HIS BUSINESS IS WAR

As master of the Pentagon, Robert S. McNamara is among the most powerful, and controversial, men alive.

By Stewart Alsop
Now people realize what hardly anybody realized five years ago—that it's impossible to win an all-out nuclear exchange. Once you realize this, you arrive at certain rational conclusions.

The words in italics were spoken with great emphasis, in the rather rasping, oddly compelling voice of Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. They were the most significant words in a long and remarkably candid talk which he recently had with this reporter. For they represent the basic, underlying thesis in a fascinating but little understood system of reasoning which has led McNamara to transform the entire defense structure of the United States.

More than five years ago, when he became Secretary of Defense, McNamara announced confidently that henceforth he expected the Defense Department to "speak with one voice." There was snickering among old hands at the Pentagon. No man on earth, they were quite certain, could force conformity on the three jealous and bitterly competing services.

Now, even in the midst of a small but cruel war, the Defense Department does indeed "speak with one voice"—and the voice is McNamara's. This is one of the revolutionary changes which McNamara has forced on his great empire, although it is an extremely important change.

The Defense Department empire, over which McNamara now presides unchallenged, is an empire truly Roman in its reach, and it makes McNamara easily the second most powerful man in the United States and one of the half dozen or so most powerful men in the world. And yet very few people really understand what McNamara has done to the American defense structure, how he has done it—and why he has done it.

In one way or another, what happens in the American defense establishment is sure to affect the lives of all Americans, for it can cause the middle-aged to reach deeper into their pockets, or the young to risk their lives in a war half a world away. Almost four million Americans (a bit less than three million military, a bit more than a million civilians) are directly employed by the Defense Department. Indirectly, the department, which farms out contracts worth between $25 billion and $30 billion a year to industry, is far and away the largest employer in the country—more people work in the defense industries than in the steel and auto industries combined.

In terms of raw power—which includes the power to kill about half the human race—the world has never before seen anything remotely approaching the monstrous military machine which McNamara commands. Wars, even small wars, kill men, and since the purpose of the Defense Department is to enable the United States to fight wars, killing is, in a sense, what McNamara's department is all about.

Perhaps this is what makes the huge, gloomy Pentagon, with its 26,000 people and its 17½ miles of corridor, such a depressing place. No one, it is said, has ever served in the Pentagon for any appreciable length of time without sooner or later experiencing an almost obsessive desire to be somewhere else. That desire has certainly been felt by Robert McNamara, who used to say that five years was the outside limit a Secretary of Defense could usefully serve. And even when McNamara was sworn in as Secretary on January 21, 1961, he was no stranger to the Pentagon.

A 1944 Pentagon telephone directory lists Lt. Col. R. S. McNamara, USAF, in Room 41053, a room on an airwell with a view of an ugly red brick wall a few feet away, which is currently occupied by Maj. Edward Davis, a 46-year-old Air Force Reserve officer. It takes only a couple of minutes to walk from Maj. Davis's office to
over the last five years," McNamara said thoughtfully. "Of course, we'd only at the time of the Bay of Pigs disaster.

"The exception" was his advice to President Kennedy. But you can't even make one mistake out of six-hundred and sixty-five. His decision to close some 665 U.S. military bases.

"Everybody was.quizzing McNamara last year on the current production rate of the UH-1H helicopter." Hebert was asking McNamara. "This filing cabinet McNamara is the Secretary of Defense is the head of the Pentagon. Members of Congress tend to regard him as the other boys in a class regarding the boy whose hand is always up when teacher asks a question. He's the one in the back row, who scribbles on a pad, in his tiny hand, like Lt. Col. R. S. McNamara, U.S.A.F. He was a specialist, and a brilliant one, in the unglamorous but essential art of 'statistical control.'"

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"Yes, sir." McNamara said. "I was an assistant professor, and newly married to Margaret Craig, a classmate at the University of California, when I joined the Air Force as a captain in 1943. He continued to scribble. McNamara would look up, pause, and stand for several seconds as McNamara's hand was up when teacher asked a question. He's the one in the back row, who scribbles on a pad, in his tiny hand, like Lt. Col. R. S. McNamara, U.S.A.F. He was a specialist, and a brilliant one, in the unglamorous but essential art of 'statistical control.'"

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of those present saw—or thought they saw—tears in McNamara's eyes. The episode was the more remarkable because his "honesty" had not been called in question—only his judgment.

This suddenly emotional McNamara has been seen in public only on very rare occasions—most recently at a press conference in March. Hanson Baldwin had written a long report for The New York Times which charged in effect that President Johnson's decision, taken on McNamara's advice, not to call up the National Guard or the reserves for the war in Vietnam, had been a mistake. A multi-homed Senate subcommittee report, which McNamara had refused to seal on security grounds, charged much the same thing. The best-trained men in four supposedly combat-ready divisions, both Baldwin and the Senate report alleged, had been sent to Vietnam, so that at least four divisions had become mere training divisions for draftees.

A long and very detailed defense of McNamara's policies was distributed when the press conference began. Thereafter, when a German reporter asked about the combat-readiness of U.S. forces in Europe, McNamara lashed out at him angrily. When an American correspondent persisted in asking questions about the "suppressed" Senate report, McNamara accused him of "throwing rocks" and, pointing a furious finger at him, ordered him out of the room. The reporters present were as amazed at the Secretary's outburst as he was at his own.

"Everybody hates to admit they're wrong," an admiring colleague of McNamara's said subsequently. "But Bob McNamara hates to be wrong—and he doesn't hardly is. I think in the TFX affair he may have suspected that maybe he had been a bit hasty in advising the General Dynamics instead of Boeing, and I think he thinks of the Senate report as evidence of the danger of not calling out the Guard or the reserves."

In McNamara's view of being wrong—or, to put it positively, his passion for being right—is the secret of his marked characteristics. As his rare outbursts reveal, McNamara is no automaton. Strong emotions boil beneath the coolly assured surface, and these emotions are aroused by any reflection on the rightness of his decisions.

At the same time, McNamara has a deep distrust of all emotion, his own included. He is capable of talking about emotion as much as an objective statistician might talk about sin, as the source of all evil. Here, for example, is McNamara on a favorite subject—what he calls "the rationalization of the defense structure":

"It is the difference between emotion and reason. Your emotional reaction may be entirely different from mine, but if we consider the same set of facts on the basis of reason, not emotion, we're not likely to be very far apart in our conclusions. For a long time there was too much emotion in defense planning, and not enough reason. Previously, the Joint Chiefs and the Secretary couldn't agree even on the basic force structure. Now there is clear agreement on most basic matters between all the Chiefs and myself."

These, then, are the most clearly marked McNamara characteristics—the distrust of emotion, the passion for being right, the amazing intelligence.

All three have strongly affected both the management of McNamara's Department and the conduct of the war in Vietnam.

McNamara has a profound faith in the power of the human intellect to "rationalize" (a favorite McNamara word) any problem, by examining it in the light of what he calls "reason" rather than emotion. If all the facts are examined unemotionally, and if these facts are "quantified" (another favorite McNamara word), carefully and correctly, then a rational means of dealing with the problem more or less automatically emerges.

In the McNamara lexicon, there is no room for instinct or a seat-of-the-pants "feel" when dealing with a problem. At one time McNamara relied heavily on a civilian intelligence expert with long experience in Southeast Asia to brief him on the Vietnamese war. The expert recalls being summoned regularly to McNamara's office, to find McNamara poring over charts showing areas occupied by the Viet Cong and government forces, and columns of figures on every phase of the war—how many "incidents" there had been in the previous week; numbers on both sides killed, wounded, and captured; estimates of infiltration from the North, and so on. The expert had confided himself to factual briefings on the progress of the war, until one day when McNamara looked up from his charts and his columns of figures, and remarked musingly: "You know, it's hard to make sense of this war.

"Mr. Secretary," said the expert, "facts and figures are useless. 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."

McNamara gave him a long, thoughtful, frowning incredulous stare. The expert was surprised to see his name mentioned to the Secretary's office again.

McNamara is a man who likes to have around him others who share his faith in "rationalization" and "quantification." The key men in the Pentagon are by no means carbon copies of McNamara. Nor are they, to borrow from Shakespeare, "slight unconsidered men..." Indeed, for the most part, they were, like McNamara himself, staff men or back-room boys in World War II. Who are the key men? The answers vary. But this reporter, after watching a number of Pentagon insiders, has found general agreement on the following list:

- Cyrus Vance, Director of Defense Research and Engineering. Vance and McNamara work very closely together, and Vance is especially useful to McNamara on Capitol Hill, where he is well-liked. Vance is a very able, and he is generally regarded as McNamara's heir apparent.
- Alain Enthoven, Assistant Secretary for Systems Analysis. Enthoven is a pleasant-mannered, rather reserved intellectual of 36, and he is the man red-faced general officers have chiefly in mind when they growl about "what fools and "complacent jocks."
- John McNaughton, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. McNaughton is a highly articulate lawyer and former newspaperman, who is McNamara's chief foreign-policy adviser within the Pentagon. McNamara listens to his advice on foreign political problems, ranging from de Gaulle to the horrible complexities of Vietnamese politics.
- Secretary of the Navy Paul Nitze and Secretary of the Air Force Harold Brown. Nitze used to have McNamara's job, and Brown used to have Enthoven's. They are accounted key men, not because they are service secretaries, but because they have worked with McNamara ever since he became Secretary and have his ear. The other service
secretary. Secretary of the Army Stanley Resor, a
newcomer, is on nobody's list of key men. Inter-
estingly, as a World War II infantryman, he is the
only top civilian in the Pentagon with first-hand
experience of combat on the ground, which is
where the war in Vietnam is being fought.

Gen. Earle Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint
Chiefs of Staff. Gen. Wheeler is a well-built man
with a quick mind, who made full colonel as an
Army staff officer in World War II. He works well
with McNamara, although he disagrees with him
on at least two important points. Wheeler, to-
gether with the other Chiefs, recommended months
ago the bombing of the oil depots near Haiphong
in North Vietnam. Wheeler also believes
that McNamara should give an unequivocal green
light to the development of an operational anti-
ballistic-missile system. But neither he nor the
other Chiefs is ready to lead an anti-McNamara
revolt on these or any other presently visible issues.

It is significant that, like Wheeler, three of
the four Chiefs of Staff have made their reputations
as staff officers rather than combat commanders
which reflects McNamara's preference for "think-
ers" over "gladiators." It is more significant that
Wheeler is the only man in uniform to appear on
most lists of the Pentagon's key men—and even
he does not appear on some lists.

This suggests one of the really basic differences
between McNamara's Pentagon and the Penta-
gon of the past. In the past, the Secretary of De-
fense has been rather like one of the early French
kings, surrounded by proud and powerful dukes
with private armies of their own, who acknowl-
edged a purely nominal allegiance—if any—to the
sovereign. The first Secretary of Defense, James
Forrestal, could not even get the Chiefs of the
three services to agree on their respective roles and
missions in case of war with Russia, and the
horrific frustrations of responsibility without real
power drove him to his death. At least two of his
successors left Suite 3E800 with their reputations
sadly tarnished.

In those days, a Chief of Staff had command
power, both as No. 1 officer in his service, and as a
member of the Joint Chiefs. Nowadays, as one of
the Chiefs recently remarked, "the military don't
command a damn thing anymore." As far as the
military men in the Pentagon are concerned, the
remark is substantially accurate. McNamara
listens to the advice of the Chiefs, and he sends his
orders to the "joint and specified commands" in
the field "through" the Chiefs. But they are his
orders—or the orders of the President, as Com-
mander-in-Chief.

In the past, moreover, the task of slicing up the
money pie was largely left to the Joint Chiefs, al-
though the President and his Secretary of De-
fense (or his Secretary of the Treasury, in the days
of George Magoffin Humphrey) decided how big
the whole pie would be. The result, as Gen. Maxwell
Taylor pointed out in his book, The Unseven-
Trumpet (which greatly influenced McNamara's
thinking), was a purely arbitrary division of the
money, on the principle of the animals dividing
the weapons in The Wind in the Willows: "One for
the rat, one for the mole, one for the badger." The
glamorous and politically powerful Air Force
usually got almost half the money, the Army less
than a quarter, and the Navy the rest.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff no longer have either
the command power or the money power they once
had, although they can, and sometimes do, appeal
any McNamara ruling to the President. To under-
stand one reason for this loss of authority by the
military, compare these two lists:

Dwight D. Eisenhower Harold K. Johnson
Carl (Tooey) Spaatz 	 John P. McConnell
Chester Nimitz David L. McDonald

The names on the left are those of the Chiefs of
Staff of the Army and the Air Force, and the Chief
of Naval Operations. (Continued on Page 94)
A sparkling welcome from Mrs. McNamara marked her return from Vietnam last July immediate after World War II. Those on the right are the names of the men who held the same titles today. Most people, at least those old enough to remember World War II, will recognize the names on the left. Only the very knowledgeable will be able to identify the names on the right.

The fact is that the day of the military giants, the men who made legendary names for themselves in the last world war, is over. The last of these giants—Gen. Curtis LeMay, who gave McNamara a lot of headaches—left the Pentagon as Capor Hill, which puts a price tag on the necessity, of course, and Dr. Enthoven makes no claim to perfection. "I think we'll have to average out at about fifty percent plus or minus," he says. "And I'd like to do better." Being wrong by a factor to measure these effects. So even given a considerable damage-limiting effort, it's extremely important to realize that a full nuclear exchange could destroy both sides. Thus it is important to assess the possibility of avoiding a full exchange in case nuclear war starts.
of 50 percent is a lot better than being wrong by a factor of 600 percent or 1,000 percent as some say.

Another part of Enson's job is to analyze "cost effectiveness," a fashionable phrase in McNamara's Pentagon. "Cost effectiveness" is, in fact, McNamara's Simple Idea No. 3. The idea is that dollar costs provide a useful yardstick with which to measure military effectiveness. Secretary of the Navy Nolte gives an example of how the system works:

"Suppose you look at analysis shows that for a given sum you can buy either three nuclear-powered guided-missile destroyers or four conventionally powered guided-missile destroyers. The nuclear-powered ships have certain advantages, notably in virtually unlimited range. Mightn't it be better to have four ships, instead of three? In the end, as McNamara says, you have to make a military judgment, but cost effectiveness at least makes it possible to arrive at that judgment rationally.

"Cost effectiveness" is not a way of measuring intelligence. As Nolte points out: "You don't escape the choice by saying, 'Let's spend more money and buy six nuclear-powered ships,' because you will have to ask yourself whether you wouldn't rather have six conventionally priced ships." Cost effectiveness, in short, is a yardstick, not a ceiling.

The first test of military planning is a way a new weapon is introduced. The new weapon has been tested, and tested hard, by the war in Vietnam. McNamara himself sums up the test this way:

"We moved one thousand troops ten thousand miles in about one hundred and twenty days, with all their supporting matériel, and those troops immediately began operating damnably effectively and with tremendous morale. I consider that quite an accomplishment." It is quite an accomplishment.

As one of his assistants secretaries has said: "If McNamara has not increased our conventional capability all along the line, we are going to get into Vietnam, because we could not. You could argue that we went into Vietnam because we could. McNamara himself sums up the point. All his graphs and figures showed that the plan was working--that Nolte is quite right. But McNamara's critics in Congress will not accept that. They argue that the war was going more slowly than he predicted, that you can not prove what is going on.

Last year, for instance, the critics contend, rationalizing a force structure. But, of course, it is different in the way men behave in combat. They can make a very real difference in the way men behave in combat. It is, of course, a difference which can not be "quantified." The fact is that in the nature of things, defies quantification. This suggests the second point that McNamara's Simple Idea No. 3, his critics score off McNamara--that he doesn't understand what is going on. For war is an emotional and irrational affair. McNamara has tried very hard to "quantify" the war in Vietnam. He has an absolute passion for collecting statistics about the war, and trying to prove his points. But as the intelligence expert warned him, "facts and figures are useful, but you can not prove a war with them."

His critics can cite chapter and verse to prove that McNamara has more than once misjudged the war. His most famous had been his statement in October, 1961, that the "major part of the U.S. military task" would be completed by 1965. And most U.S. troops withdrawn by then. This statement was based in part on his "quantification" of the war. A three-year plan for winding up the war had been drawn up under his direction, and when he made his statement, all his graphs and figures showed that the plan was statistically on schedule. Also, war has a way of defying schedules. McNamara can point to many statements in the past in which he was warned of a "long and hard" war. But his critics can point to other his statements, like his statement early last
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Robert McNamara
year that the newly arrived Marines would "probably not have to 'tangle with the Viet Cong," a forecast which proved almost as spectacularly wrong as the October, 1963, statement.

As he has about most things, McNamara has a theory about the war in Vietnam which he has stated repeatedly. It is that "the essence of our military effort must there be to show the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong that they can't win in the South.

Once this has been proved to the satisfaction of the Communist side, "we presume that they will move to a settlement, either through negotiation or other means."

Like all McNamara's theories, this one is apparently logical. If McNamara's "quantification" of the war is correct, in terms of the real balance of power and the comparative damage inflicted on both sides—and if Ho Chi Minh has been McNamara—the Communist side would have "moved to a settlement" months ago. But Ho Chi Minh is not McNamara, and the country's adversaries in Vietnam, from Ho Chi Minh down to the smallest Viet Cong, may be motivated by emotions (including simple hatred of the white man) quite impossible to quantify, and totally alien to McNamara's rational and emotion-disturbing mind. It may seem quite good enough to the Communist side that the "American imperialists and their stooges"—our side—"can't win in the South."

McNamara himself, during one of the bad months of the war some months ago, expressed uncharacteristic well-wishes to a visitor to his office: "I've been given all the resources I've asked to solve this problem in Vietnam, and I've failed. Perhaps it's time for someone else to try."

Such remarks gave rise to rumors, which were being heard as much as this is written, that McNamara will soon move out of Suite 3E880, and hand on the poisoned chalice of the Secretaryship to Vance. But most of those who know him well believe that McNamara is locked in by the war in Vietnam, and that he will not leave 3E880 until the war takes a decisive turn, for better or worse.

In any case, if McNamara has been wrong about the war, he has not been alone. He is, in fact, "in basic agreement with the Joint Chiefs of Staff."

"We all agree that the foundation of our military strategy lies in the South, that the effort in the North is secondary, I'd say that we agree ninety percent, and disagree ten percent."

The 10 percent area of disagreement concerns the pace of the war. The Chiefs want not only to bomb the Hanoi and Hanoi-Haiphong areas and bases also to accelerate the pace toward a "decisive crunch," while the President and McNamara are more cautious. But on the two key decisions—the decision to bomb in the North, and the decision to commit American combat forces in the South—the Chiefs were in unanimous agreement with McNamara.

So much for the second point his critics raise against McNamara. History will judge its validity. If McNamara's theory about Vietnam proves correct, and an honorable settlement is reached, McNamara will be triumphant vindicated. Otherwise, McNamara's sour joke about general will be cited in reverse—"War is too serious a matter to be left to civilians."

For male no mistake about it, the civilians McNamara is running the Vietnam war. "My predecessor, [John F.] Kennedy," says Rep. Mendell Rivers, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, "had a sense of having a single Chief of Staff, because he would have too much power. Now we have a single Chief of Staff—and by God, he's a civilian, of all things."

This is the third charge that his critics bring against McNamara—that he has concentrated too much power in 3E880. "He's designed an enormous engine, and he's only the man with the driver's license," says one old Pentagon hand. "I have to think what will happen when he goes, especially if a second-rater takes over."

"When people talk about centralization of power," McNamara said when questioned on this point, "they don't realize that my power is strictly limited. If you had a president in this office who was cutting back the force structure drastically, I would tell him that system, the five-year force-structure system, would blow him out."

He produced his 200-page force-structure report to Congress, and tipped through the pages till he came to the table on airlift. "The committee members would ask him," McNamara said, "'where's your table eleven, on airlift?—don't you have an airlift table for fiscal year 1973?'

If he tried to claim you can't project your structure that far ahead, he'd never get away with it."

Yet even some of his devoted admirers feel a trifle nervous about the concentration of power in McNamara's hands. One reason suggested by his idea that, as he put it to this reporter, "the basic guidelines of all administration are the same, whoever in the Catholic Church, the Ford Company, or the Defense Department."

Subordinates are not given to criticizing the president of the Ford Company, in public at least, and a priest who publicly differs with the Pope on basic church policy is severely disciplined. Both the Ford Company and the Church "speak with one voice," So, as pointed out at the beginning of this report, does the Defense Department.

The "monitoring" system introduced by McNamara, which requires that the Defense Department will continue to speak with one voice. When a reporter talks with a ranking Pentagon official, there is usually an obtrusive young man sitting in a corner taking notes. If not, the reporter can be sure that, on McNamara's orders, the substance of the conversation will be reported to the office of Public Affairs. Quite obviously, the monitoring system works as a gag. With that young man scribbling away, no normally ambitious officer or official is at all likely to criticize the Secretary or dissent from his policies.

The report, compiled up by Richard Fryklund of the Washington Star, one of the best of the defense reporters and an admirer of McNamara: "The people don't get to know about the rejected options, so they are never debated in public."

A decision, whether it concerns the movement in Vietnam or a crucial weapons system, may be body debated inside the Pentagon—McNamara insists on "exercising the options."

But the debate is secret, and once the decision is made, all impo-
ment, public and private, is expected to end forthwith. Some members of Con-
gress, moreover, accused McNamara of
using his power of censorship to sup-
press reports critical of his policies,
like the Senate subcommittee report on
army shortages. While at the same time
declassifying secret material when it
suits his purposes.

McNamara himself stoutly defends his
monitoring system and the other discipines he has imposed on his
department. He contends that without
such disciplines the department would
again become what it has undoubtedly
been at times in the past—a babel of
confusion and personnel vocios. He
cites Harry Rymie's Letters from Vinc-
city to prove that even the saintly
Pope John used a closed-circuit tele-
phone system to keep an eye on the
rebelous conservative cardinals during
the Ecumenical Council.

But a Secretary of Defense is not a
Pope, and there is one important
difference between the Defense Depart-
ment and the Ford Company or the
Church. The Defense Department is
part of the government of the United
States—in terms of both money and
power. It is part of the government of
the United States. If the theory
of political democracy is valid, the
ceremony, not any appointed official, is
the ultimate boss of the government;
and thus the relationship between the
secretary of defense and the people's
department is different in an essential
way from the relationship between the presi-
dent and his company, or the relationship
between the Pope and his
church. This is why it is dangerous
when "the people don't get to know
about the options."

Yet it must be said in fairness that
some of the theories the "outside critics"
have been debated thoroughly and publicly.
A case in point is McNamara's decision
not to order the B-70 bomber, which was
most totally degraded. There's not a single senior military or civilian
leader in the department who now be-
lieves that we should have ordered the
B-73," McNamara says. "I would have
reduced it to the 74 if we had had it, and approxi-
ately fifteen billion dollars would have been
just plain wasted.

Congress, the press and the public have been provided by McNamara
with the essential facts related to most
decisions involving the national security.
This is true, for example, of the great,
looming decision involved in Mc-
Namara's cryptic instructions to
Dr. Foner: "Number three—ABM, but
don't precommit me." Soon McN-
amara is going to have to make up his
mind whether or not to recommend to
the President and the Congress his
decision to order the super-ABM, which would
deal with the Soviet threat directly, at the present level of
the $15 billion. It involved about 130 million and 130 million Americans.
Given these enormous estimates, he told
this reporter, "we almost certainly cannot hang it

"They're based on AEC computa-
tions involving blast and radiation," he
explained. The estimates are mea-
surable, in terms of experience in Hiro-
shima and Nagasaki and controlled
tests, tattered animals, and so on. But

paragraph came back with one deep-
significant correction. The word "could"
was changed to "would," in Mc-
Namara's most habit-forming, and a
little cross was made in the margin to
make sure that the change was noted.

What McNamara calls a "consider-
able damage-limiting effort" might cost
as much as $30 billion, over a period of
seven years. For that kind of money, a fully operational ABM weapons sys-
tem could be bought. The ABM is a
missile which can knock down a missile. It is the weapon Nastia Khrushchev
had in mind when he boasted that the
Soviet could "hit a fly in the sky." The
states of the missile-makers art, both in
the Soviet Union and the United States,
within six to nine months, by current
estimates, the research, he said, does so on a basis of
"reason," which is the most favored of all his
words. "There is nothing more habit-forming than rea-
onse," he said. McNamara, or "Reason" helps to
shield him from the terrible pressure to try
and answer the unacceptable.

There is no sure way to "quantify"
war, whether a small war like the war in Vietnam or the kind of war which
McNamara "quantifies" in terms of
135 million dead Americans. But at
least when McNamara tries to answer the
unanswerable, he does so on a basis
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The final decision is up to the Presi-
dent and the Congress, of course, but
the President and the Congress will no doubt in the end take McNamara's
advice. Obviously, this decision, which
confounds McNamara, like many others
which have confronted him in the past, is not really comparable to a decision
by the Ford Motor Company on a new
model, for example—or even to a deci-
sion by the Catholic Church on, say,
mixed marriages.

McNamara, in fact, has to make up his
mind how to answer a question which
is inherently unsolvable, be-
cause there are too many unknowns
involves, and yet a question which, if
wrongly answered, could lead to
national disaster.

Yet McNamara will make his deci-
sion, when he must, as he has made similar decisions in the past. This
is why, to the three marked McNamara
caracters as unassumingly listed in
this article, a fourth must be added—simple
reason. To make the decisions McNamara is called upon to make requires
considerations of the highest order and
of a very special sort. "Making decisions is what the Secretary of Defense is paid for,"
Gen. Maxwell Taylor has remarked, "and I must say, this Secretary earns his pay."

He does indeed. The courage and conscious of which McNamara
has so often displayed, in making the hide-
ously difficult decisions with which he
has been faced, are enough vastly to
outweigh the "case against McNa-
mara," in fact, after watching McNa-
amara in action for more than five
years, the report reflects that there is
a close connection between McNamara's
public reputation as inhuman—"an
IBM machine with legs"—and the ter-
fible nature of the decisions he is called
upon to make.

Any man under very great pressure
needs a release or a support—a arrow of
the ridiculous, perhaps, or a religious
faith. To McNamara, his belief "quantifications," the columns of
figures and the reams of facts, which he
so determinedly examines on the
basis of reason, not emotion," are both
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