

# Vietnam War

Author: [Sam Mittelsteadt](#)

Date: January 19, 2025



## Robert S. McNamara

by A.F. Canwell

Reprinted with permission from *American Opinion*, September 1963

“Is he still using that damned computer?” was the question asked by an acquaintance of Robert McNamara who knew of his part in organizing the “scientific data” which became Ford Company’s Edsel — the car with everything nobody wanted.

Apparently the answer is yes. In spite of his 350 million dollar goof with the Edsel, Kennedy’s Secretary of Defense did not abandon his computer upon leaving Ford. His blind faith in scientific gadgetry is still as far out as that of Professor Norbert Weiner of MIT, who thinks machines are about ready to reproduce more Weiners. With McNamara, this Pavlovian bent has recently left him standing at inattention while test-ban negotiator William C. Foster proposed to place America’s future in the oracular care of twenty little black boxes which, scattered throughout the Soviet Union, are supposed to record any test-ban cheating there.

Unfortunately, his reliance upon robotry for such delicate things as test banning is not the only myopic offense of Robert McNamara. Along the whole defense spectrum he has shown himself to be either blind or, at best, a gazer through smoky glasses. In the scandals of the RS-70, the Skybolt missile, and the TFX [Tactical Fighter, Experimental] McNamara has consistently taken a dim view of bolstering America’s striking power.

In the Cold War Education Hearings, McNamara showed himself to be somewhat less than frank in his allegation that unpleasant references to Communism were not “invariably deleted” but were deleted only during the time JFK was negotiating for release of RB-47 flyers. The fact that Senator Thurmond proved the dates didn’t square apparently caused McNamara no loss of self-esteem; for as late as the TFX hearings he was crying, “My wife told me that our twelve-year-old son had asked how long it would take for his father to prove his honesty.” Benedict Arnold’s son may well have asked the same question.

I

Who is this button-pushing poltergeist, this Frankensteinian theorist who is so lost in a maze of tubes and wires, the flash and static of rationalization, that he is unaware of the inevitable consequences of his decisions? In addition to being a Ford favorite — and those familiar with the Ford apparatus would expect this — he is a Harvard man, an alumnus of the University of California, and a member of the Council On Foreign Relations.

McNamara was born in San Francisco about the time of the First World War, moved through school with enough honors (President of the French Club, Member of the Board Of Student Control) to cast doubt on the hypothesis that his problem as Secretary of Defense is merely a case of pedestrian stupidity. And in addition to his successes in the lower schools, McNamara was awarded a Phi Beta Kappa at the University of California — an honor which is always impressive, unless given as a reward by a Left Wing college to a Left Wing student because of a mutuality of viewpoint.

After attending the University of California, McNamara went to Harvard Business School, where he gained a Master’s degree, and where he taught for three years. It was at Harvard, also, that he instructed Army Air Force officers in the techniques of using his “damned computer” to arrive at figures that otherwise took brains to calculate.

In the A.A.F., where he received a Captain’s commission in spite of having been a foureffer (with — you guessed it — eye trouble), McNamara was placed in the Pentagon to work in statistical control. Later he and the nine-man team with which he worked there were transferred as a package to the Ford Motor Company.

At Ford, McNamara went through various positions — financial analyst, company comptroller, group Vice

# Vietnam War

Author: [Sam Mittelsteadt](#)

Date: January 19, 2025



President for the car and truck divisions — until the day after John F. Kennedy won the election. On that day he was appointed Ford President in what can be termed a “dramatic coincidence” or a “staged propaganda move,” depending on whose team you root for.

While working at the Ford plant in Michigan, McNamara took residence in a typical working man’s home — a \$50,000 English Tudor hovel near the State University at Ann Arbor. It was there that McNamara set up a monthly discussion group for big businessmen who, we may assume, were thereby treated to some of McNamara’s favorite literature, such as Walt Rostow’s *The Stages Of Growth*. Interested in “education” as such people always are, McNamara helped Professor Ralph Gerard, a neurophysiologist, organize another study group to discuss new books. It is interesting to note that the book lists so popular with these study groups included such wondrous works as books of the Communist front *Institute Of Pacific Relations*. Another notable study group in which McNamara participated was Robert Kennedy’s Hickory Hill group, which must have been about as distinguished as the Oppenheimer Soviet Study Group set up ten years ago by the Council On Foreign Relations to cooperate with the State Department. Study groups such as these constitute the “think cells” which manufacture the logical reasons for treason or concession, in much the same manner as a green plant manufactures carbohydrates by photosynthesis.

McNamara’s fondness for education may also explain why he supported Left Wing Extremist Professor Paul Bagwell in a Gubernatorial race in Michigan, and why he worked for a member of the Harvard entente (JFK) in the Presidential race, even though he professes to be a Republican.

McNamara’s support of Kennedy paid dividends when he was offered the position of Secretary of Defense after “conservative banker” (*Time*’s misnomer — not ours) Robert Lovett of Manhattan had turned down both the Treasurer’s post [*Time* 12/26/60, p.7] and the Defense position [bid., p.12]. Lovett, by the way, had been Secretary of Defense from 1951-1953.

II

In the hoopla that followed McNamara’s appointment, millionaire McNamara was supposed to have taken a great personal loss to prevent the accusation of conflicting interests. He would sell 24,250 shares of stock in the Ford Company and resign his \$410,000 a year job in order to take the \$25,000 Defense position. This should have reassured everyone that Honest Bob, in an improvement on George Washington-style ethics, not only couldn’t tell a lie, but wouldn’t have thought of cutting down a cherry tree in the first place.

Such superficial gesturing was not the least reassuring to Right-Wingers who knew McNamara as a large financial contributor to the American Civil Liberties Union and the racist NAACP. The anti-religious and racial agitation activities of these organizations and their long list of Commie-fronting national board members have disturbed informed Americans of all races for many years.

Nor was it more reassuring when the praise-singers of our contemporary Sweeney Among The Nightingales turned out to be Joseph Alsop (*New York Herald Tribune, Reader’s Digest*), Stewart Alsop (*Saturday Evening Post*), and Theodore White who wrote the book which proved Presidents are made, not born. White, writing in *Look*, America’s number one sick slick, on April 23, 1963, could not resist intermittently rambling into support of some casualty of justice, as when he stated [P. 34], “Occasionally, civilians, too, were destroyed [by inter-service rivalry] — as when the Air Force shot down Robert Oppenheimer, the genius who tooled the first atom bomb, because it suspected him of forcing the Air Force to share its monopoly of atomic weapons with the Army and Navy.”

This bit of news (plus White’s allegation that “neurotic” and “fragile” James Forrestal was also a casualty of inter-service rivalry who jumped out of a window when the “uniforms” got him) comes as a revelation. We had read in some dusty old volume that Oppenheimer’s security clearance was withdrawn in December of 1953 because of “fundamental defects in his character” and because of his association with known Communists.

Theodore’s White-wash of Oppenheimer in the McNamara article may be due in part to some interlocking

# Vietnam War

Author: [Sam Mittelsteadt](#)

Date: January 19, 2025



associations which should be brought out here. (1) Oppenheimer writes for *Foreign Affairs*, the publication which lays down the line for the Council On Foreign Relations. (2) The July, 1953, issue of *Foreign Affairs* called for a defense policy in which disarmament was to be the central theme. Oppenheimer wrote the article. (3) Oppenheimer was described by William Liscum Borden, former Executive Director of the Congressional Joint Committee On Atomic Energy in a letter to J. Edgar Hoover as follows: "More probably than not he has been functioning as an espionage agent and more probably than not he has since acted under a Soviet directive in influencing U. S. military, atomic energy, intelligence and diplomatic policy." (4) The New Frontier has been attempting to clear Oppenheimer and has concurrently awarded him the \$50,000 tax-exempt Enrico Fermi Award given by the Atomic Energy Commission and paid for by the public. (5) New Frontier members of the Council On Foreign Relations who, like McNamara, are cursed with barnacle mentalities which make them quite willing to sink with the ship include: John J. McCloy (formerly of World Bank, Chase Manhattan Bank, and Ford Foundation); Dean Rusk (formerly with the American Council of the Communist front *Institute Of Pacific Relations*, and the Rockefeller Foundation); Chester Bowles (formerly trustee of the Rockefeller Foundation, and author of the Democrat Platform); Luther Hodges (former director of Ford Foundation); Robert McNamara; Adlai Stevenson; David Bell, Director of the Budget; Arthur Goldberg, and W. Averell Harriman, plus a dozen or two others.

Exposed to the Oppenheimer line in *Foreign Affairs*, it became ultimately more wholesome to convert "New Frontiers" into *New Frontier*. The name carried a tang of the new West as represented by Governors Brown and Hatfield.

III

Robert McNamara has acted in perfect accord with the suspicions of thinking Americans, who witnessed McNamara's ACLU, Ford, NAACP, and CFR affiliations and said, "the claw is proof of the Lion." As early as February of 1961, he was already doing the job of the Administration by revealing that Kennedy's claim that the United States had missile gaps was merely an ad man's line to sell us on the pre-shrunk theories of the social fabricators.

While this revelation was played up by the phony Liberals as a *first flap*, its real usefulness was that it relieved the Kennedy Administration and the Defense Department of any immediate need for increasing our arsenal of missiles. The conclusion that no real schism existed between Kennedy and — McNamara is supported by the fact that the Kennedy and McNamara attitudes reveal not even a minor cleavage in their mutual support of — gradual erosion of United States security and defenses.

The whole plot of Kennedy's retreat from victory, outlined in a paperback pocketbook [*The Strategy Of Peace*] available on any newsstand, is one of appeasement, conciliation, and water treading. The Nixon-Kennedy debates were used to rationalize Kennedy's support of such retreats as giving up the islands of Quemoy and Matsu, these rationalizations being identical to those of the ComParty line publications.

The Ninth Wonder Of The World is that Americans stand idly by while the Kennedy Administration releases convicted Communists (such as Junius Irving Scales), gags anti-Communists, collects anti-Castro Cubans in a New Frontier Roundup and, through the Department of Defense, pulls in America's defenses from our foreign bases.

The latter, which is part of McNamara's "brilliant new approach" to defense is not new at all. Removal of "imperialistic armies" from those lands which the Communists had in gun sights is a strategy advocated by our Red enemies as far back as the Sixth International of 1928. In the Resolution of the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International, entitled *The Struggle Against Imperialist War And The Tasks Of The Communists*, this brilliant new approach was all mapped out.

The Resolution states: *The slogan: Withdraw the imperialist armies from the colonies; withdraw the imperialist cadres and officers from native armies, must be advanced in the colonies as well as in the home countries.*

# Vietnam War

Author: [Sam Mittelsteadt](#)

Date: January 19, 2025



Unfortunately, other aspects of the new defense also coincide with the program of the Sixth International and make it remarkable that so many of the slick magazines can write about McNamara with a straight face. But then, we remember Harry Hopkins, Harry Dexter White, Alger Hiss, and others of the Roosevelt and Truman era (Kennedy has pledged to complete the Roosevelt Program) and realize the Age Of Treason begun in the Thirties with FDR's recognition of the Soviet Union.

That Age continued throughout World War II, when we supplied \$11 billion in Lend-Lease — antique furniture, atomic materials, lipsticks, and industrial plants — to the Soviet Union; continued with the rapid mustering out of forces after VE Day in reply to Communist demands.

It continued with the Geneva conferences of which President Kennedy said in a commencement speech at American University, Washington: "Our primary long-range interest in Geneva, however, is general and complete disarmament. . . ."

This dovetails with a Sixth International Resolution which states:

*. . . The disarmament policy of the Soviet Government must be used for Purposes of agitation much more energetically and to a wider extent than has been done hitherto. However, they must not be utilized as a Pretext for advancing similar demands [that Russia disarm] in the capitalist countries, but as a means: (1) For recruiting sympathizers for the Soviet Union.... (2) For utilizing the results of the Soviet disarmament policy and its exposure of the imperialists in the effort to eradicate all Pacifist illusions and to carry on propaganda among the masses in support of the only way towards disarmament and abolition of war, viz., arming of the proletariat, overthrowing the bourgeoisie and establishing the proletarian ,dictatorship.*

Other points in the Communist program are the intensifying of class and racial antagonisms to produce civil war (as is being done by CORE, NAACP, the Black Muslims, the Anti-Defamation League, and other racist organizations — now with the help of the Department of Defense) and crippling of defense plants through union activity.

Effectiveness of union slow-downs was demonstrated in May of 1961 during Senate Hearings with regard to General Dynamics Corporation. Jack Cannady, chief cost controller of the Convair-Astronautics Division of General Dynamics testified that union [International Brotherhood Of Electrical Workers] strike threats and featherbedding had added \$692,000 to the cost of the Atlas missile.

## IV

In spite of such problems with cost control — and here McNamara again comes into the picture — our Defense Department turned over the TFX contract to General Dynamics Corporation, with McNamara stating that GDC could provide: "The least expensive, time-consuming [*sic.*] research-and-development effort before production." The key to this statement is "*before production,*" which keeps the statement from being a lie. How this "before production" savings is achieved may be explained by the comments of Albert W. Blackburn, who testified that all of the imaginative aerodynamics fixes devised by Boeing in their third submission . . . somehow found their way into the final General Dynamics design to a degree of similarity that would hardly be a coincidence."

It was then revealed that Roswell Gilpatric of our Defense Department had a connection with a law firm which handled a great deal of business for General Dynamics. Boeing, the loser in the TFX case, has long been a thorn in the side of the Liberal Left because of its airtight security (assuming if a plans-leak occurred in the TFX case it occurred through the Department of Defense) and its anti-Communist educational programs. Many observers feel this was the reason the Senate investigated Boeing in May of 1962 for alleged disproportionate profits made on the Bomarc anti-aircraft missile.

In view of the spurious charges made against other strong anti-Communist organizations and individuals, such a conclusion is not outrageous. General Edwin Walker, for example, was accused by Secretary McNamara of violating the Hatch Act through use of the *ACA Index* — the publishers of which were listed as a recommended

# Vietnam War

Author: [Sam Mittelsteadt](#)

Date: January 19, 2025



source by the U. S. Army in its *Guide To Anti-Communist Action*, released to nineteen armed forces schools, eight armies, and twenty-three other branches of the U. S. Army!

Conversely, McNamara testified to the four points of emphasis in his October, 1961 memorandum, *Armed Forces Information And Education Program* — stating that one aim was to make army personnel “fully aware of the threat of communism.” McNamara’s approach to full awareness was evidenced in the remarks of Major General Alva R. Fitch, *Assistant Chief Of Staff For Intelligence*, U.S. Army, who testified that he was unfamiliar with the magazine *Nation*, which was being used in troop indoctrination; and that he was unfamiliar with its Editor, Carey McWilliams, who had been identified in sworn testimony as a member of the Communist Party.

V

It seems incredible that General Walker should be besmirched by McNamara in this instance for carrying out an army directive which was supported by McNamara’s own memorandum while the use of a pro-Communist publication (known to be pro-Communist by even a novice Left or Right Winger) for troop indoctrination received almost no comment — it is even more incredible to read an analysis of McNamara’s Defense Strategy.

There are really only two points to this *New Defense*: Limited Retaliation and Disarmament.

The Limited Retaliation line is pushed under the nice-sounding titles of “controlled response,” “counterforce retaliation,” and the “doctrine of Conventional Option.” These rationalizations of accommodation can further be broken down into specific points.

“Controlled response” means that control of our nuclear weapons system has now been centralized in the civilian controlled Department of Defense by these steps: (1) The “permissive link” system, which makes it impossible to retaliate against attack on any base, *unless retaliation is triggered by the civilians in the Defense Department*. This is accomplished by a mechanical lock which short circuits accidental firing, and which was installed after the public was saturated with a deluge of propaganda about an accidental war through news stories and books, such as Eugene Burdick’s and Harvey Wheeler’s novel *Fail Safe*. (2) Control has been established over the military to such an extent that subordinate civilians can overrule service nominations made by the military. And (3) a barrier was set up between the military and Congress. The *Army, Navy And AirForce Journal* of October 28, 1961, described this action: “Secretary of Defense McNamara is coordinating a proposal that would restrict the contact of Pentagon civilian and military officials with Congress . . . . Secretary McNamara is exploring the possibility of centralizing all Pentagon contacts with Congress within one organization” [the office of Norman S. Paul, McNamara’s Special Assistant For Legislative Affairs]. This would make censorship of the military much easier, and might make it possible to news-manage much of the civilian hanky-panky that is going on in the Department of Defense.

“Counterforce retaliation,” the second verse of the Limited Retaliation theme song, is the assurance given to the USSR that we will not strike “first.” In other words. subversion may go on all over the world and in United States possessions, but we will take no action unless an overt military attack occurs. It won’t.

Furthermore, we promise not to hit civilian populations; and since (surprise!) most industrial plants for the production of war material are located in heavily populated areas, this guarantee of immunity is utterly ridiculous.

Also, under this category, is the “balance of terror” theory which says we will do our best not to get ahead of Russia in production of weapons, as this might frighten her into plopping a missile over into Dallas, or some other Conservative city on the President’s black list. JFK expressed the idea of “balance of terror” in a speech in 1958 when he said that in “1960-1964” the United States would be in a “position of great peril” for having destroyed Soviet superiority in “offensive and defense missile capability”! Imagine that!!

The false logic behind the idea of “counterforce retaliation” is expressed in the December 1, 1962, *Saturday Evening Post* article by Stewart Alsop, who attempts to defend the theory with this description of dueling:

# Vietnam War

Author: [Sam Mittelsteadt](#)

Date: January 19, 2025



This country and the Soviet Union are like two men with cocked pistols. Both know that if one trigger is pulled the other will be pulled. Both want to be able to aim at the heart. But both have a mutual interest in avoiding death. So both will also want to be able to aim at the shoulder, say, or the band holding the pistol, as in one of those duels where both duelists want to stop short of killing. The trouble is, of course, that to hit the shoulder, and not the heart, you've got to have a damn good aim. And if you aim at the shoulder, and the other fellow aims at your heart, you've got to have another bullet left to aim at his heart.

Or you'll need a damn good heart. The point Alsop missed completely is: How can you aim at the "other fellow" when you have already been hit in the heart — Or as the kids say, "Bang, you're dead."

The "cost effectiveness" economics of the "new defense" is included in the "doctrine of Conventional Option." This is the method by which we get less destructive power for more money. It has long been known that modern weapons have an immensely greater efficiency dollar for dollar than conventional weapons. As a result, a large portion of the present defense budget is going into conventional weapons; which have brought on such stalemates as Korea and such heel-dragging conflicts as Laos and Viet-Nam. Obviously, conventional weapons cannot bring about a decisive victory anywhere, so long as the two sides each hold back an ace — for who will accept defeat before the depletion of all resources for victory (except an American Liberal)?

VI

And why are such no-win wars being waged? Is it because such three-ring circus performances serve to distract the audience from the arsonists who are burning down the Big Top? Probably. For while the audience is talking about Southeast Asia, Berlin, Cuba, civil rights, etc., etc., the performers are moving swiftly, assembling the props for unilateral disarmament — refusing to use appropriations for bombers (which can't be controlled by the permissive link and are not destroyed by one firing as is a missile), withdrawing troops from foreign bases [Fortress America program], transferring more and more sovereignty to NATO and SEATO and, of course, to the UN.

The "Revolution in the Pentagon" is proceeding smoothly; the graven image which has replaced God for the Socialists who are entrenched there is the Red Dove Of Peace. The thirty-three battle paintings in the Department of Defense have already been removed and replaced with paintings of the tranquil majesty of the High Sierras. We wait now to hear the strains of the *Internationale* in pianissimo.

All those in favor of a cultural exchange for the Beats in McNamara's Band, say *Aye!*