

McNamara's Candor *Post 7/1/68*

Secretary McNamara made a special point of confessing his participation in the Bay of Pigs fiasco. He was not questioned directly about the Bay of Pigs in his television interview, along with Secretary Rusk, on Meet the Press. But a passing reference to the failure of the Cuban invasion to arouse public support, gave him an opportunity to say what was on his mind. There followed a candid statement that every single one of President Kennedy's advisers, including Mr. McNamara himself, recommended the action which so flagrantly boomeranged.

Presumably Mr. McNamara felt free to acknowledge that his advice on that occasion was "a serious error" only because he will soon be leaving the Cabinet. Nevertheless, it was a refreshing example of self-criticism that few Cabinet members care to indulge in. We fully understand Secretary Rusk's disinclination to follow the McNamara lead even though the latter's self-indictment included all the President's advisers on the Bay of Pigs incident. Mr. Rusk remains in the Cabinet and doubtless therefore feels less impelled at this point to review his record publicly. But that in no way detracts from the merits of the McNamara precedent.

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