



McGeorge Bundy

March 30, 1919 - September 16, 1996

Boston, Massachusetts

McGeorge Bundy, national security advisor to Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson and later president of the Ford Foundation, died in Boston, Massachusetts, on September 16, 1996. He was seventy-seven. Boston Brahmin schooling, Harvard's youngest arts-and-sciences dean, and the cold-war White House years had already written him into the history of Vietnam escalation - a brilliant manager of memos whose advice helped enlarge a war he later reconsidered in public.

Born March 30, 1919, in Boston, Bundy moved through Yale, wartime intelligence, and academic administration into the Kennedy circle as national security advisor in 1961. Cuban Missile Crisis nights and Vietnam mornings both ran through his office. Under Johnson he remained a central civilian architect of deepening commitment before leaving in 1966 for the Ford Foundation, where philanthropy and education policy occupied the decades that followed. Late essays and interviews showed a man willing to revise earlier confidence without pretending the past had been simple.

Historians still argue how much any single advisor "caused" Vietnam; they rarely argue that Bundy's desk was peripheral. Boston was the beginning and the ending of a life spent translating elite schooling into national power - and then living with the bill.

He died in Boston on September 16, 1996. The NSC papers and the Foundation years remain the archival spine.

Bundy's hard lesson is that intelligence without humility can still steer a republic into tragedy. Notice Nearby records the death date so September 16 keeps a Massachusetts strategist on the calendar of American power and regret.

Services

Died in Boston, Massachusetts, September 16, 1996. U.S. National Security Advisor (1961-1966); president of the Ford Foundation (1966-1979).

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