

May Be Used to Back 'Aggressive' Talk

McNamara Fears China A-Force Intent

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Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara declared yesterday that he is "concerned" that Red China is acquiring nuclear weapons for possible use in support of its "aggressive talk."

But Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman J. William Fulbright (D Ark.) remarked in rebuttal that China's seemingly aggressive posture

"could just as well be because they fear attack by countries on their border who have nuclear power."

The exchange provided a curtain raiser on hearings before Fulbright's committee on China and American policy toward China. Much of the congressional alarm about the war in Vietnam relates to fear that the United States may end up in a war with China.

To Hear China Expert

Today's witness will be A. Doak Barnett, professor of government at Columbia University, a leading American authority on China. But

as of last night none of the three networks had plans for live television coverage. A network pool is expected to tape the hearings today and Thursday for use on regular newscasts.

McNamara was testifying before the Joint Atomic Energy Committee in favor of a resolution putting Congress behind President Johnson's efforts to negotiate a treaty to halt the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The Secretary noted Chinese Defense Minister Lin Piao's "aggressive talk" last September about "wars of national liberation" but he conceded that "these are about words and words alone will not hurt us." However, he said China will have the nuclear capacity in two or three years "to carry out aggression" by missiles against nations 500 to 700 miles from its borders. He first made public such estimates last December in Paris.

He said that China was "moving to support those words" while "millions are starving."

When Fulbright was told of McNamara's remarks, he commented that China could be acting defensively, adding that it is just as natural for a country to seek its own defense as to build for aggression. It is just such differences of interpretation that Fulbright hopes to discuss at the hearings. The senator yesterday delivered his own China speech, released to the press in advance on Sunday.

McNamara argued that the United States should try to negotiate a non-proliferation treaty with Russia and Britain even if China and France would not accept it. Any "increase in the number of nations independently controlling nuclear weapons is an increase in the threat to our security," he said, whether they are Sweden and Switzerland or Czechoslovakia or Indonesia.

No Bomb Needed

The Secretary said it must be made clear to such nations as India, Japan and West Germany that "they need not acquire nuclear weapons to have

the status of a major world power."

McNamara estimated that three countries which he did not name could produce nuclear weapons in six, 18 or 24 months without outside help. Furthermore, he said, other nations could not afford to spend the "billions" the United States has spent on safety measures, thus increasing the danger of an "almost certain" accidental nuclear detonation "sometime."

The secretary stressed that to win adherence to a non-proliferation treaty, some form of guarantee against nuclear blackmail would have to be given non-nuclear nations. He said these nations "might very well" want such a guarantee from both the United States and the Soviet Union.

The need for a guarantee has long been recognized in Washington but no formula has yet been found. McNamara yesterday refused to discuss in public how such a guarantee might be arranged, other than to say that it is "not so difficult a problem that it should lie in the way of a treaty."