

THE McNAMARA BOOK AND LEGACY: Retrofit for IN RETROSPECT

A one-day conference at the Army and Navy Club, Washington DC
(November 9th, 1995 at

IN RETROSPECT(Times Books, 1995) is Robert S. McNamara's apology for prosecuting the Vietnam war and a confession of error--which he attributes to both himself and to our political/military establishments. The book generated controversy that must have surprised even the author. Indeed, letters-to-the-editor, cartoons, opinion pieces, and editorials erupted with heated discussions of the issues of "guilt" and "retrospection" raised by the book during the "twentieth anniversary" of our defeat in Vietnam. (Only a small fraction were favorable to the author.)

The Vietnam Veterans Institute(VVI) believes that our heritage needs constant analysis and evaluation. The VVI Journal has examined such issues as Discrimination against Veterans and the Neil Sheehan book, A Bright Shining Lie. We have read McNamara's In Retrospect and find the book deficient--even in its declared areas of "clarification." This day-long conference will be taped and major media will be invited; an anthology will be created from the papers and comments. With these video and print records, we will produce a comprehensive retrospective of Robert McNamara's activity in, and account for, the Vietnam War--thereby providing a retrofit for In Retrospect.

Registration is \$50.00. All must register.

This conference is partially underwritten by the American Legion, but is still seeking financial support from veterans groups and foundations.

What is the Vietnam Veterans Institute?

Since the Vietnam War ended, its veterans have struggled to come to grips with their experience, and society in turn has struggled to come to terms with them and with its involvement in the war. These struggles have been compounded by an enormous amount of misunderstanding about the war, those who fought it, and the reaction to it.

The VVI mission is to develop and foster legislative, public policy, and educational initiatives that positively address issues of importance to Vietnam veterans and veterans generally. VVI also promotes legislative initiatives on issues in support of our active duty armed forces and, domestically, the values upon which our nation was founded.

Founded in 1981, the Vietnam Veterans Institute is an incorporated, tax exempt, not-for-profit organization governed by the active Board of Directors and Trustees. It is an independent Education, Research, and Public Policy Institution which develops

symposia in conjunction with universities and other institutions. It publishes the Journal of the Vietnam Veterans Institute. In the recent past, the journal has published issues devoted to the following topics: Discrimination against Vietnam Veterans; Neil Sheehan's epic, A Bright Shining Lie; Vietnam in Academe.

VVI organizational contact:
The Vietnam Veterans Institute

Journal matters:

Dr. Peter C. Rollins (See contact data, above.)

I. MORNING SESSIONS

"Planning, Preparing
B. Learning Sector (IBBS)"

7:30-9:30 Registration and Breakfast

8:00 Welcome to the VVI Conference

"Welcome to the VVI"
✓ J. Eldon Yates, Chairman, Vietnam Veterans Institute
✓ Dr. Peter C. Rollins, Curriculum Chairman, VVI
Dr. Adrian Cronauer, Vice President, VVI

8:20 - 9:20 The McNamara Book As Analysis

Summers | Chair: Dr. Adrian Cronauer, VVI *A study of Vietnamization*
Dr. Joe Dunn (Converse College)
"In Retrospect's Context: McNamara, Military Strategy,
and the Literature"
Comments: Dr. Joe Guilmartin (Ohio St. Univ)

9:35-11:15 The Military Perspective: Could We Have Won?

Chair: Dr. James Reckner (Texas Tech Vietnam Study Center)
Hon. William Colby, "What the McNamara Book Doesn't Cover."
Dr. Stephen Young, "Westmoreland's Plan/McNamara's Ignorance"
Comments: W.C. Westmoreland, Admiral E. Zumwalt,
John Singlaub, Charles Krohn, Douglas Pike,
Admiral U.S. Grant Sharp

Picken & Hedges 1995 - Particulars

George Decker - "Any good soldier can become a general"
John Singlaub - Holy Cow! [sic] -]

11:20 - 12:20 In Retrospect, Who Needs to Retrofit?

Chair: J. Eldon Yates, VVI

Senator Robert Dole, "Veterans Should be Proud...." (Invited)

Dr. John Wheeler, "McNamara the Man: Contributing to 'The Wall?'"

Tom Pauken, "Neither Americans nor Veterans Should Apologize"

Col. Bob Rheault, "We Should Forgive Ourselves--and Each Other"

Comments: J. Eldon Yates, VVI;

William Deitweiler, Past Commander,

American Legion

II. LUNCHEON SESSION

12:30-1:50 Luncheon

Chair: Dr. Peter Rollins, VVI (Oklahoma St. Univ.)

Gen Vinh Loc, Vietnam War Aftermath Study Project

"Briefing McNamara One More Time..."

Tom Lyons, "We Kept The Faith..."

The Bolanos Brothers, (Rick, Louis, Ben, William)

"Our Current Lawsuit v. Robert S. McNamara"

III. AFTERNOON SESSIONS

2:00-3:00 McNamara as Political Analyst and Military Planner

Chair: Captain Ron Ford, U.S. Army

Sedgwick Tourison, "The SOG Groups; A McNamara Deception?"

Herbert Y. Schandler, "Was McNamara A Military Planner?"

Comments: Daniel Ellsberg and Douglas Pike

3:15-4:15 The RVN View: Our Fight for Freedom Was Shortchanged!

Chair: Dr. Nguyen Manh Hung (George Mason Univ.)

Honorable Bui Diem, Ambassador to US, 1966-72

Honorable Stephen Lyne (Boston Univ.)

Prof. Nguyen Ngoc Bich (George Mason Univ.)

Comments: George MacArthur

Mark Leepson

4:30-6:00 The Future: The McNamara Debate and Legacy

Chair: Dr. James Stever (Univ. of Cincinnati)

Dr. DeVallon Bolles, "A New World Order and a New Politics"

Dr. Stephen Cimbala, "McNamara and the American Way of War"

Dr. Ed Haley, "McNamara: America's Innocent Abroad?"

Comments: Dr. Frederick Brown (Johns Hopkins Univ.)

6:30ff Reception TBA: The Discussions Continue.

NOTES: