

Medal of Freedom Award to  
Secretary McNamara  
Wednesday, February 28, 1968  
1:00pm.  
Words: 521      /Sparks

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT

Thomas Jefferson said:

"When a man assumes a public trust, he  
should consider himself as public property."

The man we honor today has lived that philosophy for more than  
seven years.

The General Services Administration does not list him among  
our official assets. But he may be the most valuable single piece  
of "public property" on earth.

I will not say that Bob McNamara has accomplished the impossible.  
We want him to understand how we feel about him -- and that word is  
not in his dictionary. But we all know that he has done what many  
believed to be the impossible -- until we saw him do it.

Those of us who served in Government during the Second World  
War came out of that conflict proud of our Armed Forces -- but  
deeply concerned for their future.

President Truman said:

"One of the strongest convictions which I brought to  
the office of the President was that the antiquated defense  
setup of the United States had to be reorganized quickly  
as a step toward insuring our future safety and preserving  
world peace. From the beginning of my administration I  
began to push hard for unification of the military establishment  
into a single department...."

Medal of Freedom Award to Secretary McNamara

-2-

I was in the Congress in those days. I heard the testimony. The opposition came from all sides. There were all points of view. But most of the arguments came down to one common denominator: it can't be done. It's impossible.

No one heard that refrain more often than the man who is about to become our new Secretary of Defense. Clark Clifford was here in the White House helping President Truman. He has told me this:

"I know so clearly what President Truman had in mind. And through the year's he kept hoping that we would reach that point. Under McNamara, we finally did."

So Bob McNamara has really served three Presidents: two as a member of the Cabinet, and -- after 20 years -- as the man who made our Defense Department what Harry Truman wanted it to be.

Now we are going to give Clark Clifford a chance to see what he can do with the Department he helped create -- after Bob McNamara has eliminated all the "impossibles".

I have no doubts about the outcome.

Nor do I have any doubts about what is going to happen at the World Bank.

Almost every day, I read some report saying that the developing nations are hopelessly far behind. The gap between the "haves and the have-nots" is so wide that they can never catch up.

Medal of Freedom Award to Secretary McNamara

-3-

It's impossible.

I am not a prophet and do not generally make predictions. But I want to make one now.

I predict that twenty years from today, some other President will stand here and say: "the real revolution in the developing nations began with the appointment of Robert S. McNamara to the World Bank in 1968."

For seven years, Bob McNamara has guided our Defense Establishment. He has helped make us the strongest military power in history.

Now he will try to make that Establishment unnecessary.

We are asking him to attack the root-causes of war itself -- poverty, disease, ignorance, and hopelessness.

Those are the only real enemies -- ancient enemies of the human race, who have never been defeated. But our generation has the power, and the resources, to eliminate them from the face of the earth.

All we need is the will, the intelligence, and the organization.

We are giving the world the very best we have to offer to win that war.

We are giving them Bob McNamara.

# # #

Thomas Jefferson said:

SINGLE-SPACE  
INDENT { "When a man assumes a public trust, he should  
consider himself as public property."

The man we honor today has lived that philosophy for more than seven years.

The General Services Administration does not list him among our official assets, ~~But~~ he may be the most valuable single piece of "public property" on earth.

I will not say that Bob McNamara has accomplished the impossible. We want him to understand how we feel about him-- and that word is not in his dictionary. But we all know that he has done what many believed to be the impossible-- until we saw him do it.

Those of us who served in Government during the Second World War came out of that conflict proud of our Armed Forces--but deeply concerned for their future. <sup>9</sup> President Truman ~~was~~ said:

Single-Space { "One of the strongest convictions which I brought to the office of the President was that the antiquated defense setup of the United States had to be reorganized quickly as a <sup>STEP</sup> ~~step~~ toward insuring our future safety and preserving world peace. From the beginning of my administration I began to push hard for unification of the military establishment into a single department..."

2.

I was in the Congress in those days, ~~and~~ I heard the testimony. The opposition came from all sides. There were all ~~in~~ points of view. But most of ~~these~~ <sup>the</sup> arguments came down to one common denominator: it can't be done. It's <sup>im</sup>possible.

No one heard that refrain more often than the man who is about to become our new Secretary of Defense. Clark Clifford was here in the White House helping President Truman. He has told me this;

*single-sense* { "I know <sup>so</sup> ~~as~~ clearly what President Truman had in mind. And through the years he kept hoping that we would reach that point. Under McNamara, we finally did."

So Bob McNamara has really served three Presidents: two as a <sup>member</sup> ~~man~~ of the Cabinet, and-- after 20 years-- as the man who made our Defense Department what Harry Truman wanted it to be.

Now we are going to give Clark Clifford a chance to see what he can do with the Department he ~~helped conceive--~~ <sup>CREATE</sup> after Bob McNamara has eliminated all the "impossibles".

I have no doubts about the outcome.

Nor do I have any doubts about what is going to happen at the World Bank.

Almost every day, I read some report <sup>SAYING</sup> ~~which says~~ that the developing nations are hopelessly far behind. The gap between the "haves and the have-nots" is so wide that ~~they~~ can never catch up.

3.

It's impossible.

I am not a prpphet and do not generally make predictions. But I want to make one now. ¶ I predict that twenty years from today, some other President will stand here and say: "the real revolution in the developing nations began with the appointment of Robert S. McNamara to the World Bank in 1968."

For seven years, Bob McNamara has guided our Defense Establishment. He has helped make us the strongest military power in history.

Now he will try to make that Establishment unnecessary.

We are asking him to attack the root-~~f~~ causes of war itself-- poverty, disease, ignorance, and hopelessness.

Those are the only real enemies-- ~~the~~ ancient enemies of the human race, who have never been defeated. to eliminate them from the face of the earth. But our generation has the power, and the resources, ¶ All we need is the will, the intelligence, and the organization. ¶

We are giving the world the very best we have to offer. to win that war. We are giving them Bob McNamara. ¶

Medal of Freedom Award to  
Secretary McNamara  
Wednesday, February 28, 1968 - 1:00 p.m.  
Words: /Sparks

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT

Medal of Freedom Award to Secretary McNamara

- 2 -



OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

---

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT AT THE  
CEREMONY HONORING SECRETARY  
MC NAMARA AT THE PENTAGON

(12:26 P.M. EST)

Secretary Mc Namara, Secretary Nitze, General Wheeler, Members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Armed Services, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I don't have a speech to make here today. I just thought that I would come over and join with all of you and with all of Bob McNamara's fellow workers in saying goodbye to him.

I have heard this place here at the Pentagon referred to as the "Puzzle Palace." Bob McNamara may be the only man who ever found the solution to the puzzle and he is taking it with him. But whatever it is called, it is one of the most important buildings on this earth.

I am sorry that this is so, but until men and nations are content to leave one another in peace it will be so.

That makes you people very important people. A great deal depends on the quality of your performance, on your character, on your intelligence, on your patriotism, on your pride in your own service and on your ability to rise above narrow service rivalries.

Bob McNamara's career is just about the textbook example of the modern public servant. But I suspect there are many others out there before me now in uniform and in civilian clothes, high ranking and not so high ranking, who also qualify as modern public servants.

I want to say to each of you that your country is grateful to you for the quality of the work that you do on behalf of all of us, as your country is grateful to this good man, Bob McNamara, to whom we have come here today to say goodbye and farewell.

END

(AT 12:29 P.M. EST)

. REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT

I did not come here to make a speech. You do not need your Commander-in-Chief to describe the virtues of the man you are gathered here to honor.

You have worked with Bob McNamara. You know the intelligence, the dedication, and the unflagging energy he has brought -- for seven long years -- to his monumental task.

Only we who have served with him in the heart of our national defense can know the full extent of our debt to this great man.

When the time comes for the history of our troubled times to be recorded, the name of Robert S. McNamara will loom large among those who carried our Nation -- and the world -- safely

through the long shadows.

He has set a standard and a model for all who come after him. No leader in the Pentagon will ever confront a hard problem or a trying challenge without asking himself, "How would Bob McNamara have done it?"

I know that every man and woman here today will cherish the memory of his leadership. You have earned the right to say, for all time, that I served with Robert Strange McNamara. I can think of no prouder boast nor greater privilege.

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

---

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT AT THE  
CEREMONY HONORING SECRETARY  
MC NAMARA AT THE PENTAGON

(12:26 P.M. EST)

Secretary Mc Namara, Secretary Nitze, General Wheeler, Members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Armed Services, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I don't have a speech to make here today. I just thought that I would come over and join with all of you and with all of Bob McNamara's fellow workers in saying goodbye to him.

I have heard this place here at the Pentagon referred to as the "Puzzle Palace." Bob McNamara may be the only man who ever found the solution to the puzzle and he is taking it with him. But whatever it is called, it is one of the most important buildings on this earth.

I am sorry that this is so, but until men and nations are content to leave one another in peace it will be so.

That makes you people very important people. A great deal depends on the quality of your performance, on your character, on your intelligence, on your patriotism, on your pride in your own service and on your ability to rise above narrow service rivalries.

Bob McNamara's career is just about the textbook example of the modern public servant. But I suspect there are many others out there before me now in uniform and in civilian clothes, high ranking and not so high ranking, who also qualify as modern public servants.

I want to say to each of you that your country is grateful to you for the quality of the work that you do on behalf of all of us, as your country is grateful to this good man, Bob McNamara, to whom we have come here today to say goodbye and farewell.

END

(AT 12:29 P.M. EST)

FEBRUARY 27, 1968

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

---

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT AT  
THE CEREMONY AWARDING THE  
MEDAL OF FREEDOM TO SECRETARY  
ROBERT S. MC NAMARA  
THE EAST ROOM

(AT 1:20 P.M. EST)

Secretary and Mrs. McNamara and family, Members of the Cabinet, Members of Congress, Chief Justice, Distinguished Guests:

Thomas Jefferson said:

"When a man assumes a public trust, he should consider himself public property."

The man we honor here today has lived that philosophy for more than seven long years.

The General Services Administration does not list him among our official assets, but he is one of America's most valuable public properties.

Bob McNamara may not have accomplished the impossible. But he has achieved the unlikely: managing and directing the huge complexity that is our defense establishment of the United States of America.

Those of us who served in Government during the Second World War came out of that conflict very proud of our Armed Forces -- but all of us were deeply concerned for our future.

President Truman, that great leader of our country, at that time said:

"One of the strongest convictions which I brought to the office of the Presidency was that the antiquated defense setup of the United States had to be reorganized quickly as a step toward insuring our future safety and preserving world peace. From the beginning of my administration I began to push hard for unification of the military establishment into a single department. . ."

As a Congressman I spent hours and days listening to the testimony for and against unification. Most of the arguments came down to one common denominator: it just can't be done. It is impossible.

No one heard that refrain more often than the man who is about to become our new Secretary of Defense. Clark Clifford was here in the White House trying to help President Truman. He has told me this:

MORE

"I know so clearly what President Truman had in mind all during that time. And all through the years he kept hoping that we could and we would some day reach that point. Under Bob McNamara we finally did."

So, Bob McNamara has really served faithfully three Presidents: as a member of the Cabinet under President Kennedy and myself, and -- after 20 years -- as the man who made our Defense Department what Harry Truman wanted it to be.

Now, another distinguished American assumes the leadership of the establishment that he helped to create -- and that Bob McNamara helped to perfect.

The task, I think, and I think Bob McNamara thinks, could not have passed to abler and wiser hands.

In Bob McNamara, the World Bank is gaining an executive of vision and a thinker who is also preeminently -- with apologies to Mrs. Johnson -- a doer.

Daily we read the reports that the developing nations are hopelessly far behind. The gap between the "haves and the have-nots" is said to be so wide and so growing that it is a great threat to world peace and that it will never be narrowed.

I do not generally make predictions on such matters and certainly my record does not compare with certain noted columnists, but I will make a prediction here in the East Room this morning.

I predict that 20 years from now another President will stand here and say: "a revolution of achievement in the developing nations began with the appointment of Robert S. McNamara to the World Bank in 1968."

For many long years Bob McNamara has guided our defense establishment. He has helped to give America the strongest, most efficient military power in history.

Now he is going to try, try to build the kind of world that alone can justify that strength.

We are asking him to attack the root causes of violence and turmoil -- poverty, disease, ignorance, and hopelessness.

Those are the ancient enemies of the human race, who have never been defeated before. But our generation has the strength and the power and the resources, I hope, to eliminate them from the face of the earth.

What now is needed is intelligence -- and organization and the will.

In this intensely loyal, brilliant and good man, America is giving to the world -- and if I may be personal -- I am giving the world the very best that we have to win the most important war of all.

MORE



America is grateful for what he has done -- and I speak for all of America this morning -- and more important, for what he is about to do.

Mr. Secretary, on behalf of your fellow Americans, all of them, your country salutes you.

I will now read the citation of the highest medal that the President can award to a civil servant.

"The Presidential Medal of Freedom citation, Robert S. McNamara. For 7 years you have administered our complex defense establishment, unifying our strength so that we might respond effectively wherever the security of our free world was challenged. A brilliant analyst, a modern administrator, you have brought a new dimension to defense planning and to decision-making.

"You have grasped the urgent social crisis of our time, the awakening of hope among the world's poor. You have understood that while freedom depends on strength; strength itself depends on the determination of free people.

"Your seven long years of unshakable loyalty to the Republic, to the President, and to all who serve beside you and under you in the Armed Services, is an example for the public servant and an inspiration for your countrymen.

"May your selfless service spent in defending freedom bring even greater awards in the larger work that you now undertake; to promote freedom throughout all the world."

It is signed "Lyndon B. Johnson, President, the White House."

END

(AT 1:29 P.M. EST)

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

---

THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT AT THE  
CEREMONY HONORING SECRETARY  
MC NAMARA AT THE PENTAGON

(12:26 P.M. EST)

Secretary Mc Namara, Secretary Nitze, General Wheeler, Members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Armed Services, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I don't have a speech to make here today. I just thought that I would come over and join with all of you and with all of Bob McNamara's fellow workers in saying goodbye to him.

I have heard this place here at the Pentagon referred to as the "Puzzle Palace." Bob McNamara may be the only man who ever found the solution to the puzzle and he is taking it with him. But whatever it is called, it is one of the most important buildings on this earth.

I am sorry that this is so, but until men and nations are content to leave one another in peace it will be so.

That makes you people very important people. A great deal depends on the quality of your performance, on your character, on your intelligence, on your patriotism, on your pride in your own service and on your ability to rise above narrow service rivalries.

Bob McNamara's career is just about the textbook example of the modern public servant. But I suspect there are many others out there before me now in uniform and in civilian clothes, high ranking and not so high ranking, who also qualify as modern public servants.

I want to say to each of you that your country is grateful to you for the quality of the work that you do on behalf of all of us, as your country is grateful to this good man, Bob McNamara, to whom we have come here today to say goodbye and farewell.

END

(AT 12:29 P.M. EST)



**February 27, 1968**

**Mr. President:**

**Here are suggested remarks  
for the McNamara ceremony  
at 1:00 p.m., Wednesday,  
February 28.**

**A copy has been sent to  
Harry McPherson at home.**

**Will Sparks**

Secretary and Mrs. McNamara and family, Members of the  
Cabinet, Members of Congress, Distinguished Guests:

Thomas Jefferson said:

"When a man assumes a public trust, he should  
consider himself as public property."

The man we honor today has lived that philosophy for more  
than seven years.

The General Services Administration does not list him  
among our official assets. But he is one of America's most  
valuable public properties.

Bob McNamara may not have accomplished the impossible.  
But he has achieved the unlikely: managing and directing the  
huge complexity that is our defense establishment.

Those of us who served in Government during the Second  
World War came out of that conflict proud of our Armed Forces --  
but deeply concerned for their future.

President Truman said:

"One of the strongest convictions which I brought

to the office of the President was that the antiquated defense setup of the United States had to be reorganized quickly as a step toward insuring our future safety and preserving world peace. From the beginning of my administration I began to push hard for unification of the military establishment into a single department...."

As a Congressman, I heard the testimony for and against unification. Most of the arguments came down to one common denominator: It can't be done. It's impossible.

No one heard that refrain more often than the man who is about to become our new Secretary of Defense. Clark Clifford was here in the White House helping President Truman. He has told me this:

"I know so clearly what President Truman had in mind. And through the years he kept hoping that we would reach that point. Under McNamara, we finally did."

So Bob McNamara has really served three Presidents: as a member of the Cabinet under President Kennedy and myself, and -- after 20 years -- as the man who made our Defense Department what Harry Truman wanted it to be.

Now another distinguished American assumes the leadership of the establishment he helped to create -- and that Bob McNamara helped to perfect.

The task could not have passed to abler hands.

In Bob McNamara, the World Bank is gaining an executive of vision -- a thinker who is also, pre-eminently, a doer.

Daily we read reports that the developing nations are hopelessly far behind. The gap between the "haves and the have-nots" is said to be so wide, and so growing, that it will never be narrowed.

I do not generally make predictions on such matters. But I shall make one now.

I predict that twenty years from today, another President will stand here and say: "A revolution of achievement in the developing nations began with the appointment of Robert S. McNamara to the World Bank in 1968."

For many long and demanding years, Bob McNamara has guided our Defense Establishment. He has helped to give America the most efficient military strength in its history.

Now he will try to build the kind of world that alone can justify that strength.

We are asking him to attack the root-causes of violence and turmoil -- poverty, disease, ignorance, and hopelessness.

Those are the ancient enemies of the human race, who have never been defeated. But our generation has the power, and the resources, to eliminate them from the face of the earth.

What is needed is intelligence -- will -- and organization.

In this intensely loyal, brilliant and good man, America

-5-

is giving the world -- and, if I may be personal, I am giving the world -- the very best we have, to win the most important war of all.

America is grateful for what he has done -- and for what he is about to do. Mr. Secretary, your country salutes you.

#####

In 1945 President Truman had a vision or concept of a reorganized Defense Establishment. He knew it was necessary. During the Second World War we had a separate War Department and Navy Department, and he knew that under modern conditions we could never go through another war with that antiquated mechanism. He had in mind a certain goal of a unification of the services in which there would be strong civilian control and a real tight and close cooperation and integration in the operation of the three services.

I know so clearly what it was he had in mind and through the years he kept hoping that we would reach that point. I then said that under the aegis of Secretary McNamara, it seemed to me that finally the goal that President Truman had in mind had been reached under Secretary McNamara's leadership.

-----  
Summation. ....

He has finally reached the goal that the President of the United States had 23 years ago of close integration of the services which led to a unified effort.