

Robert McNamara

Quotes

War, Nuclear, Thinking, Issues, Winning, Weapons, Men, Action, Trying, Vietnam, Believe, Management, Night, Shapes, World, United States, Important, Evil, Inspiring, Political

We do not have the God-given right to shape every nation in our image or as we choose.

~Robert McNamara

Measure what is important, don't make important what you can measure

~Robert McNamara

If we'd lost the war, we'd all have been prosecuted as war criminals. And I think he's right. He, and I'd say I, were behaving as war criminals.

~Robert McNamara

Never answer the question that is asked of you. Answer the question that you wish had been asked of you.

~Robert McNamara

In order to do good, you may have to engage in evil

~Robert McNamara

The war in Vietnam is going well and will succeed.

~Robert McNamara

To this day we seem to act in the world as though we know what's right for everybody.

~Robert McNamara

There are many ways to make the death rate increase.

~Robert McNamara

At my age, 85, I'm at age where I can look back and derive some conclusions about my actions. My rule has been try to learn, try to understand what happened. Develop the lessons and pass them on.

~Robert McNamara

Brains are like hearts - they go where they are appreciated.

~Robert McNamara

It was a perfectly beautiful night, as fall nights are in Washington. I walked out of the president's Oval Office, and as I walked out, I thought I might never live to see another Saturday night.

~Robert McNamara

Short of nuclear war itself, population growth is the gravest issue the world faces. If we do not act, the problem will be solved by famine, riots, insurrection and war.

~Robert McNamara

The indefinite combination of human fallibility and nuclear weapons will lead to the destruction of nations.

~Robert McNamara

Poor planning or poor execution of plans is simply to let some force other than reason shape reality.

~Robert McNamara

A computer does not substitute for judgment any more than a pencil substitutes for literacy. But writing without a pencil is no particular advantage.

~Robert McNamara

We see what we want to believe.

~Robert McNamara

That's one of the major lessons: no president should ever take this nation to war without full public debate in the Congress and/or in the public.

~Robert McNamara

Neither conscience nor sanity itself suggests that the United States is, should or could be the global gendarme.

~Robert McNamara

General, you don't have a war plan! All you have is a kind of horrible spasm!

~Robert McNamara

[General Curtis] LeMay recognized that what he was doing would be thought immoral if his side has lost. But what makes it immoral if you lose and not immoral if you win?

~Robert McNamara

What makes it immoral if you lose and not immoral if you win?

~Robert McNamara

I don't object to its being called "McNamara's war." I think it is a very important war and I am pleased to be identified with it and do whatever I can to win it.

~Robert McNamara

I think the human race needs to think about killing. How much evil must we do to do good?

~Robert McNamara

The commitment of government to deal with the population issue is of course essential....There are many ways to make the death rate increase.

~Robert McNamara

I formed the hypothesis that each of us could have achieved our objectives without the terrible loss of life. And I wanted to test that by going to Vietnam.

~Robert McNamara

One cannot fashion a credible deterrent out of an incredible action.

~Robert McNamara

They'll be no learning period with nuclear weapons. Make one mistake and you're going to destroy nations.

~Robert McNamara

Belief and seeing are both often wrong.

~Robert McNamara

It would be our policy to use nuclear weapons wherever we felt it necessary to protect our forces and achieve our objectives.

~Robert McNamara

Action should be founded on contemplation, and those of us who act don't put enough time, don't give enough emphasis, to contemplation.

~Robert McNamara

Management is the gate through which social and economic and political change, indeed change in every direction, is diffused through society.

~Robert McNamara

Rationality will not save us.

~Robert McNamara

I would characterize current US nuclear weapons policy as immoral, illegal, militarily unnecessary, and dreadfully dangerous

~Robert McNamara

I like to run down to the beach and have a little swim in the nude in the morning.

~Robert McNamara

It is true that at the time [1962] we had a strategic nuclear force of approximately five thousand warheads compared to the Soviet's three hundred.

~Robert McNamara

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