

Defense Secretary McNamara Vows to Increase War Production

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Description

Just hours after Ambassador Arthur Goldberg proposes at the United Nations that the U.S. would halt the bombings of North Vietnam under certain conditions for de-escalation in the Vietnam War, Defense Secretary Robert McNamara vows to increase production of military tactical aircraft.

Keywords

Defense Secretary, Robert McNamara, Vietnam, Vietnam War, Escalation, Department of Defense, DOD, Pentagon, Military, War Production, Aircraft, Jets, Warplanes, Combat, Ammunition, United Nations, UN, Ambassador, Arthur Goldberg, State Department, South Vietnam, South Vietnamese, North Vietnam, North Vietnamese, Dogfight, MiG, Raid

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Transcript

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DEAN BRELIS, anchoring:

If Hanoi, Peking, and the Russians didn't believe that the United States truly wanted peace in Vietnam, the Defense Department didn't think we were going to get it. Within hours of the Goldberg speech at the U.N., Secretary of Defense McNamara made an ill-timed statement that the United States was stepping up its war production.

ROBERT McNAMARA (U.S. Secretary of Defense): Because of the long lead-times involved in aircraft production, I have come to the conclusion that it is now wise to place on order aircraft that may be required to support combat operations beyond June 30, 1967. On July 11, when I announced the cutback, approximately one billion dollars in the planned level of air ammunitions production, I also stated that we were examining the production schedules for fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters, and other major items of combat equipment. We've now completed a review of the tactical air requirements. In the case of air munitions, we found it prudent to decrease production from the previously planned levels. Now we find it wise to increase the production of tactical aircraft for fiscal year 1968 by approximately 280 aircraft. The cost of the additional aircraft will amount to about 700 million dollars. The schedules for fiscal years 1966, '67, and '68 have been developed to ensure that new deliveries of aircraft will exceed potential losses.

Unidentified Man: Secretary McNamara, Ambassador Goldberg proposed in the U.N. today that the U.S. would halt the bombings of North Vietnam under certain conditions of de-escalation of the war. Now, does this mean that you are offering the big stick to the State Department's care?

McNAMARA: No, certainly not. We support, very emphatically, the proposal made by Ambassador Goldberg today. The aircraft production increases that we are proposing would be required worthy operations in South Vietnam to continue beyond June 30, 1967, and therefore are in no way to detract

from the importance of the very significant offer which he made to the U.N. today.

BRELIS: There was more than one indication that those 280 additional warplanes will be needed. The air war is escalating. The biggest day of aerial combat was fought between American and North Vietnamese jets some 50 miles north of Hanoi. In a single day, the communists sent out a record of nineteen fighters. After eight dog fights, the North Vietnamese lost two MiG-17s. Three others were damaged, one a late model MiG-21. But communist gunners on the ground shot down six more American planes, bringing to 385 the number lost in the North. Still, there was evidence that the American raid had flooded the enemy's capacity for infiltration.