

Giap Could Cause Gasps If He'd Just Get Mad Too

Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara was rebuked on Capitol Hill yesterday for censoring from a congressional hearing transcript Vietnam secrets he later announced at a news conference.

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Some denizens of the Pentagon wish that Hanoi's Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap would get mad some day just like Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara.

They figure that if he did, he might hold a desk-thumping news conference and toss out facts that would keep newsmen and intelligence officers happy.

He might discuss the "reaction time" in which Hanoi could rush extra battalions down the Ho Chi Minh Trail, or the supply problems in feeding the Vietcong 7.62-mm. ammunition for their Chinese weapons, and so forth.

He might even admit that he was leaking lots of classified information so that nobody would get the wrong idea that Hanoi was militarily overextended.

This would create a matching dismay and wonderment in Hanoi's Pentagon. Aside from gasping each time Giap dropped some hitherto secret pearl of intelligence, his minions would have to judge wheth-

er he was just scattering booby-trapped figures to mislead the unwary in Washington.

Pentagon hands have never really become accustomed to those sudden salvos of intelligence that get fired at geopolitical targets. It still makes them blanch at first.

There was the time in 1963 when McNamara mustered huge photos and charts to support his persuasive rhetoric, and showed just how U.S. surveillance had assured that there were no big missiles left on Cuba. People in the surveillance business gulped hard and assured each other that the boss had not given anything away.

Then there was President Johnson's assertion during the 1964 campaign that the United States could knock down the satellites that anybody else could put in space.

Today, Congress is less concerned about second-guessing McNamara's facts than with catching up to them.