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McNamara: Debate Puts His

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A little more than a year ago, Robert S. McNamara took up residence in the World Bank, one of the more placid backwaters in the institutional life of this town.

He was exhausted and emotionally shaken after seven years as Secretary of Defense. They were years of conflict, tragedy, war and intense preoccupation with the spectre of nuclear suicide in an unstable world.

By the standards of that history, the bank assignment was a form of liberation. The charts and tables that delineated his new concerns — population curves, the cost of money, agricultural yields in Latin America — were blessedly remote from the materials with which he used to deal:

"At (nuclear) fatality levels approximating 100 million or more, differ-

ences of 10 to 20 million in the calculated results are less than the margin of error in the estimates."

There were to be no more of those scenes at the White House such as the night in mid-1967 when he was summoned by an angry Lyndon Johnson to explain his statement to a Congressional committee that the bombing of North Vietnam was ineffectual.

"The President," according to a credible account, "raged and hollered at him. It was like something out of a Kafka novel. It was frightening to Bob."

The pressure and the weariness sometimes showed in those days. There were public occasions when tears would fill McNamara's eyes and he would have difficulty speaking. And occasionally he would pour out his frustrations to friends over a few drinks at Trader Vic's. Toward the end there were moody talks with civilian

Insight

officials bound for Vietnam, and once in a while he would tug at a visitor's sleeve to plead: "I hope you can do something."

He is out of all that now, but he is facing, obliquely, a new ordeal. His reputation, in effect, is on trial in Washington these days as a major by-product of an intensifying debate over the role of the military establishment in American life.

He is explicitly accused by former colleagues in the Kennedy Administration — Richard Goodwin, John Kenneth Galbraith and Marcus Raskin among them — of having helped cre-

Record on Trial

ate in his years at the Pentagon a military machine of such size and power that is it no longer responsive to political control.

"The Kennedy Administration," the indictment reads, "took office in 1961 with the avowed aim of establishing greater civilian control over the military. Yet the harsh fact is that military considerations today play a greater role in determining American policy than at any time in our national history."

"In the name of efficiency we unified the operations of the armed services, introduced the techniques of computer management and encouraged closer interactions between the military and industry. As a result, power once checked by rivalries and inefficiency is now wielded as a single force, defying effective democratic control . . .

"We should be clear on one point: It is not the uniformed military which

has created the present situation, but the civilian leadership and the institutions they have created to centralize and expand the performance of national security functions."

The old hawk, Sen. Richard Russell of Georgia, who ran the Armed Services Committee for many years, has come to the same conclusion.

That is one charge. There are more. McNamara is now accused, after the fact, of leading an innocent President Johnson down the road to full-scale war in Vietnam.

"Without him," a Johnson associate declares, "there wouldn't have been a war . . . He'd come over and say, 'They (the enemy) have sent 1223 troops in there and we've killed 667 and if we put so many more (American troops in there we will have it eliminated' . . . I don't think Johnson ever saw through it until after he was out."

See McNAMARA, A10, Col. 1



Drawing by David Levine

McNAMARA, From AI

Said another: "It was Robert McNamara who persuaded the President that we should go in there and that the war could be won. Of course, Bundy and Rusk were saying the same things, day after day."

A third man, deeply involved in those events, put it more delicately: "There was a feeling over there (in the Pentagon) that top-flight administrative efficiency would win the war, and that we really could win it with good management."

Even on that score — his celebrated managerial ability — McNamara is under attack. From every sector of Congress and from other quarters, there are charges that waste and gross inefficiencies characterized the McNamara regime.

The fiasco over the TFX fighter-bomber missile (the F-111), the huge cost overruns on the Minuteman II missile and on the C-5A military transport are laid at his feet. A Budget Bureau official, Richard Stubbing, has asserted in a learned and much-disputed academic paper that weapons acquired in the 1960s were less reliable and more costly than those acquired in the 1950s. An Air Force systems manager, A. E. Fitzgerald, told a Congressional committee last week that "the runway contractor overhead rates, plummeting labor efficiency and sharply increasing average pay of the ballistic missile contractors during the early 1960s — a period of relative price stability — were the precursors of our present inflation. The higher prices caused by degraded performance spread throughout the major acquisition community, encouraged by the permissive climate (in the Pentagon) for cost growth."

As this storm of rhetoric and accusation gathers, McNamara remains silent.

Declines to Testify on Hill

He declined a few days ago an invitation to appear before a Senate panel looking into cost overruns, as he declines invitations from the media to talk publicly about the Pentagon years. He feels that his position as president of the World Bank makes it impossible for him to get personally involved in domestic controversy. But there are others anxious to defend him.

Gen. David Shoup, the retired Marine Corps commandant who has himself denounced the "militarization" of American life, has a simple reply to McNamara's detractors:

"I said when I came in and I say now that he was the best damned thing that ever happened to the Pentagon. I know they're all coming along now and giving him the debits for the F-111 and all that. But when I was there I was impressed by the new blood and the new outlook and his extreme capabil-

ity for grasping all the problems facing us."

Gen. Maxwell Taylor, a former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is known to feel the same way.

McNamara's principal deputy for nearly four years, Roswell Gilpatric, the New York lawyer, believes that the organization and rationalization of the military establishment and its budget under McNamara's leadership are monumental reforms that will never be abandoned.

New Defense Chiefs Agree

That is the approximate judgment of the Republican civilians who are now in command at Defense. Deputy Secretary David Packard expresses the common view: "He made great contributions . . . You might criticize some things with hindsight, but I don't know that I would have done anything different at the time."

The ambivalence in all these judgments is no greater than the seeming ambivalence in the man on whom they are rendered.

He is often depicted as a bloodless figure, aa kind of computer in a Brooks Brothers suit, arrogant and self-righteous. Stewart Alsop has written that he has "an almost Calvinistic horror of emotion, an almost mystical reverence for reason."

But to his friends, he is above all a humanist, a man who could say a few months ago:

"I get charged with the TFX. It's nothing compared to the Bay of Pigs, or my failure for four years to integrate off-base military housing. I don't want you to misunderstand me when I say this, but the TFX was only money. We're talking about blood, the moral foundation of our future, the life of the Nation, when we talk about these other things."

President Kennedy's widow once said of him, "Peace. That's all he cares for. Here he was supposed to amalgamate this seething furnace, run the greatest war machine in the world, and all that he really cared about was that it was never used."

He is, in any case, a man who sometimes stands off from the crowd at an evening social gathering, and untouched drink in his hand, staring blankly into space, a brooding, melancholy figure who can look back over the past eight years and contemplate the ironies of what might have been.

Myth Was Born Quickly

From the day that McNamara arrived in the Pentagon the mythological image began to form. He was spoken of and written about as a Mr. Infallible with an ordered, computer-like mind that could at last unsnarl the Byzantine bureaucracy of the Pentagon.

Gilpatric, his devoted deputy in those days, recalls an illustrative inci-

dent:

"Just after Inauguration we sat down at the Pentagon and Bob asked each of us to list the major problems we'd be facing in the next four years. I had been in the Defense Department before on various study groups and I thought I knew the place.

"Anyway, I listed 48 questions that I thought would be of major concern to us. Bob had 79 on his list, most of my 48 and some that hadn't even occurred to me. It was amazing."

By the following March the McNamara list was expanded into a formal agenda of 92 tasks assigned to various Defense officials for "urgent accomplishment." In his characteris-

tically methodical way, McNamara listed after each task the agency responsible for carrying it out and the date he wanted the answers.

Old Assumptions Questioned

The memorandum called into question all the assumptions and policies of the past. McNamara demanded new thinking and new answers on an incredible range of issues. He wanted a revision of the Nation's "basic national security policies and assumptions" (Task 1). He also wanted an investigation into the causes of press leaks at the Pentagon (Task 83).

"McNamara exercised control by the questions he asked," one associate recalled of that early era.

"He was anxious to learn," said Gen. Shoup. "He would ask questions about why we had so many mortars in a mortar platoon and why we carried so much ammunition. They were good questions. Some people might think he was asking those things because he wanted to change everything. But that wasn't so. He wanted to learn."

And learn he did, then finest flower of the Harvard Business School, with a rapidity that those around him found dizzying. No detail was too trivial, whether it be the size and shape of Marine belt buckles or the size of a platoon.

There is little argument over the managerial innovations of those early days. The operative word was "rationalize." McNamara took the vast, costly, duplicative housekeeping establishment of the Pentagon and imposed rational management techniques upon it.

Created New Supply Agency

He created the Defense Supply Agency to end the multiple buying and stocking programs of the individual services. The same was done with communications in the form of the Defense Communications Agency.

Still stung by the fiction of the "missile gap," which McNamara and asso-

ciates concluded was a wish-fulfillment of Air Force intelligence, the new Secretary also merged the intelligence programs of the three services. The result was the Defense Intelligence Agency, from which McNamara hoped to get straight information, uncontaminated by parochial institutional biases. Ironically, he finally grew suspicious of DIA's sanguine reports on the bombing of North Vietnam late in 1966. McNamara turned back to the Central Intelligence Agency, which had bequeathed the Kennedy Administration that massive intelligence fiasco known as the Bay of Pigs.

Acceptance by McNamara as the CIA plan for "liberating" Cuba was wholly out of keeping with his pervasive skepticism toward everything else. Some students of the Pentagon at this time say that if McNamara had consulted top military leaders instead of suspecting them the Administration might have been spared the humiliation of the Bay of Pigs.

CIA Ran Whole Show

"The Bay of Pigs was a CIA operation from beginning to end," said a senior military intelligence official who viewed the crisis from the Pentagon. "It was a fait accompli presented to the President and the Joint Chiefs didn't get a chance to look it over until hours before the thing happened. The CIA did all the briefing and the military was never really asked for opinions or advice."

Historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. in "A Thousand Days" claims that McNamara, "who was absorbed in the endless task of trying to seize control of the Pentagon, accepted the judgment of the Chiefs on the military aspects of the plan" as well as the CIA's contention that the invasion would produce a popular revolt against Castro.

The CIA was the principal goat of the Bay of Pigs though President Kennedy publicly accepted responsibility for it, as did McNamara. Even so, the stock of the new Defense Secretary rose steadily on the Washington scene.

The popular notion of McNamara was of a man engaged in a Herculean struggle to tame the ever-grasping military, end political pork-barrelling with military contracts and put in order the big five-sided house across the river.

Won Admiration of JFK

"President Kennedy liked and admired him more than anybody else in the Cabinet," Robert F. Kennedy once said. "He would certainly have made him his next Secretary of State. And although it was a long way away, he thought McNamara had the ability and courage some day to be President."

John F. Kennedy, in fact, once told Gilpatric, who was then embroiled in the TFX controversy: "Roz, go back to New York and make some money, then maybe we'll make you Secretary of Defense and make McNamara Secretary

of State."

The TFX was McNamara's first genuinely bruising encounter with Congress. Now he is known to Congress. Now he is known to feel that the controversial contract was a mistake. Back in 1963, he fought for it with all the forensic brilliance he could muster.

The Battle of the TFX provided the first public glimpse of the deeply emotional nature that was concealed under the armor of McNamara's tough, unflappable exterior.

After a series of blows and counterblows in the press between McNamara and the Senate's persistent gumshoe, Sen. John L. McClellan (D-Ark.), the Defense Secretary came to confront the Senate investigating subcommittee on the TFX.

At one point in the heated colloquy, members of the subcommittee were astonished to hear a gasp in McNamara's voice and to see him brushing away a tear.

Shaken by Son's Query

"Last night when I got home at midnight, after preparing for today's hearing, my wife told me that my own 12-year-old son had asked how long it would take for his father to prove his honesty," he said.

The issue then was McNamara's award of the contract to the General Dynamics Corp., which had been vetoed by four military source selection boards in favor of the Boeing Corp.

The overriding implication of the McClellan inquiry was that the \$6-billion TFX award to a Texas plant was a political fix on the part of the Kennedy Administration, then looking toward the 1964 presidential race.

This view is held today by a man who had the closest access to both Presidents Kennedy and Johnson.

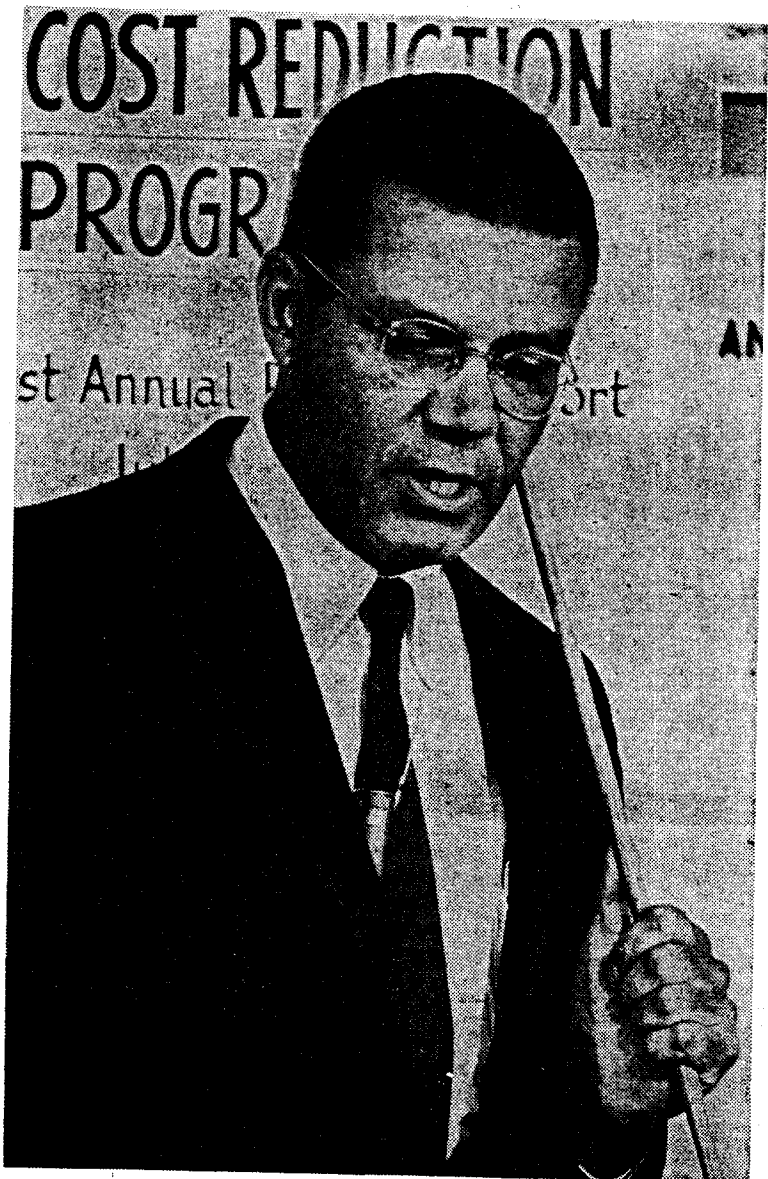
"Bob McNamara was instructed on what to do about the TFX—he was told what to do," this man asserts. "No one will convince me otherwise. He was a good soldier. The facts are concealed."

Refuses to Discuss

To this day McNamara refuses to discuss the TFX. But those familiar with his thinking say that he now believes the project to have been premature, to have pushed the technological "state of the art" too hard.

But he is also said to feel that his basic premise was correct: That the Navy and Air Force could use a common plane rather than embark on costly separate development plans.

The controversial TFX decision was



United Press International

McNamara in 1963, reporting on savings made at the Pentagon.

an example of McNamara's supreme confidence in his own decision-making powers. "He considered his own thinking as better than the thinking of anyone around him," said one admiring subordinate.

Yet the Navy has abandoned its version of the TFX, the F-111B. About 110 of the planes have been produced to date and the future of the F-111 is cloudy. Its costs, by one estimate, are almost tenfold the original estimate. No one can come up with a current figure. Not the Pentagon. Not Congress. Not the General Accounting Office.

Because of the sheer force of his personality and power of exposition, McNamara emerged from the TFX row as a hero in the eyes of prestigious newspapers and magazines. The battle was viewed as another episode in the ongoing struggle between "Supermac" and the brass-hatted beast in the Pentagon.

Scalp Hunters on the Hill

This view seemed to find ready confirmation in the fact that the pro-military Armed Services Committee figures on Capitol Hill were shouting for McNamara's scalp on the basis of the TFX award.

"Is our military defense strategy, our defense plans, and our future defense posture to be entrusted to civilian theorists with no military training or experience?" Assistant Republican leader Leslie C. Arends of Illinois asked in the House.

McNamara was confident and composed. "If anything," he told the American Society of Newspaper Editors in 1963, "the potential dangers of the so-called 'military-industrial complex' have been overstated rather than understated in recent months."

He sternly warned Congress that he would not tolerate political favoritism in the award of Defense contracts. "I think the most important function that a Congressional representative or delegation can perform in relation to defense contract awards," he told then Rep. Melvin R. Laird (R-Wis.), "is not to try to influence the award because, frankly, we will not be influenced."

Others Didn't Share Standards

Ironically, this standard of probity was not shared by fellow members of the Kennedy Administration.

John F. Kennedy himself was not loath to use the promise of Pentagon business as a political sweetener. Campaigning in Pennsylvania in 1962 Mr. Kennedy reminded a political audience that "working with Governor (David) Lawrence since 1960 we have increased by 50 per cent the number of prime contracts that came to Pennsylvania."

Shortly before the 1962 election in Massachusetts, Gilpatric notified the White House that the M-14 rifle contract at a Worcester plant was being canceled. It was the year President Kennedy's brother Ted was running for the Senate. When White House

aide Kenneth P. O'Donnell learned of the impending cancellation, he snapped: "Tell Gilpatric he's kidding."

The rifle contract was extended beyond the election and then canceled. Newly elected Sen. Edward M. Kennedy and his Republican senior, Leverett Saltonstall, called upon McNamara to renew the rifle contract. The Defense Secretary said no—"in no uncertain terms," according to one witness to the conversation.

By 1965, it seemed that Robert McNamara had very nearly won the battle for control of the Pentagon. His war theories, budgeting and planning concepts were widely accepted by both the generals and the Congress. Shoup virtually idolized him. JCS Chairman Maxwell Taylor thought he was the best Defense Secretary ever to come down the pike. The Army field commanders were unanimous in their praise.

Abrams Paid Him Tribute

Said Gen. Creighton Abrams (now the field commander in Vietnam: "The Army is in the best peacetime condition in its history.")

Gen. Harold Johnson, the Army Chief of Staff, was equally flattering. "The Army," he said, "was never in a better position in peacetime than it is today."

The Navy and Air Force and their Congressional allies were less satisfied. McNamara was still stifling Air Force plans for a new bomber to replace the B-52 at a cost of up to \$20 billion. The Admirals, Hyman Rickover in particular, were unhappy over his skeptical attitude toward nuclear-powered ships. They were unhappy, too, over his insistence that the Navy buy the F-111.

"Independence of expression," Rickover muttered one day, "has now become almost unthinkable."

By any objective standard, however, the military men had little to complain about — pet weapons projects, expected. Since 1960, McNamara had jacked up the Pentagon budget by \$7 billion a year. There had been, by his own statistical count, a 45 per cent increase in the number of combat-ready Army divisions, a 45 per cent increase in combat helicopters, a 100 per cent increase in airlift capacity, a 51 per cent increase in the number of Air Force fighter squadrons, a 100 per cent increase in naval ship construction, a 1000 per cent increase in the size of the counterinsurgency forces, a 200 per cent increase in the megatonnage and number of strategic nuclear warheads, a 67 per cent increase in the number of tactical nuclear weapons in Western Europe.

Enough for 4 Separate Wars

He was buying for the United States (although some members of Congress, including Sen. Richard B. Russell

seemed unaware of it) the military forces required to fight a nuclear war and three ground wars simultaneously — in Western Europe, Southeast Asia and in the Western Hemisphere.

And he seemed to be doing it, as he had promised President Kennedy and the Congress, "at the lowest possible cost." After an initial spurt in spending to build up both strategic and conventional forces, the budget by 1965 was not only leveling off but was beginning to decline.

In 1964, he had asked Congress for about \$51 billion; a year later he was asking for only \$49 billion, a request, as it turned out, that did much to damage his standing in Washington.

One who was especially impressed with his performance was President Johnson, who was telling friends: "McNamara is the ablest man I ever met." Another Johnsonism was the statement: "Sometimes when I'm talking to Bob McNamara late at night, and I hear him going along like a machine, boom, bang, boom, everything in order, I feel like it's all I can do to keep up and pretend I'm understanding."

It seemed then, in any event, that

Johnson — with McNamara nursing the Pentagon budget — had an open field ahead for his Great Society experiments. The money was there, and the political building blocks had fallen into place.

Gloomy View at Vietnam

The Cold War, McNamara reported to Congress, was beginning to thaw. The only shadow on the horizon was Vietnam, and McNamara's prognosis was gloomy. The situation there, he said, was not "hopeless" but it confronted the United States with some hard decisions.

"The choice," he said, "is not simply whether to continue our efforts to keep South Vietnam free and independent, but, rather, whether to continue our struggle to halt Communist expansion in Asia. If the choice is the latter, as I believe it should be, we will be far better off facing the issues in South Vietnam."

At that time in early 1965, there were 23,500 U.S. military personnel in South Vietnam. In April, a regiment of Marines was sent in that would not, McNamara said, engage in offensive combat. Two months later Army units began to arrive and by June 3, there were 51,000 U.S. troops in the country. On July 28, President Johnson announced a troop increase to 125,000 and by year's end 181,000 Americans were involved in the fighting.

What happened in those momentous months of 1965 is the subject of one of the most profound controversies raging around Robert McNamara today. Such former Pentagon associates as Arthur Sylvester have maintained all along that McNamara "clearly" op-

posed the commitment of American troops to the Vietnam war. Kenneth O'Donnell says flatly, "I don't believe that Bob McNamara believed in that Vietnam thing. Maybe he should have resigned. But he was so loyal to the Presidency it got to the point where it led him into an unhappy situation."

He Was Called Biggest Dove

NBC's Douglas Kiker in an article for the Atlantic in 1967 quoted a McNamara friend as saying: "He's the biggest dove in the higher echelons of the Johnson Administration . . . He's dying to get this war over with."

There is little outside evidence, however, to support that view, either from McNamara's public and private comments or from the testimony of men deeply involved in the events of that time. When he was accused by Sen. Wayne Morse during that period of having created "McNamara's war," his reply was:

"I don't object to its being called 'McNamara's war.' I think it is a very important war, and I am pleased to be identified with it and do whatever I can to win it."

Today, there is an eagerness on the part of President Johnson's men at that time to place the principal responsibility for the war on his Secretary of Defense.

"We would ask the Pentagon for options," one of these men recalls, "and they would come back with only one option — to do what we were doing only more. He (McNamara) kept telling us that we could win it in 18 months." Faulty Prediction in 1963

It is a fact that in late 1963 McNamara had predicted publicly that "the major part of the U.S. military task can be completed by the end of 1965, although there may be a continuing demand for a limited number of . . . training personnel."

A close friend and great admirer of McNamara — a man who served with him at one time in the Pentagon — had this version of the events of 1965:

"By that time everybody had gotten emotionalized and traumatized by Vietnam because it wasn't a black and white, day or night situation. They didn't know what it would take to win. But they were convinced that after a buildup to 200,000 (American troops) that you could then start bringing men home."

There is other evidence that McNamara counted on a quick end to the war. It is contained in the budget sent up to Congress in late January 1965, by President Johnson. It provided \$49 billion for military spending and was prepared with the full knowledge that the situation in Vietnam was deteriorating and that U.S. troops might have to be committed. In early 1964, McNamara had warned Congress that "the situation in South Vietnam has unquestionably worsened . . . The road ahead . . . is going to be long, difficult, and frustrating." In February, 1965, he told the House Armed Serv-

ices Committee that "the present situation . . . is grave."

Budget Was \$11 Billion Off

It is against that background that his fiscal 1966 budget went up to the Hill early in 1965. It proved to be grossly in error.

He asked in that budget for \$19 billion to support the "General Purpose Forces" that would have to fight the Vietnam war. The actual cost of those forces that year was \$30 billion, an error of \$11 billion on McNamara's part.

That miscalculation, according to a White House fiscal adviser at that time, caused the President to "completely lose confidence" in McNamara's judgment.

Furthermore, this adviser claims, McNamara's miscalculations upset the country's economic balance, led to inflation, to the belated surtax on incomes and to all manner of political problems for the President.

In any event, McNamara's estimate of what it would take to support the war turned sour and before the year was over he had other problems. He came under heavy fire again in Congress — from doves opposed to the war and from hawks like House Armed Services Committee Chairman L. Mendel Rivers, who wanted more military construction, more bombers, more research on exotic weapons and wanted, too, an end to military base closings.

Signs of Strain Emerged

By September, McNamara was showing signs of strain and depression. Tears came into his eyes as he told one visitor, "The honeymoon is over. I'm going to have trouble on the Hill. They're out to get me."

In November, he took the unusual step of flying to South Carolina to make peace with Rivers. But later he said the visit may have accomplished little. "I don't trust that man," he said. "He'll stab me in the back the first chance he gets."

It was not only Rivers who bothered him. He had become convinced that the Congressional leaders most involved in military affairs were little more than lobbyists for military-industrial interests, that they were "biased, prejudiced and ill-informed" and that they were unrepresentative of the people.

Some of McNamara's Congressional difficulties, however, arose out of his own personality, his "rightness" complex, as one general described it:

"He was too bullheaded ever to admit that he might be wrong."

A former Air Force official described this trait as a form of "self-containment." He said that McNamara "did his own thinking and he was con-

vinced that no one could think better than he could. The problem with him was getting him to avoid taking a position too quickly. Once he took a position he was damned hard to move. He was implacable."

The story is now told that in the Kennedy White House an ad hoc group of presidential assistants made it a point to try to prevent the President from hasty endorsements of McNamara's proposals.

This skepticism, from all accounts, was missing from the Johnson White House, at least in the early stages of the Vietnam involvement.

Single Voice From Pentagon

"No one said anything from the Pentagon, except McNamara," according to one official involved in those events. "What could the President do? If he had said he didn't believe McNamara's figures, it would have been a presumptuous judgment . . . The trouble was that McNamara was so concerned with clamping down on the military and the 'military-industrial-complex' that he acutely became a complex of his own."

"He felt," said a high-level Pentagon civilian, "that you could quantify anything, including the intangibles."

So, as the war continued on into 1966, McNamara set in motion an elaborate "quantification" system that was to measure progress in the war and produce some sort of timetable as to when it might end. Statistics were gathered incessantly on weapons captured and lost, infiltration rates, deaths and injuries on the battlefields, air sorties, bomb tonnage, ammunition consumption.

The trouble with all that, a former McNamara subordinate has said, was that "they had no experience or training for a situation of that kind. McNamara would send someone like Tex Thornton (of Litton Industries) out to Saigon on a problem of port congestion or logistics. But that had nothing to do with the real problem, which was the state of mind of the Vietnamese . . . I don't think any of the people sent out to Vietnam ever got into real communication with the Vietnamese; they didn't understand them; it was another world."

CIA Deputies Experience

Stewart Alsop has illustrated that point with a story of the late Desmond FitzGerald's experiences with McNamara. As a deputy director of the CIA, it was FitzGerald's job to give McNamara a weekly intelligence briefing on the war.

"FitzGerald would come into McNamara's huge Pentagon office at the appointed hour," Alsop recalled, "to find McNamara surrounded by charts and tables of statistics which 'quantified' the progress of the war."

"FitzGerald would summarize that week's intelligence input, while McNamara took notes in his tiny handwriting, occasionally interjecting an incisive, factual question. One day Fitz-

Gerald asked McNamara if he could make a personal comment and McNamara nodded.

"Mr. Secretary," FitzGerald said, 'facts and figures are useful, but you can't judge a war by them. You have to have an instinct, a feel. My instinct is that we're in for a much rougher time than your facts and figures indicate.'

"You really think that?, McNamara asked.

"Yet I do," said FitzGerald.

"But why?" said McNamara.

"It's just an instinct, a feeling," said FitzGerald.

"McNamara gave him a long, incredulous stare. It was, FitzGerald later recalled, rather as though he had said something utterly and obviously mad. McNamara said good-bye politely, but that was the last time FitzGerald was ever summoned to his Pentagon office."

\$25 Billion War Budget Sought

On the basis of his quantification figures, McNamara went back to Congress in 1966 and proposed a budget of \$25.7 billion over the next year for the general purpose forces conducting the war. That was a \$7-billion miscalculation; the actual cost of those forces over the next 12 months was \$32.7 billion.

Other miscalculations were in the process of emerging.

Despite their increasing preoccupation with Vietnam, the Pentagon's managers at that point were in the midst of a modernization program that involved the purchase of costly new weapons and weapons systems — the sophisticated Minuteman II and Minuteman III land-based missiles, the Poseidon missile to replace Polaris, the F-111, the C-SA, nuclear carriers and new tanks.

See McNAMARA, A11, Col. 1

McNAMARA, From A10

McNamara was fully aware that in the past the cost estimates for new weapons systems had turned out, as often as not, to be grossly inaccurate. It was to prevent these cost overruns, sometimes as high as 700 per cent, that McNamara place such emphasis on "cost-effectiveness" and contracting procedures. These procedures were applied to the new weapons purchases of the mid-1960s but, as the evidence of recent months has shown, they were not uniformly successful. The nuclear carrier Nimitz, which was to have cost \$150 million originally, ultimately cost \$600 million, according to the McClellan Committee. F-111 costs are running 10 times as much as McNamara estimated. The C-5A is afflicted with a \$2-billion overrun. The current overrun on the Minuteman II missile, the Defense Department said last week, is

\$4 billion.

Preoccupied With the War

One of McNamara's closest allies in the Pentagon has blamed these problems directly on the Vietnam war and on McNamara's preoccupation with it:

"Beginning in 1964 the people doing the big weapons systems contracts and proposals became distracted by the buildup in Vietnam. This was largely because of President Johnson's style. McNamara had to spend nearly a full working day at the White House every day. He spent two-thirds of his time there and then at the end of the day would have to go back to the Pentagon to try to look after some of these other matters. Now it's obvious that the Office of the Secretary of Defense can't run very well without the Secretary of Defense there to run it. On projects like the C-5A and the tank program, these things would have gotten a lot more attention at the OSD level if everybody hadn't been preoccupied with Vietnam. That wouldn't have helped the TFX, of course. That was just a goof.

"Before Vietnam, for example, McNamara had a schedule of seeing every top civilian official—35 or more—every week. When you stop these contacts, as McNamara did, you've got problems."

There is no evidence that McNamara agrees with that analysis or that he agrees that "The System" failed to work because of his absences at the White House.

Kept Faith in Reason

He believed then that "The System," meaning rational, scientific analysis of all the options, had no major flaws, that problems arise only because of the ignorance of the people using The System.

In any case, cost overruns and problems of reliability were beginning to

haunt the Pentagon toward the end of McNamara's regime. In his last major statement to Congress in February, 1968, he described some of the difficulties. "Disturbingly large cost increases and delays in commitment of funds," he said, "have been encountered in recent years." Mushrooming overruns caused him to cancel the installation of new missile-firing turrets on the M-60 tank. The cost of the carrier Nimitz had risen 28 per cent above estimates in a single year. There were cost problems with various aircraft, including the C-5A.

"The System," a leading Pentagon civilian of the McNamara years said, "worked so long as we didn't have a shooting war, which raises questions. I suppose, as to how good 'The System' really was."

"The System," in any event, never provided McNamara with an answer for Vietnam and by 1967 his frustra-

tions over the war were apparent to all in close contact with him. One of these men described him as "very emotional and punchy."

'McNamara's Agony' Reported

Reporters visiting him at the Pentagon started coming away with stories of "McNamara's agony," of his "tarnished image" and of his apparent ambivalence toward the war: "The doves call him a blood-thirsty hawk, and the hawks call him an indecisive, weak Hamlet."

There is no doubt that he was emotionally and physically exhausted after six years in what is perhaps the most difficult job in the world. Those problems were compounded by the demands made on him by President Johnson. He not only spent an incredible number of hours "holding Johnson's hand" in the daytime, as someone has put it, but spent many of his nights at the White House, too.

"Johnson," a McNamara associate recalls, "looked on McNamara for a long time as the best salesman of his policy. He got every member of Congress down there to the White House, in batches, with their wives at the end of the day—maybe 8 or 9 o'clock. There was quite a bit of drinking and then McNamara would be called in to brief everybody with his charts and tables. They did the same thing with business and labor groups. It was a terrible strain on him, night after night."

Another story of the kind of demands put on Cabinet officers by Mr. Johnson comes from a host who had McNamara out for a weekend in the country late in 1966:

Special Line From White House

"They activated a special phone from the White House to my house in case anything came up. We had dinner early and it was obvious that Bob was

exhausted. At about 9 o'clock he went to bed.

"At 11 o'clock that phone rang and some duty officer asked to speak to McNamara. I asked if it was really necessary since he had just gone to sleep. Then another voice came on and said, 'get him to the phone.' It was President Johnson.

"I woke up Bob and he came down and talked for 30 minutes. When he was finished I asked if the call had really been necessary. He shook his head and said, 'No. But you know how he is.'"

Inevitably rumors got abroad (and reached the White House) that McNamara, by 1967, had grown disillusioned with the war, that he had "gotten sick of Lyndon Johnson, that he couldn't stand him anymore." There were stories that he would wake up at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning and brood about the fresh graves at Arlington Cemetery.

There is no official record or statement suggesting those disillusion-

ments. Indeed, McNamara told a group of antiwar clergymen late in 1966 that "there are two ways to kill a man. You can kill his body or you can kill his soul. I'd rather kill a few thousand bodies than kill 14 million souls in Vietnam."

He was clearly dissatisfied, however, with the bombing attacks on North Vietnam and made those views known throughout the Government.

Cited Toughness of Ho

a tough old S.O.B. and he won't quit no matter how much bombing we do. I'm as tough as he is and I know I wouldn't quit no matter how painful the bombing."

His advice to the President early in 1967 not to escalate the bombing was overruled, but McNamara said nothing publicly in dissent. His loyalty to the Presidents he served was legendary and, in itself, was a source of some concern to his friends.

He once said: "I think it's a heretical concept, this idea that there's a duty to serve the Nation above the duty to serve the President . . . It will destroy democracy if it's followed."

He had in mind the example of such people as J. Edgar Hoover, Gen. Lewis B. Hershey and Admiral Rickover who often seemed immune even from presidential control.

But McNamara's definition and practice of loyalty, has been the source of concern among some of his friends and associates.

A man who served with him said recently that McNamara's idea of loyalty to the Presidency "is a concept that's germane in American corporate society. It's the kind of loyalty you give to Henry Ford. But it's a conceptual frame that doesn't apply to public service and, in fact, is a disastrous concept."

Others, such as Kenneth O'Donnell and Roswell Gilpatric, have implied that McNamara's sense of loyalty affected his better judgment on Vietnam.

Acted Against Better Judgment

However that may be, it is a fact that McNamara was intensely loyal to the Presidency and that this loyalty on at least one occasion led him to a major strategic recommendation with which he was in fundamental disagreement.

That was his recommendation in a San Francisco speech in September, 1967, that the United States should deploy a "thin" anti-ballistic missile system known as "Sentinel."

The major part of that speech was an eloquent, Dostoevskyan description of the suicidal nature of the nuclear arms race. His mordant conclusion was that no matter what the United States might do in the future, no matter what the Soviet Union might do in the fu-

ture, there was no escaping the fact that in a nuclear war both nations would be utterly destroyed. Then, quite unaccountably, he proposed that the Sentinel ABM should be deployed as a defense against the coming Chinese nuclear threat.

There is little doubt now, from the testimony of many persons involved in that affair, that McNamara endorsed the Sentinel at President Johnson's direction, and there is little doubt that it was a political decision designed to mute the criticisms of Congressional hawks.

McNamara was so discomfited by the incident that when he included his San Francisco speech in a book last year, he eliminated the Sentinel recommendation from the main body of the text. It was thrown in at the end in an appendix.

One of His Last Chores

The Sentinel affair was one of the last chores Robert McNamara performed for Lyndon Johnson. In November, 1967, somewhat to his surprise, McNamara learned that he had been nominated by the President for the World Bank job and that the bank's directors had agreed to accept him.

He had expressed a fleeting interest in the job in various casual conversations with the President over a period of several months. He was not aware until it happened, however, that the President seriously intended to nominate him.

So in that sense, at least, he was gently nudged out of the huge office he had occupied for seven years at the Pentagon. Whether a mutual disenchantment had taken hold is something only McNamara and Mr. Johnson know. Mr. Johnson said privately after the decision was made that McNamara

was so talented that he "could do anything, including my job." It is also known that McNamara was perfectly willing to stay on at Defense if Mr. Johnson had wanted him.

But McNamara's friends and his wife, too, it is said, felt that he had overstayed his time.

"This shows," one of his colleagues at Defense said, "that you shouldn't stay anywhere longer than five years. That was his own rule when he came here in 1961. He should have followed it."

Valedictory on the Hill

McNamara's valedictory to the Pentagon was contained in his final report to Congress in February, 1968. His assessment of the state of the world was in some respects more hopeful than it had been seven years before, although he still saw no end to the Vietnam conflict. The gulf between the United States and the Soviet bloc was narrowing, he felt. He believed there was a growing recognition by both sides that a nuclear war would be intolerable. And he pointed with pride to the enormous American military force he was leaving behind.

As he left the Hill that day he was asked to identify his "principal regret."

"The principal regret," he replied, "is my recommendation on the Bay of Pigs, which was an error certainly, with hindsight, and I think it could have been recognized as an error at the time, and that by all odds is my principal regret. The principal accomplishment was to educate our people that a strategic (nuclear) war cannot be won. There can be no victors in such a war."

There was not a word about Vietnam, about the alleged "militarization" of American life during his tenure in Government or about the miscalculations that had been made on such major issues as the TFX.

A short time later at a White House farewell, he was overcome with emotion and as he left the Government an admiring columnist remarked that the "last human barrier to the war" was gone.

Quietly Starts New Life

Then he dropped out of sight and quietly moved into the World Bank, where he was more or less ignored by the political community until the last few months when his legacy at the Pentagon came under attack from both the right and left spectrums of American politics.

Hanson Baldwin, The New York Times military analyst, charged that "relatively speaking, he left the defenses of the United States weaker than he found them . . ." Richard Goodwin charges that the problem is quite the opposite, that by building up an enormous military force it was easy for the

Insight

United States to get into Vietnam; the force was available to be used.

One school argues that McNamara spent too much, while another argues that he spent too little and left many critical military needs unmet—the need for a new bomber, for example. A number of liberals claim that the civilian control he established at the Pentagon has proved disastrous, while others insist that the principle of control will be his greatest monument.

From the beginning, McNamara took the position that his function was to provide the military strength necessary to carry out the foreign policy of the United States as defined by the White House and the State Department. Thus, he bought the forces necessary to support foreign policy commitments in Europe, Asia and the Western Hemisphere.

The question of whether those were wise commitments, the question of whether the United States should have entered into 42 mutual defense treaties, he always felt, was not for him to decide. Those questions, he insisted, should be debated and resolved in Congress and the White House, not in the Pentagon. If the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin resolution opening the way for military intervention in Vietnam was improper, he felt, the Senate should have said so at the time.

He took the same position toward the defense budget. If it is "immoral", as many argue (and as McNamara might agree), to spend billions on bombers and little or nothing to eliminate poverty, Congress should make that judgment. But instead of changing priorities of that kind, the inclination in Congress, he felt, was to give unthinking support to any military gadget that was "shiny and new."

When he dedicated the new aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy last fall, McNamara spoke of the "unfathomable poignancy about the sea. It is—like life itself—beyond our power to predict."

He might have been talking about himself, for there has been a poignancy and an unpredictable quality to his own life since he came to Washington eight years ago.

He brought with him an almost religious faith in the virtues of "reason and civility and sanity," and he tried to apply them to the issues of life and death. The irony in his present situation is that, in essence, it is those very virtues that are under attack.

He was, they are saying now, simply too rational for his own good.