

Stark Says Nixon Might Try 'Coup'

Congressman Fortney H. (Pete) Stark (Dem-Oakland) suggested yesterday that President Nixon might—out of desperation—attempt to engineer a military coup.

"The President," Stark declared, "could easily manufacture an 'extreme national emergency,' tell his generals to take command and send the Congress and the Supreme Court packing."

His remarks were made before the Supervisors Association of the Naval Air Reserve Facility, a civilian group, at the Alameda Naval Air Station officers club.

They were immediately scoffed at by spokesmen for both the White House and the Pentagon.

"The congressman's hypothesis is so ridiculous that it does not merit comment," said a spokesman for the President at the Key Biscayne White House.

Jerry W. Friedheim, assistant secretary of defense for public affairs, said he couldn't believe that a member of Congress would say such a thing.

"Therefore, I have no comment," Friedheim said.



UPI Photo

REP. STARK
East Bay speech

Several hours after his speech, Stark said he got the idea from last week's global military alert ordered by Mr. Nixon.

"I felt that it was a manufactured affair," Stark said, "and when the next crisis comes it could be more severe . . . not just an alert but a national emergency."

He said that would involve the President invoking emergency war powers

"and that's scary."

Stark, a 41-year-old millionaire and former Walnut Creek banker, said he doubted a military takeover would be successful because "there are too many good officers who put the country ahead of self and politicians."

However, he returned once again to his theme by declaring:

"As the noose of justice draws closer around Nixon, he is growing more desperate. The missing Watergate tapes is the latest episode in this sad scenario. What will happen next? Nixon is running out of alternatives."

Stark said in support of his speculative theory that the military-industrial elite in the United States "represents tremendous power dedicated to self-perpetuation, even if it means sacrificing democracy."

At the conclusion of his speech, Stark was asked by a reporter what generals and admirals he thought might willingly be a party to a military takeover.

"The people who lied about Cambodia, the people who lied to cover up the Mai Lai incident. There are very few, fortunately," he said.