

Paul 6/1/67

Hilsman Says U.S. Could Win War, Lose Vietnam

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Roger Hilsman, former Assistant Secretary of State, said yesterday he fears the United States will lose Vietnam to communism even if it wins a military victory.

"President Kennedy used to say it's their war," said Hilsman, a Kennedy appointee who resigned in 1964 to become a professor at Columbia University.

"I think he meant by this that if we took the war over, we would in a sense be driving nationalism into the arms of communism.

"Even when we succeed in defeating the Viet Cong militarily," he added, "my fear is that the political result will not be viable that we will then have to either occupy the country to keep it anticomunist, or if we turn our backs and withdraw as we promised to, that it will then go down the drain politically."

Hilsman appeared on the radio-television program, "Face the Nation," (CBS-WTOP) and much of the questioning involved a forthcoming book in which he describes his government experience.

In his new book, "To Move a Nation," to be published Fri-

day, Hilsman writes that he quit the State Department in opposition to what he termed the Johnson Administration's military approach to victory in Vietnam.

Hilsman headed the Department's intelligence bureau from 1961 to 1963, then succeeded W. Averell Harriman as Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs.

His book suggests that the decision to begin regular bombing of North Vietnam was made after he left the Administration—not in retaliation against massive infiltrations of men and supplies southward as the administration contends, but before this flow began.

The idea, Hilsman says, was to force Hanoi to its knees. But he said Sunday, in the interview, that he believes now, as then, that the bombing should be stopped. The bombing hurts North Vietnam, but it is not decisive against a guerrilla campaign, he said.

Politically, he continued, the man rates bombing in either paign dependent on winning bombing has cost the United States the confidence of its allies and of neutralist nations, and may place the Soviet Union and Communist China in an intolerable position.

Hilsman's main theme is that the guerrilla war in the South Vietnam was foremost a political problem which could be met best by counterinsurgency measures performed by the South Vietnamese themselves, aided by limited, rather than massive, U.S. military intervention.

Himself a West Point graduate and World War II guerrilla fighter in Burma, Hils-

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