

WHEELING, W. VA.
INTELLIGENCER

M. 21,660

OCT 26 1965

Army Rule

Fifty Billion Military Dollars Could Be Wrong Dictating Foreign Policy

Senator J. William Fulbright, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has come as close as the proprieties will permit to accusing the Pentagon of formulating this Government's foreign policy.

What the Senator proposes, and what he at least infers the Defense Department and Central Intelligence Agency have prevented, is a suspension of our bombing raids on North Viet Nam. The purpose, as he states it, would be to create a more favorable atmosphere in which to conduct peace negotiations. If the Communists failed to respond, he says, we could always resume the bombing operations.

The practicability of what the Senator proposes may be open to question. We suspended our air attacks once before, and while it is true that the moratorium — four days — afforded little opportunity for the machinery of diplomacy to get into gear, it also is true that the enemy interpreted it as a sign of weakness and gave no evidence of a willingness to repair to the conference table. So it very well might be that doing again what Fulbright suggests, especially viewed in the light of recent anti-war and anti-draft demonstrations in the United States, might produce an effect di-

rectly opposite to that he has in mind. In any event, it would seem that suspension of hostilities must be a two-way affair if it is to hold any promise of constructive achievement.

Entirely aside from the merits of the Senator's strategy, however, what he has to say about military influence on foreign policy is of interest from the long range as well as from the immediate point of view. His reference to the "great persuasive powers" of Secretary McNamara and to the Defense Department's control of over 50 per cent of the Nation's entire budget were in no degree softened by the hasty assurance that Mr. Johnson is in full control of foreign policy and is "not by any means under the dominance of anybody."

Dominance? Perhaps not. But if, as Fulbright also says, the Defense Department in an advisory capacity "is a very influential influence, a very strong influence at the present time," where's the essential difference?

Civilian control of the military has been, historically, a basic tenet of American government. But if the Secretary of Defense calls the shots for the President to fire, the military, it would appear, has taken over in fact if not in name.