

A
file subj.
date sub-cat.
10/69

4515

EPF B

10/15/69

LAIRD SEES TROOP REPLACEMENT 'WITHIN REASONABLE TIME' (700)

WASHINGTON, -- THERE IS "NO RPT NO QUESTION" THAT THE CURRENT VIETNAMIZATION PROGRAM CAN LEAD TO THE REPLACEMENT OF ALL AMERICAN COMBAT TROOPS IN THE WAR ZONE WITHIN A REASONABLE TIME, SECRETARY OF DEFENSE MELVIN R. LAIRD SAYS.

SPEAKING IN A PRE-TAPED INTERVIEW THAT WAS TELEVISED AT THE CLOSE OF THE DAY OF MORATORIUM ON THE VIETNAM WAR, MR. LAIRD ALSO EXPRESSED HIS BELIEF IN LEGAL AND LAWFUL DISSENT AND ACKNOWLEDGED THE "FRUSTRATION IN THIS COUNTRY OVER THE LENGTH OF THE WAR."

HOWEVER, HE MAINTAINED THAT "IT WOULD BE A GRAVE ERROR TO ANNOUNCE DATES AS TO FUTURE REDUCTIONS IN FORCES OR ANYTHING ELSE," BECAUSE SUCH STATEMENTS COULD LEAD TO DISSIPATING "ANY OPPORTUNITY TO NEGOTIATE A SETTLEMENT."

"AND I BELIEVE THAT YOU CANNOT RPT NOT JUST THROW AWAY THE OPPORTUNITY FOR NEGOTIATIONS IN THIS YEAR 1969," HE DECLARED. "WE WANT TO MOVE INTO THE ERA OF NEGOTIATIONS, WE DON'T RPT NOT WANT TO MOVE AWAY FROM AN ERA OF NEGOTIATIONS."

THE SECRETARY OFFERED HIS OBSERVATIONS IN THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF PROGRAMS ENTITLED "THE PRESIDENT'S MEN," AIRED NATIONALLY OVER THE NATIONAL EDUCATION TELEVISION NETWORK WEDNESDAY NIGHT -- OCTOBER 15, EXCEPT IN NEW YORK, WASHINGTON AND PHILADELPHIA, WHERE IT WILL BE SHOWN OCTOBER 16.

HISTORY OF THE VIETNAM WAR ON MICROFILM