

Raid Halt Is Urged By Bundy

Troop Cutback To 100,000 By '71 Proposed

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McGeorge Bundy, one of the original architects of U.S. policy in the Vietnamese war, called yesterday for an unconditional bombing halt and a drastic cutback of American forces, starting in 1969.

The former White House aide proposed cutting the more than half-million U.S. troops now in South Vietnam by 100,000 to 150,000 men at "the end of 1969." Bundy advocated a similar reduction for 1970, ending by 1971 with about "a hundred thousand troops" and "a volunteer war, if we have a war at all."

The "right goal now is to lift the burden of this war as we now know it," said Bundy, who is currently president of the Ford Foundation.

Possible Impact

"This war cannot continue at its present level of cost and sacrifice," said Bundy, because "its penalties upon us all are much too great." He cited annual spending of "\$30 billion," "an annual rate of sacrifice of more than 10,000 American lives" and "the increasing bitterness and polarization of our people."

Bundy's sweeping indictment of present policy in the war could have unusual impact because he was from 1961 to 1965 the White House special adviser on national security affairs under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. Since leaving the White House he often has served as a major consultant to President Johnson.

While on a mission in South

Vietnam in February, 1965, Bundy personally joined in urging President Johnson to initiate the bombing of North Vietnam.

Reverses Position

For years he was one of the most articulate defenders of U.S. policy in Vietnam. His brother, William P. Bundy, continues to be such an advocate as Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. While McGeorge Bundy's new statement is a major public reversal of position, he was among the private advisers who participated in President Johnson's decision last March 31 to reject military requests for more troops and to order a partial halt in the bombing of North Vietnam.

Bundy spoke yesterday at DePauw University in Greencastle, Ind., in a memorial symposium honoring the late John T. McNaughton, Secretary of the Navy-designate killed in an air crash in 1967 with his wife and their youngest child. McNaughton was a

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major behind-the-scenes advocate for bombing pauses.

While urging a sweeping cutback in the war, Bundy said he remained convinced that "the basic decision of 1965, to stand and fight in South Vietnam, was right."

Believes It Validated

But he now describes that as a decision for "the avoidance of defeat in Southeast Asia" which he said he believes has been "validated by events in the area." Now, he maintained, a "reduced level of effort is more than enough still to sustain and execute the basic purpose of our forces in Vietnam—the purpose of preventing defeat."

Bundy cast his recommendations in terms of the needs facing the next Administration in 1969, because, he said, "as a private citizen, I have no desire to play the role of second-guesser on the present efforts of the President and his negotiators in Paris" at the peace talks there.

While it is necessary to hope for progress in Paris by January, said Bundy, "it is prudent" to face the "probability

that in its main outlines this problem will still be with us in 1969."

Exercise in Futility

Escalating the war, said Bundy, cannot produce a military victory "by any level of U.S. military force which is acceptable or desirable" for U.S. interests or world peace, either by nuclear or conventional weapons. Three years of war, he said, "have demonstrated plainly that American forces can prevent defeat . . . But they have also shown us that they cannot produce victory."

In 1969, he said, without amplification, "we can do more than we have done so far to test the possibilities of peace by agreement." But, he added, "It is not clear at all that Hanoi will accept any settlement that will be remotely acceptable to the people of this country."

Bundy then took up what he called the principal "dovish" proposal in the country—the minority plank supported at the Democratic convention in Chicago by the forces of Sen. Eugene J. McCarthy.

On its first recommendation, an unconditional bombing halt, Bundy said, "I agree with this recommendation."

Can Minimize Risk

The risk of halting the bombing, said Bundy, "can be minimized by alternative means of defense and if necessary by alternative deployments." The diplomatic advantages of a halt, he said, "are obvious: It would shift the burden of response from Washington to Hanoi . . ."

Stopping the bombing will not bring peace, however, said Bundy, but "will simply remove one obstacle to further negotiations."

Bundy said he would also agree with the next proposal of that plank, to negotiate a mutual withdrawal of all U.S. and North Vietnamese forces from South Vietnam. But it is questionable if that can be negotiated, he said, because it would be "a good bargain for us and for South Vietnam . . ."

Next, said Bundy, the call for "a political reconciliation with the National Liberation Front" in a "broadly representative government" for South Vietnam is acceptable to him, but he fears that is unattainable, too. Bundy expressed a similar view about

"a genuine cease-fire.

Bets 'No' For 1969

The United States said Bundy, in negotiations, "should be ready for a compromise well short of victory in which the eventual outcome would remain to be settled by the people of South Vietnam." But he said he would "bet" against getting such a compromise "at least for 1969."

Therefore, he said, the next Administration "must decide that it will steadily, systematically and substantially reduce the number of American casualties, the number of Americans in Vietnam, and the dollar cost of the war."

"It must make this decision," he said, "without bargaining or negotiation and establish it as a fact of American policy . . ."

The "honest answer" to what happens in Saigon "as we cut down," he said, "is that no one knows."

He said that "no one who means to keep at least a hundred thousand troops in place for years (always assuming there is no decent settlement) can be accused of precipitate or faithless withdrawal."