

HILSMAN FEARS VIETNAM LOSS

Urges Bombing Halt as
'Cost Is Too High'

WASHINGTON (AP) — Roger Hilsman, former assistant secretary of state, said Sunday he fears the United States will lose Vietnam to communism even if it wins a military victory.

"President (John F.) 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 anti-Communist, or if we turn our backs and withdraw as we promised to, that it will then go down the drain politically."

Hilsman appeared on a radio-television program.

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 Friday, 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 be-

fore 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. On the other hand, he

pointed out, North Vietnam is able to concentrate antiaircraft defenses in its target areas and take a heavy toll of American planes and fliers. of the equation the cost is all out of proportion to the military gain," he said. H
"I think on the military side gain," he said. oi