

FULBRIGHT WARNS MILITARISM GAINS

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He Tells War College U.S.
Faces Authoritarianism

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WASHINGTON, May 19—Senator J. W. Fulbright argued today that the nation's far-flung military commitments were eroding the democratic process and leading the Government down the road to authoritarianism.

The chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee went before the student body of the National War College, composed of the elite of the military, to deliver an indictment of "militarism" and what he described as its pervasive, corrosive influence upon American society.

The Fulbright lecture grew out of a chance dinner meeting between a staff aide of the Foreign Relations Committee and a general at the war college. When the general complained about the Senator's critical views on Vietnam, the aide suggested that the Senator should be given an opportunity to explain his position before the students at the War College.

It was the first time in eight years that Senator Fulbright had addressed the War College, and in many ways his lecture was a summation of the evolution that has taken place in his thinking as a result of the Vietnam war.

Eight years ago the Senator gave a general lecture on military responsibility in the formulation of public policy. Today one of his basic complaints was that the military policy had acquired "inordinate" influence, with the result that the democratic values of the society were being "subverted."

In large measure, however, the Fulbright indictment was directed not so much at the Pentagon as at the whole trend of postwar foreign policy, with its reliance upon "the threat or the use of force" abroad.

"Quite as inevitably as if it were deliberate," he said, "our imperial role in the world has generated a trend toward authoritarian government."

What has happened, he contended, is that foreign policy has become "an end in itself" instead of "an instrument toward the central, dominating goal of securing democratic values within our society."

The political cost, he said,

"is reflected in the steady concentration of power in the hands of the national executive, in a long-term trend toward authoritarian government."

'Unhappiness' Cited

The moral cost, he said, "is reflected in the unhappiness of the American people, most particularly in the angry alienation of our youth."

And the economic cost, he continued, is reflected in "the disparity of almost ten to one between Federal military expenditures since World War II and the regular national bud-

getary expenditures for education, welfare, health and housing."

Contending that "a foreign policy of chronic warfare and intervention has its own irreversible dynamic" toward authoritarian government, Senator Fulbright made the "fairly confident prediction" that "if American democracy is destroyed within the next generation, it will not be destroyed by the Russians or the Chinese, but by ourselves, by the very means we use to defend it."

Senator Fulbright made clear that his criticism was not directed at military men but at political policies, made by civilians, that lead to "militarism." But at the same time he complained that military leaders had "acquired an influence disproportionate to their numbers on the nation's security policy."

The Defense Department, he said, "has become a vigorous partisan in our politics, exerting great influences on the President, on the military committees of the Congress, on the 'think tanks' and universities to which it parcels out lucrative research contracts, and on public opinion."

At the same time, he said, "millions of Americans" have acquired "a vested interest in an economy geared to war."

"Every new weapons system or military installation," he said, "soon acquires a constituency—a process which is aided and abetted by the perspicacity with which Pentagon officials award lucrative contracts and establish new plants and installations in the districts of influential members of Congress."

Somewhat the same theme—that the United States must pull back from its global military commitments—was struck by Senator Stuart Symington of Missouri, a member of both the Armed Services and Foreign Relations committees, in a speech prepared for delivery before the Jewish Center in Kansas City, Mo.

Contending that the nation was "overcommitted politically, militarily and economically," Senator Symington said the Executive branch must be made to "recognize the limitations of using military power as the primary means for solving international problems."

Taken together, the Fulbright and Symington speeches were a preview of the forthcoming Senate debate on the so-called "national commitments resolution."

Basically, the resolution calls upon the Executive branch not to enter into any further foreign commitments without the express approval of Congress.