

Bill and Ed's Big Adventure: Cold Warriors, William Fulbright and Right-Wing Propaganda in the US Military, 1961-62

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Abstract

This article analyses a notorious episode of the early 1960s when Senator J. William Fulbright, then Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, investigated the anti-communist propaganda activities of right-wing 'ultras' in the US military. The episode is used to investigate the phenomenon of 'cold warriors', those figures who associated their entire political identity with the 'fighting' of the Cold War. One particular figure soon stood out as epitomizing the anti-communist paranoia that so worried Fulbright: Major General Edwin Walker. The contest between Fulbright and Walker (and their supporters in Congress) was not a political side-show, since it soon involved President Kennedy and saw Defense Secretary Robert McNamara testifying before a Senate investigative committee. It also marked a contest between an orthodox anti-Soviet position and the new, uncertain but more flexible world-view to be known as Détente. The Walker case encapsulated the debate and the widening divide in US politics and society between those who saw the Cold War as a do-or-die struggle to the bitter end, and those who were willing to accept the existence of the Soviet Union for the sake of a stable Détente. By drawing on the work of Anders Stephanson, this article explores the broader political ramifications of the Fulbright-Walker contest in the context of the changing dynamics of the Cold War.

Key words : Fulbright ; Anti-communism ; Propaganda ; Cold Warrior ; Right-wing.

Résumé

Cet article analyse un épisode célèbre du début des années 1960, lorsque le Sénateur J. William Fulbright, alors président du comité sur les relations internationales au Sénat, a enquêté sur les activités de propagande anticommuniste des « ultras » de droite dans l'armée américaine. L'épisode sert à examiner le phénomène des *cold warriors*, ces figures qui ont associé toute leur identité politique au « combat » de la guerre froide. Une figure particulière s'est rapidement démarquée, illustrant la paranoïa qui inquiétait tant Fulbright : le général de division Edwin Walker. La dispute entre Fulbright et Walker (et leurs sympathisants au

Congrès) n'était pas un moindre épisode politique, puisqu'il a bientôt impliqué le président Kennedy et son secrétaire de la Défense Robert McNamara, qui ont témoigné devant le comité d'enquête au Sénat. Il a aussi marqué la confrontation entre une position orthodoxe antisoviétique et une nouvelle vision du monde, incertaine mais plus flexible, celle de la Détente. Le cas de Walker illustre le débat et le fossé grandissant au sein de la politique et de la société américaines entre ceux qui considéraient la guerre froide comme une lutte acharnée jusqu'à la fin, et ceux qui étaient prêts à accepter l'existence de l'Union soviétique au nom d'une stable Détente. En s'appuyant sur le travail d'Anders Stephenson, cet article explore les grandes implications politiques de la dispute Fulbright-Walker dans le contexte des dynamiques changeantes de la guerre froide.

Mots clés : J. William Fulbright ; anticomunisme ; propagande ; *cold warriors*.

Pour citer cet article : Giles Scott-Smith, « Bill and Ed's Big Adventure : Cold Warriors, William Fulbright and Right-Wing Propoaganda in the US Military, 1961-62 », *Histoire@Politique*, n° 35, mai-août 2018 [en ligne, www.histoire-politique.fr]

This article analyses a notorious episode of the early 1960s when anti-communism in the US military became a major political issue. The episode is used to investigate the phenomenon of 'cold warriors', those figures who associated their entire political identity with the Cold War. The individual at the centre of this narrative is Senator J. William Fulbright who, as chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1961, launched an investigation into right-wing propaganda practices being undertaken by anti-communist 'ultras' within the US military. One particular figure soon stood out as epitomizing the anti-communist paranoia that so worried Fulbright: Major General Edwin Walker. The contest between Fulbright and Walker (and their supporters in Congress) was not a political side-show, since it soon involved President Kennedy and saw Defense Secretary Robert McNamara testifying before a Senate investigative committee. In a novel way it also marked a contest between an orthodox anti-Soviet position and the new, uncertain but more flexible world-view to be known as Détente. As Anders Stephanson has argued, the (American) Cold War had at its centre "a certain gesture of diplomatic refusal vis-à-vis the USSR," and once this was put aside (he refers to 1963 as the turning point), a new set of relations began.¹ The Walker case encapsulated the debate and the widening divide in US politics and society between those who saw the Cold War as a do-or-die struggle to the bitter end, and those who were willing to accept the existence of the Soviet Union for the sake of a stable Détente. This early stand-off between the forces of liberalism and conservatism was a precursor for the internecine political battles that were to come with the rise of the New Right in the 1970s. This article first explores the historical usefulness of the term 'cold warrior' before recounting the Fulbright-Walker contest and its broader political ramifications.

Cold Warriors: A Concept

The Cold War, referred to here as two political opponents that ideologically negated each other, would not have been possible without the existence of 'cold warriors' – those individuals and social movements that waged ideological war for the duration of the contest. The term 'cold warrior' does not have a fixed definition, it being more a journalistic reference that conjures up images of fiery political rhetoric, resoluteness and inflexibility. Significantly, Andrew J. Rotter kept his description very broad when writing the entry in the *Encyclopedia of the New American Nation*:

Architects of the conflict that gripped the world for nearly fifty years, cold warriors were the men, and few women, who gave shape to the ongoing conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union from 1945 to 1989. They built the Cold War's institutions, forged its diplomacy, oversaw its military flare-ups and its diplomatic stand-downs, and supplied its fierce rhetoric and its silent espionage.²

Cold warriors are often linked to the first decade of the Cold War, encapsulating the mentalities of the governments of Truman, Eisenhower, and Stalin as they laid the basis for the superpower confrontation that would dominate the following four decades. However, studies that make use of the term in their titles often don't go

¹ Anders Stephanson, *Fourteen Notes on the Very Concept of the Cold War*, H-Diplo Essay, 1996-2007, p. 1.

² Andrew J. Rotter, 'Cold Warriors', *Encyclopedia of the New American Nation*, available online at <http://www.americanforeignrelations.com/A-D/Cold-Warriors.html> [accessed 4 September 2017].

much further in terms of defining its characteristics.³ Other works provide some pointers for a usable definition. John Donovan's *The Cold Warriors* examined "the activities of a coherent elite in formulating, establishing, and administering the national security policy of the United States." Donovan adopted a political science approach that was mainly focused on patterns of elite decision-making, but he did refer to "civilian militants" who believed in US military supremacy as an essential component in world order, and who "have made a professional career of the Cold War."⁴ Stephen Kinzer's study of Allen and John Foster Dulles does not refer to his two main characters as cold warriors, but does nevertheless provide some pointers as to how it might be interpreted, citing the two brothers' belief in American exceptionalism and a "missionary Christianity, which tells believers that they understand eternal truths and have an obligation to convert the unenlightened".⁵ Neither is it impossible, apparently, for cold warriors to change their views, as Philip Taubman has chronicled on the issue of nuclear weapons.⁶

Beyond the realms of policy-making and the military, the term 'cold warrior' has also been connected with those actively engaged in the war of ideas, be that as public intellectuals or actors behind the scenes. Studies of governmental patronage in the universities (particularly the contracting of social scientists for large-scale research programmes) have highlighted the ways in which Cold War ideology influenced the direction and approach of 'objective' analysis and its practical application.⁷ In the field of literary studies, cold warriors have epitomized "the ideological extremity ... whose identity was purified of communism and totalitarianism — but also of gender, race, color, sexuality, or class." Cold warriors were invariably male, drawing their justification from "the gendered mythology of the American West" and the challenges of the lawless frontier.⁸

In terms of political allegiance, there is a knee-jerk tendency to place cold warriors on the right of the spectrum. They stood for national defence and the identification and elimination of threats to an idealized national identity and cultural integrity. Yet this does not mean that all cold warriors were Republicans. The 'Cold War consensus' that placed the combating of the combined threats of Soviet military power and communist ideology at the top of the national security agenda meant that some of the

³ See for instance H.W. Brands, *Cold Warriors: Eisenhower's Generation and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Warren Weis, *Cold Warriors and Coup d'Etats: Brazilian-American Relations 1945-1964* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993); Elizabeth Spalding, *The First Cold Warrior: Harry Truman, Containment and the Remaking of Liberal Internationalism* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2006).

⁴ John Donovan, *The Cold Warriors: A Policy-Making Elite* (Lexington: D.C. Heath, 1974), p. 19, 259.

⁵ Stephen Kinzer, *The Brothers: John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, and their Secret World War* (New York: Henry Holt, 2013), p. 3.

⁶ Philip Taubman, *The Partnership: Cold Warriors and their Quest to Ban the Bomb* (New York: HarperCollins, 2011), which focuses on the changing opinions of Henry Kissinger, George Schultz, Sam Nunn, William Perry and Sidney Drell.

⁷ On cold warriors in academia and 'Cold War social science' see Noam Chomsky, *The Cold War and the University* (New York: New Press, 1997); J. Isaac, 'The human sciences in Cold War America,' *Historical Journal* 50 (2007), pp. 725-746; David Engemann, 'Social science in the Cold War,' *Isis* 101 (2010), pp. 393-400; Joy Rohde, *Armed with Expertise: The Militarization of American Social Research during the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013).

⁸ Suzanne Clark, *Cold Warriors: Manliness on Trial in the Rhetoric of the West* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000).

key cold warriors were Democrats such as Dean Acheson.⁹ The cold warriors who launched the campaign of political warfare and covert action against the Soviet Union in the late 1940s were serving the Democratic administration of Harry Truman.¹⁰

An essential element for this article's argument is Anders Stephanson's claim that there were two principle phases to the Cold War, the pivotal period being the late 1950s and early 1960s when the United States began to recognize the Soviet Union as a diplomatic equal. This re-situates the cold warrior concept less in terms of bipartisan politics and more in terms of the broader history of political conservatism, particularly the 'right turn' that has been traced back to the 1960s and the critical response to Democrat-led liberal internationalism and welfare state social democracy.¹¹ Race and religion were key factors to this backlash, as anti-Civil Rights groups mobilized across the South and looked to forge nationwide political alliances in order to influence (and ultimately determine) the national agenda.¹² As Joseph Lowndes has succinctly put it, "In the case of modern conservatism, race has been both an open and coded signifier for popular mobilizations against redistribution, regulation, labor protections, and myriad other aspects of neo-liberal opposition to 'big government'."¹³ The rise of neoliberalism and neoconservatism were closely intertwined, since both positions were based on, among other things, individual responsibility, self-sufficiency, and a mistrust of the state's role in the 'social engineering' of society.¹⁴ For the conservative, traditional family values and gender roles were now under threat from an overbearing government with a liberal agenda.¹⁵ Religion, particularly the evangelical movements, had always been a source of anti-communist fervor against the godless foe, and that now also fed into the reconfiguration of the political right.¹⁶

⁹ Robert McMahon, *Dean Acheson and the Creation of an American World Order* (Washington DC: Potomac Books, 2009). Richard M. Filipink titled the review of this book 'The Original Cold Warrior, Democratic Party', see *Reviews in American History* 39 (September 2011), pp. 523-528.

¹⁰ Peter Grose, *America's Secret War Behind the Iron Curtain* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000).

¹¹ William Berman, *America's Right Turn: From Nixon to Clinton* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994); Mary Brennan, *Turning Right in the Sixties: The Conservative Capture of the GOP* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Lee Edwards, *The Conservative Revolution: The Movement that Remade America* (New York: Free Press, 1999); Jonathan Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing: The Rise of Modern American Conservatism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The origins of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

¹² Rick Perlstein, *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001); David Farber, *The Rise and Fall of Modern American Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

¹³ Joseph Lowndes, *From the New Deal to the New Right: Race and the Southern Origins of Modern Conservatism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 7; William Link, *Righteous Warrior: Jesse Helms and the Rise of Modern Conservatism* (New York: St. Martins Press, 2008).

¹⁴ Gary Dorrien, *The Neoconservative Mind: Politics, Culture and the War of Ideology* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995); Mark Gerson, *The Neoconservative Vision: From the Cold War to the Culture Wars* (Lanham: Madison Books, 1997); Justin Vaisse, *Neoconservatism: The Biography of a Movement* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2010).

¹⁵ Donald Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman's Crusade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

¹⁶ George Lewis, *The White South and the Red Menace: Segregationists, Anticommunism, and Massive Resistance, 1945-1965* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004); Angela Lahr, *Millennial Dreams and Apocalyptic Nightmares: The Cold War Origins of Political Evangelicalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); James Davison Hunter, *The Christian Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

Domestic and international politics therefore contributed to this political realignment process on the right from the 1960s onwards. Domestically, it concerned the rejection of the liberal consensus in favour of the defence of traditional values. Internationally, it was about maintaining vigilance against the perceived continuing threat of the Soviet Union. The two were closely intertwined, and cold warriors who still regarded the communist menace as the number one security challenge were ideologically migrating away from the Democrats towards the Republican New Right. Just as the domestic dimension involved building alliances with other like-minded groups, so too were there considerable efforts made to join forces with political allies outside of the United States, for mutual benefit.¹⁷

The cold warrior category is therefore linked to both liberalism and (neo)conservatism, to both Southern Baptists and the north-eastern Ivy League. They do not represent a homogenous group. Where does this leave it as a definable historical term? For the purposes of this article, a set of characteristics can be distilled that, to varying degrees, are central to the cold warrior as a political figure. They were predominantly male, expressing traditional forms of egoistic drive and patriarchal leadership. They expressed a messianic drive, involving an intolerance of alternative or opposing views that were generally dismissed as ludicrous, subversive, and dangerous. They were millennial in the sense of possessing the information that could lead to salvation and escape from an otherwise inevitable destruction and damnation. They sought to mobilize and shape public behavior by clarifying its purpose and identifying its goals. They possessed a moral conviction in the fundamental importance of their cause. They were monomaniacs, fixated on one idea and the negation of all alternatives. They sought attention through the media in order to proselytize the message to the largest possible audience. This is of course not an all-encompassing list, and it may verge on the edge of caricature. It also begs the question of what precisely separates a cold warrior from similarly politically-engaged individuals in pre- (or post-)Cold War history. If the cold warriors are representative of an identifiable epoch known as the Cold War, we need to agree on the unique characteristics of that epoch.

Firstly, there is the simple fact of the nuclear revolution. The unlocking of the destructive power of nuclear fission presented the human race with the prospect of its own complete destruction, something that marks 16 July 1945, the date of the Trinity test explosion in the New Mexico desert, as a 'Rubicon moment' separating what would follow from all previous history. This potential for imminent destruction would overshadow and indeed define the Cold War, and provided the basis for the messianic content of cold warrior fervour. Secondly, the availability of multiple media outlets by the mid-twentieth century – print, radio, film, and television – provided those wanting to engage with national and global publics plenty of opportunity. Likewise, cold warriors represented good media copy since they were often imposing figures providing easily-understood interpretations of current-day events, combining hope

¹⁷ Martin Durham and Margaret Power (eds.), *New Perspectives on the Transnational Right* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); John Rosenberg, 'To Arms for the Western Alliance: The Committee on the Present Danger, Defense Spending, and the Perception of American Power Abroad, 1973-1980,' in Hallvard Notaker, Giles Scott-Smith, and David Snyder (eds.), *Reasserting America: US Public Diplomacy and the Rebuilding of America's Image Abroad* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), pp. 245-262; Kyle Burke, 'Radio Free Enterprise: The Manion Forum and the Making of the Transnational Right in the 1960s,' *Diplomatic History* 40 (2016), pp. 111-139.

and fear in equal measure. Thirdly, there was the decisive factor of the ideological allegiance of mass publics. If the principal contest of the Cold War was the allegiance of the public to one or another ideology, then the Cold War contest was essentially a public event. Cold warriors wanted to personify a broader movement that would collectively change and define history. As Eric Hoffer described in his book on mass movements, “all of them, irrespective of the doctrine they preach and the program they project, breed fanaticism, enthusiasm, fervent hope, hatred and intolerance; all of them are capable of releasing a powerful flow of activity in certain departments of life; all of them demand blind faith and singlehearted allegiance.”¹⁸ This is how cold warriors wanted to mould their publics.

Lastly, cold warriors were essentially bipolar in their geopolitics. This involved the negation of the principal adversary. As Stephanson has described it:

“For the United States, communism was the equivalent of war and the communist HQ lay in Moscow. There could be no real peace, consequently, with the Soviet Union, indeed no real peace in the world as such, unless the Soviet Union ceased being the Soviet Union and communism ended.

For the Soviet Union, on the other hand, there could be peace with the United States but not until the influence of ‘reactionary, warmongering monopoly capitalism’ had been neutralized and the regime assumed a more ‘normal’ bourgeois character This, then, was the structural ‘difference’ or discrepancy that gave rise to the cold war as a situation and provided its laws of motion”.¹⁹

For this negation to be perpetuated, social figures were required to explain it, justify it, give it meaning, and of course maintain it. World War II had created a grand alliance to defeat fascism and nazism, so the former Soviet ally needed to be re-cast as the new enemy. This was no easy task, since war-weary populations were obviously hoping for a major peace dividend after the end of hostilities. The Cold War therefore required “a new constitution of the Other and a new affirmation of the Self as the negation of that which was thus being excluded”.²⁰

Of course, the negation of alternatives is not something unique to Cold War discourse – the ‘policing of heresy’ is something as old as social life itself. But the bipolar nuclear stand-off was a decisive factor for cold warrior discourse. For many political actors in the Global South, the Cold War was a phenomenon largely imposed from outside, coming on top of and permeating their local and national struggles with a discourse they did not wholly accept or act by. Global South cold warriors were therefore those who fully adopted the bipolar frame for their own particular needs. This often involved using it as a way to strengthen alliances with one or other of the superpowers, typecasting opponents as representing the ‘other side’ to discredit them and so strengthen a hold on power. Figures such as Syngman Rhee, Ramon Magsaysay and Mengistu Haile Mariam fit this view.

It is the notion of a public that is crucial for the definition used here. Cold warriors had an inherently *public* role – this separates them from ideologues who may have shared the sense of ideological mission, visionary drive and intolerance towards

¹⁸ Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements* (New York: Harper & Row, 1951), p. xi.

¹⁹ Stephanson, *Fourteen Notes*, p. 19.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

alternative interpretations of reality, but who did not necessarily proselytize it as a *public figure*. Many personified the missionary zeal of a cold warrior through their professional channels: government, business, religious institutions, the military, education, and so on. But it is precisely the public role of cold warriors, and their populist claim that they represent the voice of 'the people', that sets them apart.

This role was not static through the forty-plus years that the Cold War is seen to have lasted. Stephanson identifies the early 1960s as the moment when the normalisation of relations between Washington and Moscow brought a new phase of international relations into being, loosely termed *Détente*. For the cold warriors, *Détente* was exactly not an end to Cold War. Far from it – they continued to 'speak truth to power', but now they attacked *Détente's* assumption that a mutually acceptable bipolar arrangement was possible. They rejected out of hand the supposition of a Cold War 'end' without full victory. The cold warrior of the late 1940s and 1950s sought to mobilize the masses for the ideological struggle. Making use of Stephanson's periodization, the post-1962 cold warrior looked to maintain that mobilization in the face of diplomatic normalisation. The cold warriors "condemned *détente* for its weakness and its willingness to accept the enemy on its own terms *Détente* was a surrender to Soviet power."²¹ Whereas the early cold warrior justified the imposition of draconian measures by the Cold War state in the name of national security, the later version was now pitted *against* the *Détente* state as a threat to peace and security. This crucial detail separates Western cold warriors from communist world ideologues because the latter could justify *Détente* as a continuation of the ideological struggle by other means. In the West such a justification only occurred with the realignment that took place in the 1970s, when human rights and freedom of movement were issues taken up by the conservative right as ideological weapons with which to play *Détente* back to the communist world.²²

Cold Warriors *versus* *Détente*

The Fulbright-Walker case therefore involved a clash between the developing political acceptance of *Détente* and the solidifying forces on the right that rejected such a re-direction for US foreign policy. For many the relaxation of Cold War tensions was a welcome development, but this shift towards normalisation also brought a backlash. From the late 1950s those on the right unwilling to accept any compromise in the war with communism began to organize and proselytize their message. The most notorious of these was the John Birch Society, founded in 1959 by Massachusetts confectionary manufacturer Robert Welch. Welch (and John Birch, the Catholic missionary killed by Chinese communists for whom the Society was named after) displayed all the characteristics of the cold warrior outlined in the previous section: "[his] unbending personality, his refusal to admit defeat or wrongdoing, and his belief that he was the only one who could do what was necessary."²³ There were many similar groups, generally on the rightist fringe of the Republican party, such as the Minute-Men Association and the religious fundamentalists of Christian Crusade. The

²¹ Jeremi Suri, 'Detente and its Discontents,' in Bruce Shulman and Julian Zelizer (eds.), *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 230.

²² Vaisse, pp. 141-145.

²³ Schoenwald, p. 68.

relationship with the Republican mainstream was tense in this period. It had been the Republican administration of Dwight Eisenhower that had made the first move towards an accommodation with the Soviet Union in the international system through the Geneva summit of 1955 and the Lacy-Zaroubin Cultural Exchange Agreement of 1958. A report in *The Nation* on the Christian Anti-Communism Crusade declared the following:

“Without exception, the Crusade’s speakers implicitly and explicitly preach war. Without exception they oppose negotiations, which they equate with appeasement. Without exception, they attack not only liberals but such a moderate spokesman in foreign affairs as Sen. W. J. Fulbright ... who presently is their principle target. And without exception, the Crusaders sow distrust of the judgment and the motives of government leaders, past and present”.²⁴

This uncompromising right-wing anti-communism, soon labeled the ‘ultras’ in the media, was aimed not so much at the Soviet Union as the root of all evil, since that was a given – the real threat came from communist infiltrators and their hood-winked or ‘soft’ allies on the liberal left. Liberalism was equal to self-destruction due to lack of political will and a rejection of fundamental American values. The enemy must definitely be within, since such an obviously corrupt and deviant ideology as communism could only succeed thanks to dangerously misguided and treasonous supporters abroad. Anti-communism thus “played an essential role in unifying disagreeing conservative intellectuals and building a grassroots constituency the anticommunist crusade created a broad spectrum of support and provided conservatives with heroes.”²⁵ Seeking political enemies on which to sharpen their ideology, by 1960-61 one of their chief targets had become Senator William J. Fulbright, the young chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Fulbright was everything they despised: urbane, erudite, educated, a Rhodes Scholar who preached cultural exchange and mutual understanding. Unlike many of his fellow southerners, Fulbright also had no particular love for the US military. For the ultras, Fulbright was a threat because he was a typical pro-UN ‘one-world-welfare-state conspirator’ (to use the words of demagogue Dan Smoot), fundamentally *un-American* in his values and beliefs.²⁶

But this was not simply a case of left versus right. The ultras had drawn support from the federal government itself. In 1958 a National Security Council memorandum had clarified US Cold War strategy and requested that a special effort be made to unite all branches of government with the citizenry in the cause of national unity. Wishing to initiate a more coordinated approach to Cold War strategy, it included the proposal that civil-military relations would be improved if military personnel and facilities were available to make the public aware of the dangers of communism.²⁷ Laid down in the wake of Sputnik and the opening of the first Berlin Crisis and part of Eisenhower’s all-government Total Cold War approach, the memo effectively opened the door to allowing the military to run domestic propaganda campaigns. Networks of military-private cooperative ventures, supported by local business interests and

²⁴ Phil Kerby, ‘The Cold War Sells Razors,’ *The Nation*, 4 November 1961, p. 340.

²⁵ Brennan, pp. 10-11.

²⁶ Randall Bennett Woods, *Fulbright: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 281-282, 286.

²⁷ Schoenwald, p. 102. Textual citations from the memo later appeared in the media, e.g. Cabell Philips, ‘Right Wing Officers Worrying Pentagon,’ *New York Times*, 18 June 1961.

chambers of commerce who saw it as their patriotic duty, began to run public seminars on 'strategy for survival' and 'fourth dimensional warfare.' What was meant to be an effort to unite civilian-military interests in a moment of concern for national security and resolve instead became a stimulus for right-wing critics to push a militant vision of national identity at the grassroots level.

A key figure in linking this grassroots activism with the national level was Frank Barnett, a political activist who first appeared in connection with a plan for a 'Free Slavic Legion' of Soviet bloc refugees in 1950-51. A determined advocate of Dulles' 'Rollback', Barnett nevertheless understood that McCarthyism was divisive and undermined the US position internationally. What was needed was a broader network of institutions that could introduce debate on the Cold War threat across the national social fabric. Psychological warfare had to enter the everyday, and to realize this Barnett brought together funding, education, and research. The finance was provided by the Richardson Foundation, the philanthropic wing of the Vicks Chemical Company, which Barnett joined as research director in 1955. With this as his base, in 1958 he was pivotal in establishing the Institute for American Strategy, a group of military officers, business interests, and 'defence intellectuals' that emerged out of the annual National Military-Industrial Conference and possessed close working links with the National War College and the Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI) of the University of Pennsylvania.²⁸ In 1960 this conglomerate published *American Strategy for the Nuclear Age*²⁹, with chapters by among others Henry Kissinger and Dean Acheson, offering an overall appraisal of US foreign policy that pushed for stronger nuclear and conventional forces and a determination to confront Soviet moves at every turn. The FPRI was a major part of this radical conservative coalition, with Barnett the conduit channeling Richardson funding to support the Institute's scholarship, which in turn provided intellectual credibility for the cause.³⁰ Barnett's goal was to break down the civilian-military barrier and create a self-aware citizenry able to understand the threat to American values and their role in responding to it. Although he aimed for a bipartisan approach, Barnett's world-view did not allow much space for an accommodating superpower détente.³¹

Bill and Ed: Two Worlds Clash

In 1959 Fulbright, a junior senator, had become chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC), a powerful platform from which to pursue his brand of liberal internationalism. Having erred on the side of Cold War orthodoxy during the 1950s, in the following five years he would significantly change his views on the position of the United States in the world, culminating in his 'Old Myths and New Realities'

²⁸ Jeffrey Michaels, 'Waging 'Protracted Conflict' Behind-the-Scenes: The Cold War Activism of Frank R. Barnett', *Journal of Cold War Studies* 19 (2017), pp. 70-98.

²⁹ New York: Doubleday, 1960.

³⁰ On FPRI see Mircea Platon, "'Protracted Conflict': The Foreign Policy Research Institute "Defense Intellectuals" and their Cold War Struggle with Race and Human Rights,' *Du Bois Review* 12 (2015), pp. 407-439; Gene Lyons and Louis Morton, 'School for Strategy,' *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 17/3 (March 1961), pp. 103-105.

³¹ Barnett, via the National Strategy Information Center, would also seek out international allies to strengthen this worldview. See Giles Scott-Smith, *Western Anti-Communism and the Interdoc Network: Cold War Internationale* (London: Palgrave, 2012).

speech of 25 March 1964, in which he accepted the tenets of 'peaceful coexistence' and called for a less moralistic, more flexible US foreign policy that accepted the presence of other ideologies. "The character of the cold war," contested Fulbright, "has ... been profoundly altered ... by the implicit repudiation, by both sides, of a policy of 'total victory'."³² For the right-wing cold warrior fringe, such a statement was treasonous. On his way to fully accepting the principles of Détente, Fulbright would come face to face with the political forces of reaction who rejected such an approach outright.

Fulbright first heard of hard-line conservative tendencies in the US military in 1960, and a year later he began to receive reports from his political aides and supporters around the country that confirmed this. 'Public information seminars' were being given under the heading of a Strategy for Survival programme that aligned any position left of centre as pro-Soviet and a threat to the United States. Fulbright was particularly concerned about a series of meetings in his home state of Arkansas, centred on the military bases located there. Fulbright's concern was evident on various levels. Firstly, these events were being used to link the Soviet Union and the communist threat directly with anyone in favour of leftist causes such as New Deal social security or foreign aid, pointing to a resurgence of the sweeping accusations of McCarthy-style anti-liberal red-baiting. Secondly, the Arkansas rallies exposed Fulbright to the potential threat that his own political base could be mobilized and radicalized against him. Thirdly, Strategy for Survival pointed to the fact that the 'ultras' were no longer purely fringe but had advocates in the Defense Department itself.

Smelling something bad at work, Fulbright decided to initiate an investigation from his Senate office to find out more about the extent of this cold warrior activity. He instructed his aide, Jack Yingling, to focus on the Institute for American Strategy, the FPRI, the National War College, and the Richardson Foundation – essentially, the basis for Barnett's network. This was a private request that was unrelated to his role as SFRC chair, which confirms that Fulbright was as concerned of a potential voter backlash in his home state as he was about constitutional propriety. The north Arkansas 'Southern gentleman', often absent in Washington DC, could be vulnerable to a grassroots revolt from the poorer electorate of the rural state. Harding College in Searcy, Arkansas, was a particular site of opposition. College president Dr. George Benson had singled out local congressman J.W. Trimble as being pro-communist to the 1000-strong crowd at the Fort Smith Strategy for Survival meeting, and Benson had led the College's involvement in both the notorious 'Communism on the Map' propaganda film and the 'Project Alert' seminars run out of the Pensacola Naval Air Training facility.³³ With the senator often away from Arkansas, the radical right were now forcing Fulbright to keep an eye on his electoral backyard.

³² Woods, *Fulbright*, pp. 334-336; J. William Fulbright, *Old Myths and New Realities* (New York: Vintage, 1964), p. 5.

³³ Woods, p. 279; Memo on Project Alert, n.d., Box 25 Folder 6 National Education Program 1961-62, Series 4: Defense Dept., Papers of J. William Fulbright, Special Collections, University of Arkansas (hereafter JWF); 'The Story of Project Alert,' n.d., Box 34 Folder 2 Pensacola Seminar 1961-62: Project Alert, Series 4: Defense Dept., JWF. See also Perry Mason (Harding College superintendent) to Fulbright, 3 August 1961 and 22 August 1961, Box 3 Folder 4 (Perry Mason – Minutemen), Series 90: Right Wing Materials, JWF.

The ensuing report from Yingling, entitled 'Memorandum of Propaganda Activities by Military Personnel directed at the Public,' pulled no punches in its declaration that in at least eleven cases Strategy for Survival had made use of "extremely radical right-wing speakers and/or materials, with the probable net result of condemning foreign and domestic policies of the administration in the public mind." Linking everything liberal with socialism, and socialism as being no more than a front for communism and Soviet domination, the report noted that "this view of the communist menace renders foreign aid, cultural exchanges, disarmament negotiations, and other international programs as extremely wasteful, if not actually subversive."³⁴ Equally disturbing was the merging of business interests, religious rhetoric, and can-do military doctrine around a blatantly partisan political platform (a classic cold warrior cocktail). Quoting de Tocqueville, the report noted that the right-wing approach of demanding quick fixes could easily gain appeal among the public, dangerously undercutting alternative diplomatic and foreign policy paths that looked to the longer term. Yingling also picked out *American Strategy in the Nuclear Age* for special consideration, remarking to Fulbright's chief of staff Carl Marcy that the chapter 'What is to be Done?' by Frank Barnett perhaps represented "the genesis of some of the proposals for which there is considerable propaganda."³⁵ On 28 June 1961 Fulbright sent the memo to Kennedy and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, "outraged that the military undertakes to 'educate' the public in any matter going beyond its own specialities."³⁶ Both the President and the Secretary were sympathetic to re-affirming civilian control over the military following the Bay of Pigs fiasco that same April.

But the report had already been leaked, probably via the Pentagon, and both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* ran the story on 21 July 1961. Fulbright responded on 25 July, declaring that the report had nothing to do with the SFRC, represented a private investigation and "I do not intend to release it."³⁷ A congressional backlash began to grow, led by South Carolina Senator Strom Thurmond, a military reserve officer, segregationist, and bane of all things liberal. Demanding retribution, Thurmond obtained Yingling's report through his Pentagon contacts and posted it in the *Congressional Record* on 2 August as part of a direct attack on Fulbright. Thurmond was adamant the "no-win" policy of the new Kennedy administration was "muzzling" the military, and Fulbright was no more than a Southern acolyte of the Eastern liberal establishment.³⁸ Declaring that Fulbright's actions represented "a clandestine assault on the fundamental foundations of our Republic" and a negation of popular sovereignty, Thurmond received support from political allies such as Karl Mundt and Barry Goldwater, who exclaimed: "Perhaps

³⁴ 'Propaganda Activities of Military Personnel directed at the Public,' Box 25 Folder 4: Fulbright Memorandum 1961, Series 4: Defense Dept, F956, 144-B, JWF. Schoenwald, who did not make use of Fulbright's own archive, claims that Fulbright "leaked" the 1958 NSC directive to the press, but he seems to mix up the directive with Yingling's 'Propaganda Activities' report, see *Time for Choosing* p. 102 and n.3.

³⁵ Yingling to Marcy, n.d., *ibid*.

³⁶ Fulbright to Kennedy, 28 June 1961, *ibid*.

³⁷ 'Statement by Senator J.W. Fulbright', 25 July 1961, Box 26 Folder 4, Series 4: Defense Dept, JWF.

³⁸ Jack Bass and Marilyn Thompson, *Ol' Strom; An Unauthorized Biography of Strom Thurmond* (Atlanta: Longstreet, 1998), pp. 191-192.

one must be a Rhodes Scholar in order to be able to state what is good for this Republic of ours.”³⁹

Both Kennedy and McNamara came to Fulbright’s support, the President stating in a press conference that Fulbright had done a valuable service – military personnel had as much right as anyone to freedom of speech, but there was a great need that “they not be exploited for any partisan purpose.”⁴⁰ Defending their purpose, the director of the Institute for American Strategy’s National Military-Industrial Conference, D.A. Sullivan, wrote to Fulbright to claim their “entirely non-partisan” intentions, and the senator also corresponded with James Dougherty and Robert Strauss-Hupé of the FPRI regarding the insinuations in the report (Fulbright hedged his criticism, admitting that the institutional linkages covered in Yingling’s report “do not amount to official support for a viewpoint at variance with that of the Administration”).⁴¹ But the right-wing genie was now out of the bottle. Through his tirades on the Senate floor Thurmond had succeeded in setting Fulbright up as the number one target for the ‘ultras’ around the country, and he capitalized on the mood by obtaining Senate support for the Armed Services Committee to investigate censorship within the Department of Defense. The Committee was led by senior southern Democratic colleagues of Fulbright, Richard Russell and John Stennis, neither of whom were keen on a political battle with the newly installed Kennedy administration. As a result they were able to water down the investigation to a “study and appraisal”, and Stennis himself chaired the Special Preparedness sub-committee established for this purpose.⁴² But Thurmond had nevertheless seized the initiative as a way to mobilize attacks against the Kennedy White House and its suave supporters such as Fulbright.

The Stennis sub-committee held its hearings from January-June 1962.⁴³ It focused on three points: the level of censorship carried out by the State and Defense Departments; the type of information programmes run for US servicemen; and the proper role of military personnel in informing the public on ‘the menace of the cold war’. First in the chair for a two-day session was McNamara himself. The Secretary of Defense remained calm and collected throughout, claiming executive privilege to avoid indicating which offices or personnel in the Pentagon were tasked with reviewing the military’s public role. McNamara went so far as to praise the approach of Frank Barnett at a 1961 National War College Defense Strategy Seminar, where Barnett had responded to criticism of anti-communist “cockle-doodle seminars” with the determination that all of his activities were subject to strict “quality control”.⁴⁴ A

³⁹ ‘Military Anticommunist Seminars and Statements,’ *Congressional Record* Vol. 107, 87th Congress Session 1, 26 July 1961, pp. 13594-13618, which includes the text of Frank Barnett’s ‘Strategy, Survival, and the Private Citizen’. Under pressure, Fulbright eventually released the report on 2 August, disdainful of the fact that he was being asked to reveal “private correspondence,” *Congressional Record* Vol 107, 87th Congress Session 1, 2 August 1961, pp. 14433-14439. Ironically enough, Frank Barnett had himself been a Rhodes Scholar in 1946.

⁴⁰ President’s Press Conference, No. 15, 10 August 1961, Box 26 Folder 5, Series 90: Right Wing Materials, JWF.

⁴¹ Fulbright to James E. Dougherty (acting director, FPRI), 25 July 1961, Box 28 Folder 1 Related Published Materials 1961-62, Series 4: Defense Dept., JWF.

⁴² Woods, p. 287.

⁴³ Woods refers to the sub-committee still being active in September 1962, but this is mistaken. See Woods, p. 287.

⁴⁴ Barnett’s speech ‘The Citizen and the Dynamic American System’ was subsequently included in the verbatim sub-committee report of the hearings. Barnett himself was not asked to appear. Box 26 Folder 6 Armed Services Committee 1961-62, Series 4: Defense Dept., JWF.

string of military personnel followed McNamara before the sub-committee turned its attention to a notorious case that had been reported a year before. General Edwin Walker, commander of the 24th Infantry Division in West Germany and a much-decorated veteran of WW II and the Korean War, had not only publicly questioned the political allegiances of Harry Truman, Dean Acheson, and Eleanor Roosevelt during his command, but had also encouraged his troops to check their congressmen's voting patterns before deciding who to support in the 1960 elections.⁴⁵ It turned out that Walker was a member of the Birch Society and had been distributing materials to those under his command as part of an anti-liberal 'Pro-Blue' propaganda campaign (although the Army confirmed afterwards that this was "not attributable to any program of the John Birch Society").⁴⁶ Having violated the Hatch Act that prohibited federal employees from engaging in politics, Walker was relieved of his command in June 1961, forbidden to speak to the press, and downgraded to a post in Hawaii. The Defense department hoped that in this way the matter would quietly disappear.

Instead of shutting up, Walker resigned from the army on 1 November 1961, forfeiting his pension in order to go public, join Thurmond's campaign, and turn himself into a patriotic New Right *cause célèbre*. Looking to consolidate his new-found fame, he set up office in Dallas, sponsored by the American Oil Corporation, and declaring his wish to run for Texas Governor.⁴⁷ For Thurmond, writing in *The New York Times Magazine*, the Walker case demonstrated a clear breach of freedom of speech against "Sino-Soviet imperialism and the worldwide communist conspiracy." "The threat that communism poses is total in nature and cannot be characterized as either exclusively military or exclusively non-military." Thurmond explained, and military personnel needed to understand their contribution to the wider cause.⁴⁸ Walker's status as a military veteran could have enhanced his reach on the Republican right. His experience as commander of the US regiment that Eisenhower sent to Little Rock in 1957 had convinced Walker that the military was on the wrong path – it was there to fight, and win, not protect civilians in a Civil Rights case.⁴⁹ But an advocate of the Birch Society was a divisive figure around which to build a revolt. Slated to receive an award at a Young Americans for Freedom rally at Madison Square Gardens on 7 March 1962, Walker was removed from the list due to concerns that his extremism would taint the event. His support base even among conservatives appeared to be thin. Nevertheless, Walker's media status meant that the ultra cause was now receiving widespread attention across the political spectrum. The question was whether this could be translated into a more mainstream boost for the broad-based conservative right, focusing on the protection of basic individual freedoms and American values.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Walker's comments on Truman, Acheson and Roosevelt were published in *Overseas Weekly*. See Schoenwald, p. 105.

⁴⁶ Department of the Army memo, 12 June 1961, Box 26 Folder 5 Kennedy Press Conference / DoD Directives 1961, Series 4: Defense Dept., JWF.

⁴⁷ "I am a walking program," says the General,' *Newsweek*, 4 December 1961, pp. 20-22.

⁴⁸ "The Walker Case Issue: Strom Thurmond's View,' *New York Times Magazine*, 14 January 1962, pp. 78-79.

⁴⁹ Perlstein, p. 147.

⁵⁰ John Andrew III, *The Other Side of the Sixties: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of Conservative Politics* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), p. 142.

Walker eventually testified to Stennis's Special Preparedness sub-committee on 4 April 1962. Beginning with an affirmation of civilian control over the military, Walker went on to chastise the fact that "there is no adequate established policy of cold war defense" and "the enemy is undesignated and unidentified." The United States could meet the challenges of first, second, and third dimensional warfare – on land, sea, and air – but it was being defeated, without realizing it, in the fourth dimension – "psychological warfare, or cold war". Irritated by the Pentagon's inconsistent approach to Troop Information, Walker had initiated his own Pro Blue campaign for the 750 officers and 9000 servicemen under his command in West Germany, focusing on the communist threat, the values of Americanism, and the importance of NATO. As he admitted, it "definitely included the hard anti-communist line." Walker argued that the government was either unwilling or unable (or both) to face up to the realities of a global ideological struggle with an implacable enemy.⁵¹ Looking to fill the vacuum by 'telling it like it is' to his troops, Walker's actions exposed the dangerous ambiguities of the 1958 NSC memorandum. The government wanted to mobilize citizens to the Cold War cause, but not mobilize them *too much* because that could ultimately challenge government authority to decide which path was best.

Thurmond had wanted to turn the Senate sub-committee into a revival of the heyday of the House Un-American Activities Committee, but his heavy-handedness soon generated trouble. Staffers he picked for the sub-committee's investigation team ran irregular questionnaires of US marines at military bases ('What is the menace of communism to the Free World?'), wanting to find 'proof' that their superiors were misinforming them about communism and the Cold War. One of the staffers, Lt. Col. Gunther E. Hartel, was himself a retired officer who was active on the conservative 'cold warrior lecture circuit'.⁵² With both Stennis and Russell looking to downplay the case for the sake of Democratic unity and in no way wanting to revive McCarthyism, Thurmond ultimately had to back down. The sub-committee's final report emphasized the essential importance of civilian control of the military. It deemed the review of public statements by military personnel to be "necessary and desirable" but it should avoid being heavy-handed. Troop information programs should be professionalized, and the military were allowed to continue informing the public on the Cold War as long as "partisan, local, and controversial issues" were avoided.⁵³

Fulbright was proved right – the Cold War national security apparatus was getting out of control. Eisenhower himself had warned of this in his infamous farewell speech of January 1961, referring to "a military-industrial complex of vast proportions" and a scientific community funded by the government.⁵⁴ Standing as a Democrat, Walker

⁵¹ 'Statement by Edwin A. Walker before the Special Preparedness Subcommittee, Senate Armed Services Committee, pursuant to Senate Resolution 191,' 4 April 1962, Box 7 Folder 3, Series 90: Right Wing Materials, JWF.

⁵² 'Memorandum for the Secretary of the Navy,' 7 February 1962, Box 3 Folder 5 (Miscellaneous 1961-65), Series 90: Right Wing Materials, JWF; 'Marine Test Episode a Setback for Thurmond in Marine Gag Inquiry,' *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 11 February 1962.

⁵³ See "Military Cold War Indoctrination Examined," *CQ Almanac 1962*, 18th ed. (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1963).

⁵⁴ The original text of Eisenhower's speech is available online: https://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/research/online_documents/farewell_address/Reading_Copy.pdf [accessed 17 January 2017].

lost the Texas primary for the gubernatorial elections in mid-1962 finishing last out of a field of six, but went on to publicly oppose desegregation and was arrested at the University of Mississippi in October 1962 for “inciting rebellion”, having declared that he had been on the “wrong side” at Little Rock five years before. He then embarked on a lecture tour, ‘Operation Midnight Ride’, together with anti-Civil Rights protester Reverend Billy Hargis in 1963, linking Civil Rights directly with communist subversion.⁵⁵ By this stage he was receiving backing only from the far, segregationists, religious radicals and John Birchers who were determined that Civil Rights were a communist plot and that American values were under threat. The Republican party, looking to build a conservative consensus around the prospective presidential candidacy of Barry Goldwater, was not yet willing to entirely shun “irregular conservatives” such as Walker and his supporters. It was a seminal political calculation. Walker’s celebrity in 1961-62 hid the fact that while the “doomsayers and paranoiacs were *in* the movement, they were not *the* movement”, and Schoenwald (one of the few historians to cover the political significance of the Walker case) has rightly claimed that Walker was a marker, “a heretofore little-acknowledged fission-point for conservative factions” whereby those who stuck with the Major General from then on belonged to the radical right, seeing conspiracy where more mainstream conservatives saw ideology.⁵⁶

Conclusion

Although his political ambitions soon faded, Walker continued to be a reference point for extreme patriotic militarism. For conservatives, his case still represented another case of the federal government over-reaching its constitutional powers by interfering in areas that it should leave well alone. Added to that was the alleged crippling of national defense by preventing the military from maintaining an alert understanding of the enemy or its role in combatting it. As Schoenwald argues, the widespread conservative backlash against the Kennedy administration (and Fulbright) brought to the fore key issues on the right that now entered the Republican mainstream: the need for a strong, unrestricted US military; deep suspicion of federal government intervention; the necessity of maintaining communism as the number one threat to American identity and integrity. It also galvanized the Kennedy administration to keep a close eye on the mobilizing right.⁵⁷ The Walker persona of the semi-psychotic super-patriot who placed integrity above democracy also stayed visible in popular culture, inspiring the movie characters General Jack D. Ripper in *Dr. Strangelove* and General James Mattoon Smith in *Seven Days in May*.⁵⁸ Bizarrely, he was also the intended victim of an assassination attempt by Lee Harvey Oswald on 10 April 1963, as stated in the Warren Commission report. Walker did not personally achieve much with his notoriety or public campaign, but he did live on as a symbol of the do-or-die military professional opposing the traitors in Washington.

What has not been fully investigated in the Fulbright-Walker case is the relevance of the episode for Fulbright himself. His up-close-and-personal clash with the radical right had made him sense not only constitutional transgressions but also, due to the

⁵⁵ Schoenwald, p. 106; Perlstein, p. 169.

⁵⁶ Edwards, *Conservative Revolution*, p. 107; Schoenwald, p. 101, 122.

⁵⁷ Schoenwald, pp. 117, 122-123; Perlstein, p. 156.

⁵⁸ Perlstein, p. 283.

right-wing backlash, electoral vulnerability for the first time in twenty years. Critics organized via the Southern States Industrial Council to raise funds and propel Kenneth Jones as a challenger for his senate seat, and Arkansas congressman Dale Alford led a charge to secure Fulbright's defeat, becoming chair of a Congressional Committee for Justice for General Walker (Alford went on to unsuccessfully challenge Orval E. Faubus for Governor in 1962).⁵⁹ Despite these mobilizations, Fulbright won re-election in 1962 with a healthy 214,867 against Kenneth Jones' 98,013. Nevertheless, 243,000 Arkansans voted for Goldwater in 1964 (against 318,000 for Johnson), and in 1968 (when Fulbright was re-elected for a fourth time) third party candidate George Wallace took the state from Republican Richard Nixon and Democrat Hubert Humphrey. In other words, Fulbright maintained a healthy majority in his home state through the 1960s, but this did not prevent voters from shifting allegiance when it came to presidential elections. Fulbright's archive in Fayetteville contains all the correspondence received on the military propaganda investigation and the Walker case during 1961-62, marked according to its supportive or oppositional message. It is clear that Fulbright kept updated on the feedback and relied on his Arkansas allies to warn him of trouble in his own backyard.⁶⁰ In terms of the policy stance of the United States, there is no doubt that the episode convinced Fulbright of the inherent dangers in maintaining a long-term state of readiness against the Soviet enemy. In 'The Cold War in American Life' Fulbright made clear that this had to be overcome:

"We must overcome the "cold war" mentality that has persuaded millions of sensible and intelligent citizens that the prosecution of the cold war is out only truly essential national responsibility, that missiles and nuclear armaments and space flights are so vital to the safety of the nation that it is almost unpatriotic to question their cost and their proliferation, and that in the face of these necessities the internal requirements of the country, with respect to its schools and cities and public services, must be left for action at some remote time in the future."⁶¹

Fulbright's suspicions towards the US military's influence in politics and society would never go away, and this was a key factor in his critical attitude towards the Vietnam War after 1965. In 1970, fully disaffected by US foreign policy in general, he published *The Pentagon Propaganda Machine*, which delved further into how military and business interests combined to promote an ever-increasing defence budget. Fulbright believed in the inherent progressive purpose of the US role in the world, but this could be distorted by interests that sought to play on the fears of citizens and the ambitions of politicians. Speaking to the National War College in October 1961, at the height of the right-wing attacks against him, Fulbright stated that US foreign policy was aimed at "the very gradual improvement of human life on earth," for which "a little of a sense of mission" was necessary. Above all, "A

⁵⁹ Woods, p. 288; 'Alford scores Fulbright's memo and urges voters to defeat him,' *New York Times*, 9 August 1961. See also correspondence in Box 7 Folder 1 (Snowden Campaign – Southern States Industrial Council), Series 90: Right Wing Materials, JWF.

⁶⁰ Boxes 28-33, Series 4: Defense Dept. are primarily filled with this correspondence, with the letters of support slightly outnumbering the critics. Some supporters pulled no punches. To a moderate letter of complaint sent from a Washington citizen, the editor of *The Commercial* replied "We no longer print crank letters from out of state."

⁶¹ Fulbright, *Old Myths and New Realities*, p. 115.

consuming messianism will surely lead us to false hopes and frustration.”⁶² But what is ‘a little sense of mission’ in practice, and who would decide what is excessive? Fulbright’s decision to investigate the scale of grassroots military propaganda in June 1961 brought these questions to the fore, in doing so exposing to scrutiny the socio-political and economic terrain of the cold warrior landscape and how it represented a threat to the basic values of US democracy. This would haunt the Democrats through the rest of the decade and the Vietnam war.

The Fulbright-Walker case clearly marks a pivotal moment when the cold warriors came out against the transition from Cold War to Détente, displaying the deep-seated unease in American society. Once again, it seemed that political capital could be gained from declaring opponents to be ‘soft on communism’ and treasonous to the nation. The Republican party initially chose to accommodate these views in the interests of forging a broad coalition around presidential candidate Barry Goldwater in 1964. This backfired, but the seeds had been sown for the party’s later transformation. As Walter Hixson remarked, “the briefest glance at the political phenomena of the 1980s – the personnel of the Reagan administration, the leadership of various right wing interest groups and political action committees, the institutionalization of a right-wing intellectual community – would suggest that in a more profound way the ‘radical right’ of the late 1950s and early 1960s had a tremendous durability.”⁶³ The Fulbright-Walker case therefore adds an extra dimension to Stephanson’s interpretation of the early 1960s as being a pivotal moment in the transition from Cold War to Détente.

⁶² William J. Fulbright, ‘Public Policy and Military Responsibility,’ 21 August 1961, Box 26 Folder 4, Series 90: Right Wing Materials, JWF.

⁶³ Walter Hixson, *Search for the American Right Wing: An Analysis of the Social Science Record 1955-1987* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 72-73