

Diplomacy: Military Intrusions

Reviewed by
Willard Barber

The reviewer is a lecturer in international affairs at the University of Maryland and was formerly deputy assistant Secretary of State.

Citations of verse and chapter confirm Roland Paul's categoric assertions that "there has been an intrusion by the military into the traditional role of the diplomat in formulating American foreign policy" and that "the disadvantages of turning more and more of our foreign policy over to the military is that military officers, capable though they training or experience to remain in their own profession, are ill-equipped by solve matters of foreign policy."

Paul pointed out that even after substantial withdrawals of troops from Vietnam in 1969 and 1970, over a million U.S. military personnel remained stationed overseas. They were based on 373 major installations (not including those in Vietnam) and more than 2,000 minor ones. Thus, the U.S. military establishment through its sheer size, its enormous budget and "with so many

eyes and ears" abroad, has access to information and to foreign officials far beyond what the few diplomats have.

Consequently, "American military leaders (exercise) inordinate power" in influence."

In 1968 it was by order of a general that a military officer informed the Spanish government that "by the presence of United States forces in Spain, the United States gives Spain a far more visible and credible guarantee than any written document." At that time negotiations for base rights were concluded which drew Franco's Spain closer to a mutual defense relationship with this country. Granted that by this, means Franco was all but admitted to the NATO alliance, it is not clear what benefits to our side resulted from the Spanish entanglement. As to the necessity of desirability of continued air, naval and communications facilities manned by U.S. troops in that country, Paul's assertion that "there is no serious external or internal threat to Spain today" reduces the benefits to Spain to a large question mark.

It is no wonder, then, that

Book World

AMERICAN MILITARY COMMITMENTS ABROAD.

By Roland A. Paul.

(Rutgers University, 237 pp. \$10)

a bipartisan challenge, led by Sen. Javits and Fulbright, to the expense and impracticality of the agreement with Franco, also led to a basic constitutional issue. Should the Senate, and the treaty making process, be ignored in making commitments to foreign powers? This question has arisen again recently as a result of the U.S. Navy's action in establishing a "home port" in Greece.

Roland Paul was counsel for Sen. Stuart Symington's Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Security Agreements and Commitments Abroad. He participated in the questioning of Pentagon and State Department spokesmen at the subcommittee's hearings in 1969 and 1970, and in field investigations conducted in a score of foreign countries, ranging from Israel and Lebanon to Ethiopia and Thailand.

It is startling to read his

words, and between the lines, of shock and dismay at the propensity of the spokesmen to withhold information and to mislead the senators. These witnesses "failed to disclose" that the U.S. was providing Taiwan with F-100 and F-104 fighter aircraft, for example.

On the other hand, the author, a lawyer and formerly a special assistant in the Defense Department, tells us specifically about the number and costs of American facilities in Morocco, Thailand, South Korea, the Philippines and Japan. Paul was aghast at the Americans' exclusive use of 10 golf courses in Japan. "One ammunition depot, Tama, covering 492 acres, was being used only for recreational purposes," and as late as 1970 the "Marines held a 45,000-acre maneuver area at the foot of Mount Fujiyama." All this, and more, in a crowded country.

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in U.S. Foreign Policy

The author points out that military commitments are not limited to formal treaties. Both multilateral treaties such as NATO and bilateral treaties, such as those with the Philippines and with Korea, place obligations on other countries in the event of attack. Executive agreements (as with Spain) and unilateral governmental declarations also commit the country, as do obligations arising from past

mutual efforts, or stationing American armed forces on foreign soil. He points out the annual operational costs of our commitments to overseas countries, and suggests specific reductions in bases and personnel which would result in savings ranging into the billions. He advocates retention of command structures and troops in Europe and Thailand; returning base

areas to Japan; the avoidance of Vietnam. Factual and valuable as this accounting is, it does not take up some fundamental considerations. To what extent are the commitments reciprocal and do they contribute to our security? Alliances and commitments are not an end in themselves. Military commitments should not determine foreign policy. Indeed, it is the other way around.