

Fulbright Sets It Straight

Post 8/8/66

Senator Fulbright has helped atone for the mischievous effects of some of his past remarks about the war in Vietnam with what amounts to a warning to Hanoi and Peking not to misjudge the support for President Johnson's stand. Congress, Mr. Fulbright comments, is "more warlike" than the President, and it would be a mistake to conclude that division in the country ultimately will force him to back down. In fact this newspaper has every reason to believe that the Administration's position commands overwhelming support in the Nation as a whole.

Coming from the most influential critic of Administration policies in Vietnam, such cautionary advice ought to carry some weight in Communist capitals—though whether it will depends upon how much the Communists believe their own propaganda. The problem with Mr. Fulbright's past expressions has never involved his right to make them—even in crisis dissent remains a cherished right in the United States—but has involved, rather, the likelihood that exaggerated interpretations would be placed upon his criticisms because of his position as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Certainly the last of Mr. Fulbright's wishes has been to abet this country's enemies. It is useful to have the matter in perspective.