

Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara

(summary interview with *New York Times*, April 22, 1965):

First, he insists that the guerrilla war is NOT merely an indigenous rebellion, that in fact the Viet Cong do depend on outside power for weapons, strategy, tactical doctrine, daily operational control. . . .

The alternative to fighting the war as outlined . . . is not to negotiate a neutral, non-Communist SVN because that is not possible. The alternative is a Chinese-dominated Southeast Asia which he thinks means a “Red Asia.” Concedes possibility of Titoist tendencies in NVN, but thinks China would inevitably dominate once we pull out. He further believes most of our allies share this view . . . and that their public statements are dictated by internal politics

McN says our “clear objective” is to maintain an independent, non-Communist SVN. Our policy is to reach this objective at lowest possible cost in casualties and risk. To attack Red China substantially increases the risks and costs, probably would bring Soviet Union to assistance of China.

If the U.S. withdrew from SVN, there would be a complete shift in the world balance of power. Asia goes Red, our prestige and integrity damaged, allies everywhere shaken (even those who publicly ask us to quit bombing, etc.). At home, he foresees as a result of these calamities a bad effect on economy and a disastrous political fight that could further freeze American political debate and even affect political freedom.