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Controversial State Dept. Figure Affirms Speaking Engagement

Roger Hilsman, assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs who resigned his position Tuesday night in an argument over policy in the South Viet Nam crisis is scheduled to speak at the Fairfax Chamber of Commerce dinner March 14.

Hilsman affirmed his intention to keep his commitment during a telephone conversation with Chamber executive Robert G. Grow.

GROW SAID that Hilsman said he was anxious and happy to keep his speaking engagement.

An associate of Hilsman in the State Department said Hilsman was "more eager than ever to speak" and that no date had been set for his departure from the department.

Grow said that Hilsman will speak about the role of Dulles Airport as a gateway to the world.

The resignation resulted from a difference of opinion between Hilsman and the Johnson Administration.

Hilsman had been a trusted advisor to President Kennedy. He had recently been by-passed by the State Department in policy making decisions, friends said.

A STATE Department source said Hilsman had received several tempting offers during the past couple of years to return to the field of education.

However, President Kennedy had prevailed upon him not to leave the State Department, sources said.

Hilsman, according to a source in the State Department, had been in conflict with decisions made in the Pentagon concerning the use of American soldiers.

Friends said that Hilsman advocated the use of anti-guerrilla forces in Viet Nam.

Shortly after news of Hilsman's resignation, letters were exchanged between the White House and Hilsman.

President Johnson's letter cited Hilsman for his "great courage and dedication." Hilsman, continuing the friendly tone, wrote, "There is no man in America who is better fitted for leadership than you."

Observers on Capitol Hill pointed out that this was the first major break in policy of any consequence in the Johnson Administration.

Hilsman admitted he has not accepted a position in academic life nor made a decision when he will leave the State Department.

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