

Congress Urged to Curb Use of Executive Accords

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WASHINGTON, April 24—Two Johnson Administration officials and the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee called on Congress today to assert control on executive agreements with foreign countries.

Testifying at a hearing conducted by a Senate Judiciary subcommittee, former Secretary of Defense Clark M. Clifford said that there had been an excessive use of executive agreements, which do not require Senate approval. This, he said, has resulted in "undue secrecy" and too many "assurances of support" to foreign countries.

Arthur J. Goldberg, who was United States delegate at the United Nations and previously had served as a Supreme Court justice, said that Congress had a clear responsibility to take back the "powers which it has abandoned too long."

Fulbright Asks Action

Senator J. W. Fulbright, Democrat of Arkansas, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, called for strong action to stop "the erosion and evasion of legislative power" in foreign policy.

The testimony was on a bill that would give Congress power to veto executive agreements. The subcommittee, headed by Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., Democrat of North Carolina, the sponsor, began three days of hearing on the proposal.

Mr. Ervin said that as of Jan. 1 the United States had

entered into 4,359 executive agreements, which do not require Senate approval, and 947 treaties, which call for concurrence by two-thirds of the Senate.

"During the past few decades," Senator Ervin said, "the executive branch has found irresistible the temptation to dispose of what it considered routine matters through the shortcut method of entering into executive agreements rather than the constitutional method of making formal treaties."

Senator Fulbright urged stronger legislation than Ervin bill, saying that either house should be able to override an executive agreement.

Also testifying at the hearing were Dr. James Robinson, president of Macalester College, and Dr. Elbert M. Byrd Jr., former professor of government at the University of Maryland. The two men, who have written books on foreign policy agreements, urged other methods—such as control on appropriations—instead of the Ervin proposal to assert the role of Congress in foreign policy.

On Feb. 16, the Senate approved, by a vote of 81 to 0, and sent to the House a measure that would require all international agreements to be submitted to Congress for its information. Mr. Ervin's proposal would go far beyond that bill, now awaiting House action, by providing that Congress could override any executive agreement within 60 days after its transmittal.