

Fulbright on the Eve Of a New Career?

Washington-

Arkansas Senator J. William Fulbright sat behind his massive desk, chewing yeast tablets and telling a visitor he was "inclined to think that it would be better for the country" if Richard Nixon was spared any prosecution.

In the course of a lengthy conversation, the veteran Democrat — who reportedly will soon be named U.S. ambassador to the Court of St. James's — talked about Watergate and its aftermath, the new President, his own career, political corruption and the caliber of young people coming into politics.

"There are those who still say that to impeach Nixon would have been more official and constitutional," said Fulbright, "but you have to be pragmatic sometimes and, on balance, this was the best way to end it. And I'm inclined to think that it would be better for the country, too, if the prosecutor should feel it is not necessary to prosecute.

"I know it might be a deterrent against future actions and I know people talk about his underlings being punished and not him; but from a philosophical sense, I think it is important that the distinction be made between



HENRY KISSINGER
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the president and his assistants.

"His office is separate and unique. And from the point of view of punishment, I think he has already suffered the greatest humiliation."

As chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Fulbright says he has great respect for what Nixon was able to accomplish as far as detente, the SALT talks, the Middle East and Vietnam peace settlements are concerned. He rates

Henry Kissinger "higher than any Secretary of State I have known."

But he also predicts the Nixon administration will go down in history as a "very great political and personal tragedy."

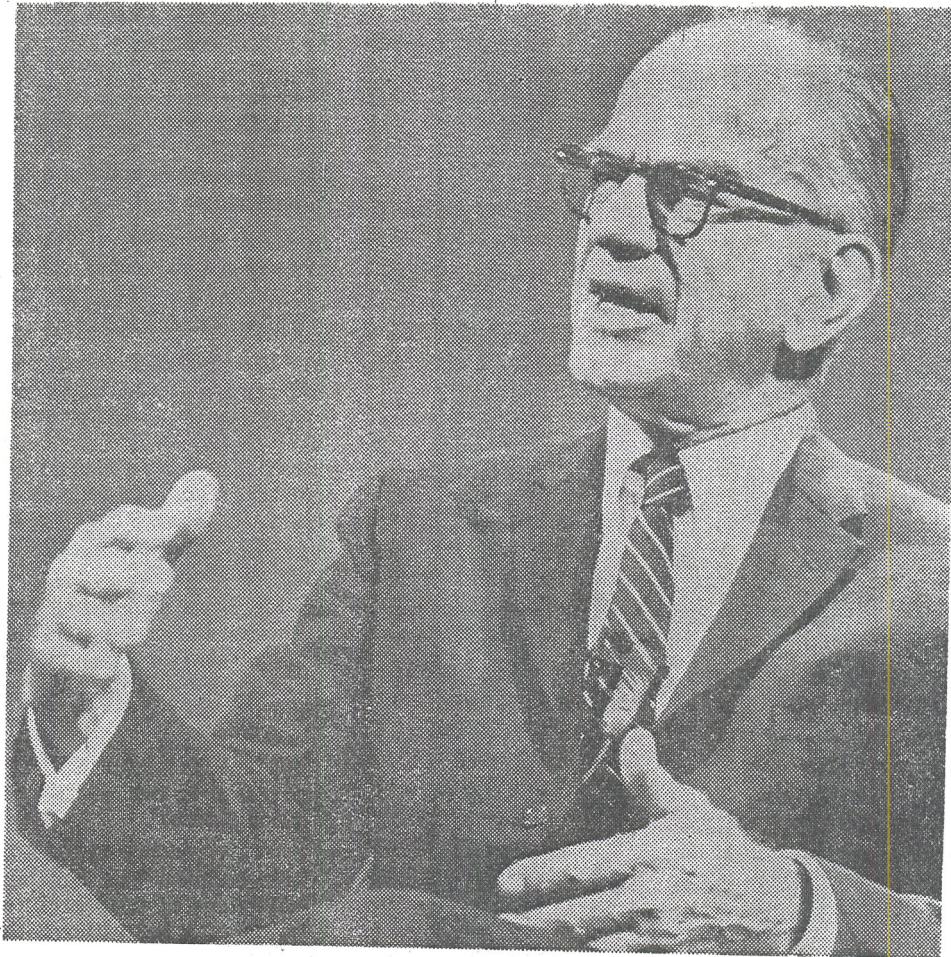
Gerald Ford, he believes, will be "a good president."

Politics, said Fulbright, who was elected to Congress in 1942, to the Senate in 1944 and was reelected four times, will never be completely clean.

"That's because it's run by human beings who are subject to frailties. There is hardly anyone who can go through a day without lying half a dozen times in some fashion. It all depends on the moral standards of the time."

Fulbright does not feel politics has become too polluted to attract young people. Watergate, he said, may indeed have a purging effect.

"And I think the performance of the House Judiciary Committee restored a great deal of respect for Congress. But you can't say politics will attract a higher caliber person now than in the past. That would imply all past politicians were corrupt. And they all were not.



William Fulbright thinks it would be best not to prosecute Nixon

"It all depends on temperament. Politics takes a great deal of energy, ego and ambition, and it is also brutal and cruel. Think of how few are elected and how many are defeated, and what a man of high ideals feels when he gets defeated."

As for his own defeat by Arkansas Governor Dale Bumpers in the state's primary election, Fulbright said he feels no bitterness.

"It's our system and I accept it. It's remarkable I've been here for so long anyway. I was puzzled in the '60s, when I assumed such

an anti-Vietnam stance, that I was reelected. If there was ever a chancy election, that was."

Of his many accomplishments in the Senate, he said

he takes most pleasure in the Fulbright scholarship program "because it's tangible — you can see visible results."

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