

APR 12 1996

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8 April '96

Admiral Elmo K. Zumwalt USN (ret)
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Tat

Dear Admiral Zumwalt:

I will be attending the Vietnam Center Symposium at the at Texas Tech University on 17 April. I feel that now at thirty- one years after the fall of Saigon it is time to discuss the Vietnam War's place in history, rather than continuing to regurgitate it as a divisive political issue. Hopefully the discussion about MacNamara's book at the Conference last fall in Washington has put a stake through the heart of this approach!

The controversy raised over McNamara's book resulted in an article in Time Magazine which, taking the long range historical view, stated that "the war was not even about Vietnam, it was a part of the protracted battle of the Cold War fought to block communist expansion in Asia !" In fact it was only one of the battles fought to contain communism not only in Asia but also in Europe the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. I hope that in the future we will be able to address the Vietnam War as history rather than a "litmus test" of the participants current political views.

In so far as the results of the war were concerned an Australian visiting scholar at the Hoover Institute noted in a perceptive article in the Wall Street Journal that the conventionally accepted view that the Vietnam War ended in an unmitigated defeat for the US and its allies was wrong! While Vietnam was lost it bought time for the nations of SEA to build up their economies to resist communism. However this view, only eight years after the fall of Saigon was much too soon after the personal bitterness and rancor to gain acceptance.

Hopefully now after thirty-one years the time has finally come to treat the Vietnamese War dispassionately as history! This symposium I feel gives us a chance to do so.

Looking forward to discussing this approach with you during the symposium.

Sincerely ,

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