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A Conversation With Senator J. William Fulbright: On Soviet Leaders, the "Arrogance of Superpowers," and the "Impossible" U.S. Electoral Process

University of Miami
Graduate School
of International Studies ✓

Institute for Soviet and East European Studies

Graduate School of International Studies
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A Conversation With Senator J. William Fulbright: On Soviet Leaders, the “Arrogance of Superpowers,” and the “Impossible” U.S. Electoral Process

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A Note from the Editor

IT IS A GREAT PLEASURE to bring to our readers another ISEES occasional paper, the seventh in the series, based on a dialogue with Senator J. William Fulbright, a distinguished member of the Visiting Committee of the Graduate School of International Studies (GSIS) and a great University of Miami supporter. Following this editorial comment, GSIS Dean Ambler H. Moss, Jr. will introduce Senator Fulbright and describe the significance of his service to the nation. Here I would restate ISEES objectives in publishing the occasional papers and thank all those who have made their publication possible.

The primary objective of the Occasional Papers Series is to sponsor bipartisan dialogue on key issues of foreign affairs and U.S. national security policies, particularly as they concern East/West and East/South relations. In this interest, ISEES has organized several debates and conferences on timely issues--the Geneva Summit of 1986, Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika*, terrorism, conflict in Nicaragua, the war in Afghanistan. Richard Pipes, Jerry Hough, Norman Podhoretz, William Maynes, Robert Leiken, Susan Kaufman Purcell, Arturo Cruz, Alfredo Cesar, Francisco Lopez, Mark Falcoff, Ambassador Harry W. Shlaudeman, Margaret Crahan, Wayne Smith, Ambler Moss and Vernon Aspaturian are some of the prominent speakers whose views are featured in this series.

With the help of supporters in Miami, ISEES has sponsored meetings for university students and faculty and the community at large with nationally prominent figures including Zbigniew Brzezinski, Congressman Dante Fascell, Ambassador Vernon A. Walters, General William E. Odom, and Ambassador Jack F. Matlock, Jr. Their presentations and dialogues with ISEES students have provided the material for the occasional papers. The fifth paper in the series describes the Council

on Foreign Relations group visit with Mikhail Gorbachev in Moscow in 1987, as reported by one of those present, John Temple Swing, Executive Vice President of the Council.

The occasional papers have generated positive response and dialogue in the local press—*The Miami Herald*, *The Miami News*—as well as in the national press—*The Washington Post*. The sixth in the series, "The Strategic Significance of Afghanistan's Struggle for Freedom" (April 1988), is based on General Odom's address at an ISEES conference on Afghanistan, cosponsored by ISEES sister Institute of Middle Eastern Studies. We were very glad to see excerpts from this paper published in *The Washington Post* on May 6, 1988. Because of the ongoing great interest in Afghanistan, we reprint that column here.

As we are proud of the accomplishments of this series, we regret its shortcomings. We regret that we failed to identify former Senator Charles Mathias, Jr. and Harold Brown in the photograph that appeared in Occasional Paper No. 5, "Impressions of Gorbachev", by John Temple Swing. I wish to correct the error in my introduction to General Odom's paper, where Dr. Odom is identified as one of only three Soviet specialists to have served as a senior member of the National Security Council (NSC). Other former academic specialists on the Soviet Union who have served in senior positions at the NSC are Zbigniew Brzezinski and Richard Pipes. Jack Matlock, Helmut Sonnenfeldt, William G. Hyland, Fritz Ermarth, and Ty Cobb are the other distinguished Soviet specialists who have served in this capacity.

Publication of the ISEES Occasional Papers Series—like the ISEES Special Studies, the ISEES Working Papers, and the ISEES Reports—would be impossible without the financial and moral support of an expanding group of donors whose names are listed on the cover preceding this comment.

I am indebted to GSIS Dean Ambler Moss for helping to support this project; to Univer-

sity of Miami President Edward T. Foote, II, for his encouragement and assistance in arranging the visit of his father-in-law Senator J. William Fulbright; and, for their continued encouragement, to Dr. Rita Bornstein, Vice President of Development, and Dr. William Butler, Vice President of Student Affairs. I also acknowledge the dedicated work of three members of the ISEES Editorial Board--John Cunningham, ISEES Senior Research Associate, Virginia Valenta, and Richard Bard,

"Viewpoint" editor, *The Miami Herald*. Without their diligent work, this and other publications would not have become possible.

Jiri Valenta
Chairman of the
Editorial Board

Introduction

J. WILLIAM FULBRIGHT is one of the most distinguished men to have served in the United States Senate. His education includes three years at Oxford on a Rhodes scholarship and a law degree earned at George Washington University. After joining the law faculty of the University of Arkansas, he became that university's president. Fulbright was elected to the House of Representatives in 1942 and to the Senate in 1944, where he served for thirty years. He became Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1959, and held that position for the next fifteen years.

Senator Fulbright is remembered for his principled criticism of the Johnson administration's policy in Vietnam. Although Fulbright had introduced the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in 1964 at President Johnson's request, in 1965 he began to reevaluate the desirability of the U.S. presence in Vietnam, and, as the conflict escalated, he became increasingly critical of the administration's behavior there. In 1968, he launched a series of hearings which determined that the administration had misled Congress in order to facilitate passage of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. His powerful voice lent credence to the anti-war movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, and helped to popularize the sentiments that led to the withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Vietnam in 1975.

It may be argued, however, that his greatest contribution to U.S. foreign policy is his sponsorship of the famous scholarship program that bears his name. Since its inception in 1946, the Fulbright Scholarship Program has promoted and financed over 160,000 educational exchanges between the United States and many other countries. In the words of Ronald McCallum, Master of Pembroke College, Oxford, "Senator Fulbright is responsible for the largest and most significant movement of scholars across the face of this earth since the fall of Constantinople."

Senator Fulbright has authored several books, including the best-seller, *The Arrogance of Power* (1967). He has received many awards, including an honorary Ph.D. from the University of Miami in 1987. He recently served as a member of the Committee on the Constitutional System, a group of eminent American citizens who met to reconsider the U.S. Constitution on its bicentennial anniversary.

During a recent visit to his son-in-law, University of Miami President Edward T. Foote II, Senator Fulbright graciously accepted an invitation from Professor Jiri Valenta and me to participate in a seminar sponsored by the Institute for Soviet and East European Studies (ISEES) at the University of Miami's Graduate School of International Studies (GSIS). In attendance were students from Dr. Valenta's Soviet Foreign Policy seminar, among them ISEES senior research associates Alvaro Taboada, John Cunningham (editor of the ISEES Occasional Papers Series), Ali Sheikh and Craig Simon, and ISEES research fellows Andrea Ewart and Roberto Lozano. Also present was Professor Ralph Magnus of the United States Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California.

The conversation began with a discussion of Senator Fulbright's first-hand impressions of the Soviet leaders he has known. It progressed to a wider consideration of ways in which the features of the U.S. political system influence this country's foreign policy decision-making process. The Senator's recent service on the Committee on the Constitutional System may have influenced his observations, as many of his comments during the seminar reflect a passionate commitment to the improvement of the structure and functions of the U.S. government.

Readers familiar with the ISEES Occasional Papers Series will have little difficulty in distinguishing Senator Fulbright's views from those of past contributors such as Zbigniew Brzezinski, Dante Fascell, and William E. Odom. However, they will also find the

Senator's remarks to be balanced (for he holds both superpowers, in their arrogance, to be responsible for the difficulties which have characterized their postwar rivalry), and bipartisan (for he blames the American political system, rather than either of its parties, for the shortcomings of the policy process in the post-World War II era).

I am delighted that the ideas of this living legend have been brought to publication in an ISEES Occasional Paper.

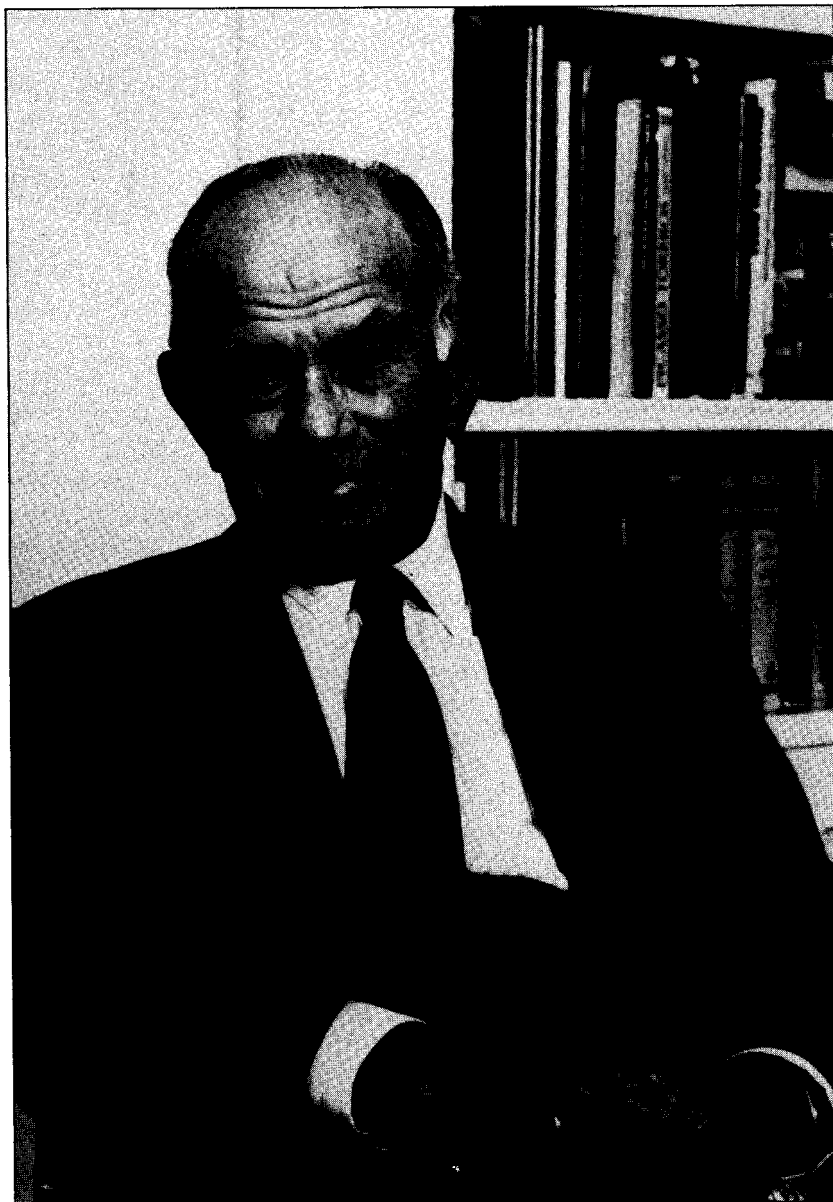
Ambler H. Moss, Jr.

Dean

Graduate School of International Studies

University of Miami

February 16, 1988



Senator J. William Fulbright

The Soviet Union and the United States

SENATOR FULBRIGHT: The most essential difference between the U.S. and Soviet political structures has to do with the distribution of decision-making power. In the Soviet Union, decisions are always made, not by great masses of people, but by some person, or a very small group of persons. The Politburo has something like twelve or thirteen members. But the leader is Gorbachev. His opinion on an issue is decisive. That is what the Soviets call "democratic centralism."

In our democracy, everybody is *supposed* to participate. However, we have learned through the Iran-Contra hearings that the president has been an overwhelmingly decisive figure, advised by just a few people in the National Security Council, among them former CIA Director, William Casey. The press just this morning has revealed that Casey had a great influence on the President. [Excerpts from Bob Woodward's *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA, 1981-1987* had been published in major newspapers that day.] Mr. Casey's opinions about these matters were extremely influential because President Reagan has had such little experience in government. Some very harsh comments have emerged: For example, Mr. Casey allegedly said that President Reagan had admitted leaving show business for a career in government because he was not a good enough movie actor. Strangely, there has been an attitude in this country that, if one cannot do anything else, one can become a politician. I used to run into that sort of thinking when I was a professor. Despite their lack of qualifications, often these adventitious leaders are entrusted with our major political decisions.

Now, in regard to U.S.-Soviet relations, I have been condemned as what is called a peacenik. I have always thought that we should make more conciliatory gestures to the Russians. I was chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for fifteen years. Mr. Khrushchev spoke to the committee in 1959,

not long after I became chairman. He had odd mannerisms, quite different from those to which we were accustomed. Khrushchev came to our committee because the Speaker of the House [John McCormick] so objected to his presence that he would not permit a joint session to be convened, although it was customary to do so for visitors of such importance.

Dr. Valenta: Would you mind giving us a little insight into Khrushchev's unusual mannerisms?

Senator Fulbright: You will remember the way he pounded his shoe on the table at the United Nations. Well, he was also very gruff in his approach to people, very blunt. He looked his part, you know; he was a rough-appearing fellow. However, I found him rather attractive. He was so like some of the hillbillies I grew up with in the Ozark Mountains. And he was quite frank and outspoken.

The refusal to allow him to speak before a joint session was an insult to Khrushchev. After all, he *did* represent an important country, and, in itself, that violation of protocol was bad. He came to our committee because people from the State Department had called and said that they were embarrassed. It was not the fault of the State Department, but rather the Speaker of the House, who was a strongly confirmed anti-communist. So I invited Khrushchev to the Senate Committee, that being the next best thing.

Khrushchev had spoken to the Press Club that day for two hours and was scheduled to arrive at five o'clock. My office was nearby, and so I strolled over there at about five minutes to five. Mr. Khrushchev was already there, eager to get to work. He came with Mr. Troyanovskii, his interpreter, and perhaps one other person. Khrushchev was not surrounded by anything resembling the corps of secret service agents that usually accompanies one of our heads of state. As to his speech, he had prepared nothing. He spoke extem-

poraneously, very spontaneously, with a great deal of spirit and mirth. Mr. Troyanovskii was a magnificent interpreter. Having grown up in Washington, where his father had been the Soviet ambassador, he spoke English as well as he spoke Russian.

The interview was reported by the Committee on U.S.-Soviet Relations. We did not have an official stenographer at the time, which was considered appropriate under these circumstances. Much later, one of the staff transcribed the session for publication. The whole discourse is very interesting, but especially Khrushchev's statement that he knew we could get along well together if the United States would just recognize that a new community—a new kind of society—had appeared on the international scene. He meant, of course, the society born of the Russian Revolution. If we were willing to accept Soviet legitimacy, he said, there would be no problem in getting along, and our differences could be negotiated and solved. The clear implication was that there was no possibility of conciliation or negotiation of a future settlement without our recognition of their legitimacy at the outset.

That theme has been restated by Mr. Gorbachev's group and it has been expressed less officially by Russian commentators. To me, this indicates a feeling on their part that the United States is not willing to accept Soviet legitimacy, or to deal with the Soviet leadership as its political equal. Khrushchev had said, rather dramatically, "You do not have to like us. You do not have to approve of us." He pointed to the wart on his cheek and said, "I do not approve of it. I do not like it. But I have learned to live with it."

I think that the phenomenon illustrated so graphically above is a very significant aspect of Russian thinking. The psychology of the Soviet-American relationship has always been provocative. We Americans have always had a supercilious attitude, never accepting the Soviets as equals. During his first press conference as U.S. President, Mr. Reagan denounced the Soviet leadership as being capable of any crime to achieve their purposes. He later described the Soviet Union as

"the focus of evil." Reagan could not have been more derogatory in his statements about the Russians, although in Geneva he did make a gesture toward correcting that tendency.

Now we see a very serious attempt in the Soviet Union to reform the economy. This will inevitably displace some old-timers who have been marking time, and who have grown accustomed to certain privileges. They will present great opposition. Reform is always touch and go. Any serious reformer will run into that problem. If he is not successful in a couple of years he is very likely to be supplanted—the same way Khrushchev was.

I think that we missed a great opportunity with Khrushchev. By not treating him as an equal, we missed a chance to go forward. We had some real progress, such as the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty of 1963. This agreement came as a result of what was, in my opinion, the first conciliatory gesture that we made to the Soviet Union: Jack Kennedy's speech at the American University in June 1963. The speech was widely reported and has been discussed in several books. In it, Kennedy recognized the Russian people; he even made some tribute to their history and what they have gone through, things that are very sensitive to the Russians. They appreciate it when others recognize the difficulties they have had. As you know, about two months after this speech, we signed the Test Ban Treaty. I went to Moscow for the signing. There was a big celebration and we were all in the best of humor.

Valenta: Were you able to get any sense that some of the Soviet marshals did not support the treaty, or that Khrushchev's removal was then being cooked up?

Fulbright: No. I do not speak Russian, and I was not that intimate with them. I had no sense of their inner political machinations. I was just so pleased that we were signing the treaty. It was the first gesture, and, I thought, a great step forward. No doubt there was something brewing. There are a lot of people in Russia—just like we have Mr. [Richard] Perle here in Washington—who do not want agreements.

The agreement did not please everybody, but Khrushchev also had difficulties with his economy that could have been more responsible for his colleagues' unrest.

Valenta: When you were there, did you sense that Leonid Brezhnev was important enough to become the next General Secretary?

Fulbright: I did not get an impression of that. Brezhnev sat across the table, but I had no idea he was going to be the successor. I was an amateur, a Senator. I was representing Arkansas. All Senators are amateurs in foreign relations. We are not experts. Details of the kind to which you refer in your question about Brezhnev traditionally were handled by the State Department. This is another subject in which I am interested: the nature of our government, especially our electoral system. The lack of continuity in the Senate is a great disadvantage for our country. I think that it is deplorable. None of us is really an expert in foreign affairs, although I have been involved a little longer than others. At least I had the experience of living in England, and I spent a year in Austria when I was young. Perhaps I knew far more than the average Senator, but I had not been to Russia, and was not an expert on Russia. I was far more knowledgeable on England, France and those countries with which I had had first-hand relations.

Valenta: You said you met Brezhnev. How did he strike you when you dealt with him later on?

Fulbright: Well, he was not as attractive to me as Khrushchev. He was a rather mushy individual. The only time I saw him later on, when he came to this country, he got a little irritated.

Valenta: He became a good friend of Richard Nixon.

Fulbright: Yes. That's right. Returning to my second encounter with Brezhnev, at first he was very pleasant. I had asked him to lunch at the Senate, but the administration vetoed that for security reasons. (They were very concerned about everybody's security, and they are even more so now.) So the Foreign Relations Committee met him for lunch at the guest quarters at Blair House, which was considered to be more secure. Anyway, Brezhnev was

there, and two of my colleagues who were deeply interested in the Jewish emigration problem--Jacob Javits and Clifford Case--both attacked him on it. He would say that there were only a thousand or five thousand or so people whose requests to emigrate had been turned down. The Senators challenged him, saying that this was not true, that he was not accurate, that he was misrepresenting the numbers. Brezhnev finally got irritated and sent one of his assistants to get the official figures. A red leather booklet was brought in, but that didn't settle anything--they had quite a little exchange. Brezhnev was very annoyed. Finally, he said, "I came here to make things good, not to have a quarrel," and that ended the conversation. The Jewish emigration issue was a big problem; it destroyed detente. I guess you are familiar with the Jackson-Vanik amendment in the trade bill: It grew out of that same problem. This issue has always troubled our relations with the Soviet Union.

Question: Did anybody ask Brezhnev about his wife? You know, she was reported to be Jewish.

Fulbright: I did not ask him.

Valenta: Was he friendly on the Jewish issue, or did he resent it?

Fulbright: He resented the challenge to his truthfulness.

Valenta: There was a large emigration, if one looks at it objectively.

Fulbright: Emigration went up sharply until the Jackson-Vanik amendment. The Soviets are very sensitive, and when Henry Jackson attempted to force them publicly to comply with U.S. legislative demands, they immediately resented it. Emigration dropped to practically nothing. It had gotten quite high, around 50,000 per year--much higher than ever before. But once the Jackson amendment was added to the trade bill, emigration plummeted. This defeated not only Jackson's purpose, but also the whole program of detente, which thereafter gradually unraveled.

Valenta: Was it your feeling that Brezhnev was a collective- leadership man? You said that Khrushchev was his own man, accompanied by just one translator. Was Brezhnev there with others, or by himself?

Fulbright: Under Stalin, the Soviet Union went through a period of extreme dictatorship, but I think that now, the Soviet leaders are subject to some collegial restraints. Brezhnev wrote articles and made speeches about his collegial government, saying that he was responsible to his colleagues on the Politburo and the Central Committee. There were various estimates, you know, that he could not make decisions alone. And when [Premier Alexei] Kosygin came to meet President Johnson, there was a public statement that Kosygin was not authorized to talk about some of the things that Johnson wanted to talk about.

Valenta: What else can you say about the differences in personality and style?

Fulbright: Khrushchev was always active-- talking and joking. He always had a lot of earthy jokes to tell. I wish I could remember all of them.

Valenta: Some of them cannot be translated.

Fulbright: He was like some of our politicians, very good at anecdotal jokes. He was very spontaneous, a buoyant kind of fellow; neither Kosygin nor Brezhnev had his spirit. Brezhnev's language seemed to be a little more polished than Khrushchev's.

John Cunningham: I am interested in how the United States can influence Soviet domestic politics at the top. Do you think that the Reagan administration is dealing with Gorbachev's situation correctly? What can be done, and is it in our interest, in any case, to support Gorbachev?

Fulbright: I would think so. He strikes me as a man who is very eager to make agreements. I was very impressed by his unilateral suspension of all nuclear testing. To me that was very constructive. I do not understand why we did not respond and do the same, unless we are just determined to go forward with the arms race. There is a theory that many

people want to do just that. I tend to think Mr. Perle is one of their leaders. As they see it, the United States is so much richer than the Soviet Union, that if we just keep up the pressure in the arms race, the Soviet economy will collapse before ours will. Then, supposedly, the Soviets would do whatever we like. In other words, if we keep up the contest the Soviets will become subservient to our wishes. I think that is totally unreal. There is, of course, no world without risk, but if we go the other way and reduce our expenditures on nuclear weapons, the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), and so forth, we can allow our economy to grow. Yes, the Soviets could become stronger and even more formidable opponents if their attitudes do not change. These changes take a long time, but I believe that people's attitudes will change. Such a generalization can be criticized, but I am certain that neither superpower will ever be able to deprive the other of the capacity for unlimited destruction with nuclear weapons. To keep building more and more of them accomplishes nothing.

The only alternative is to try to change attitudes, to change people's will. Mr. Reagan himself has changed, in talking about the need to increase trust and confidence in each other's purposes and attitudes. Even Mr. Nixon was a great advocate of what he called "confidence-building measures." In the context of military might, I happen to think that exchanges and communication are the most efficient confidence-building measures. There are some disparities in certain categories, but much of the argument at the time of SALT I was misinformed. Senator Jackson made a great to-do that there were certain categories of weapons whereof they had more than we; but there were others of which we had more than they. Jackson simply could not stand being outnumbered in any category. The two superpowers have sufficient equality to deter each other. The theory of deterrence is guaranteed by the Anti-Ballistic Missile System Treaty (ABM Treaty). The significance of the ABM Treaty is the recognition therein by both

countries that there is no effective defense against nuclear war. In other words, the whole population of each side is hostage to the other. I view this as an efficient deterrent.

Valenta: But how do we know that the Soviets accept our concept of deterrence?

Fulbright: Neither side is going risk a war with the other as long as this parity exists. Now, neither side, even in its wildest moments, is planning to attack the other. The trouble with SDI is that, in appearing to build a defense against nuclear attack, deterrence would no longer be effective. SDI is unsettling. It destroys the basic theory of the ABM treaty.

As long as we have deterrence, we can afford to respond to Gorbachev's offer of a test moratorium. This would be a significant gesture and a tremendous boost to his political prestige at home. Perhaps he is having trouble with domestic critics who complain about his reform because it eliminates some people's jobs and makes the others work harder. An important foreign policy success would help to offset domestic hardships. That is politics; in an imperfect world, one thing offsets another.

When I represented Arkansas, if I did a good job representing the cotton growers, the chicken growers, and the soybean industry, then I had a certain leeway to take a position on the Vietnam war that my constituents did not necessarily approve. I could still survive, at least briefly. I could survive because they forgave what they considered my deficiency and my lack of understanding of Vietnam or Russia. I was good at the other things. That is the way it works. I think it would work the same way with Mr. Gorbachev. If he is successful in his relations with us, his constituents will forgive him for being so mean about the reforms at home. That is a generalization. Nobody knows for sure how far he can go. Collegiality does affect Gorbachev, as it affected Mr. Khrushchev, who, in frustration, did a foolish thing by putting missiles in Cuba. When we forced them out, his failure embarrassed the country. Then they got rid of him. That was the last straw.

Professor Ralph Magnus: Do you think that the Soviets in Afghanistan are making more mistakes than we did in Vietnam?

Fulbright: I sure do, and I think they are very embarrassed. Their Afghan campaign is very expensive, and it has cost them a great deal of support, even among their own allies. Nobody approves of it. The British found Afghanistan to be an ungovernable group of tribes. I do not think the Soviets are going to get a great deal of profit out of their Afghan policy. I think it is a mistake.

Q: Are they are going to leave?

Fulbright: I think that they will. If we make progress, if there is a change in attitude between us and the Russians, it is much more likely. If they think that they are going to have to stay fully armed, if they fear a real war with us, then they are going to keep all the assets they can. This pattern we see of relaxation in their human rights policies, the domestic reforms, and all of that, in many ways depends upon progress with us. Nixon began the first period of detente, and it looked as if it would develop. This one might improve. Psychologically, it would be the natural thing.

Valenta: Concretely, what can we do to help Gorbachev? He has talked about Afghanistan being a 'bleeding wound' in Soviet foreign policy, but, so far, we have seen no sign of a Soviet retreat.

Fulbright: As I have already indicated, I think that we ought to move much more vigorously in the field of arms control. I grant that this is difficult. Other, less sensitive, confidence-building measures are joint ventures. In 1972, aside from SALT I and the ABM Treaty, a lot of joint projects were set in motion. One that made progress was linking up in space. These measures created an attitude that we could change the way we viewed one another. But other projects were abandoned, such as joint research projects in the fields of pollution and medicine. We even had a commission to rewrite our history books so that each side did not represent the other in such a negative fashion. You know, it is traditional for a nation to teach bad things about rival countries to its young. I remember when I was in school reading histories of Waterloo and the Napoleonic period. In comparing them, I was struck by the extent to which the authors' nationalities affected their frames of reference,

and the ways in which they treated the period. And I suspect that their versions of the Napoleonic Wars were entirely different from the real conflicts that took place. There was no objectivity in the recording of historical fact. The same is true of the manner in which the Russians and Americans have depicted one another.

Q: Do you think that the U.S. should link future progress on arms control with Afghanistan?

Fulbright: One cannot link everything, as a practical matter. The main thing is to try to make progress with Russia per se. Nixon managed detente when we were in Vietnam doing all sorts of things of which they did not approve. The Soviets did not link arms control progress to Vietnam at that time. I do not know why we should draw linkages to Afghanistan now. It is proper for us to voice disapproval, but there is a big difference between voicing disapproval and refusing to do anything in other areas. We have to move forward on the central issues. To be sure, it is difficult. I do not think that one can expect a sudden change as a result of some magnificent treaty that solves all the differences. That is why I keep emphasizing the long term. Of course, most people are not interested in the long term. They want solutions to materialize right now. But the long term is much surer to bring results. There is a real value in the pursuit of joint ventures over a period of years, putting aside other differences.

The joint ventures that I like are educational exchanges. They are not as sensitive as negotiations on arms control. We have had good exchange agreements with other communist countries, like Yugoslavia and now the People's Republic of China. The first Fulbright Program in China was suspended when we did not recognize the Chinese Revolution in 1949. It has since been reinstated. After Afghanistan, however, Mr. Carter said that there would be no more agreements with the Russians. Yet even though Carter boycotted the Olympics, imposed a trade embargo, and suspended wheat sales, a very small exchange program continued: the agreement we had under IREX [International Council on

Research and Exchange]. It was so small it got overlooked, I guess. It slipped through. IREX is funded partly by Fulbright programs, and partly by others. It is a very good program, but it is much too small. As I have already said, there are a number of people in Russia who were once students here under the Fulbright program. We have had some of the best, I am often told. The people best informed about Russia in this country are the people who have been on the Fulbright Program. They have lived as the Russians do, under conditions that our diplomats and officials have never experienced. The confidence-building approach, typified by these exchange programs, develops a background which then makes possible more sensitive agreements in other areas. That is my theory.

Andrea Ewart: I certainly agree with your general point that contact between societies and cultures diminishes the possibility of war. At the same time, the U.S.-Soviet rivalry is being extended into the Third World. In my interpretation, what happened in Vietnam, and what is happening in Afghanistan, is that the superpowers are contending for spheres of influence. Do you think that this system of contacts can be effective in regard to this competition?

Fulbright: I think that you are quite right. We have each been contending with the other. We began it with our aid program after World War II. We had money, and everybody else was broke, so we began to distribute aid in a big way. I was in favor of it. We had the Point Four program under Truman--basically an educational program to teach people the most modern methods of production. Rather than give them wheat and finished goods, we wanted to teach them how to provide for themselves. It was a good program, perhaps the best we have ever had. Gradually, we began to support all kinds of people. The Marshall Plan was a classic success, but it dealt with the highly developed, civilized countries whose industries had been ruined by the war. All they needed was an injection of capital to

restart their machinery. They had the people and the know-how. They knew how to rebuild if they had the means. It worked very well.

Well, the Russians could not match us at that time. They did not have the funds and could not do much. But they did have the Chinese Revolution, which was something they hoped would keep going, winning more converts to communism. We were scared to death by what we called the "yellow peril." This fear stemmed from our traditional attitudes. All this competition will continue. I do not expect that we will get over that sense of competing for the allegiance of other countries. Each super-power believes that its system of organizing society is the better one. Mr. Khrushchev bragged that his socialist system would outperform our capitalist one. He went to great lengths in his speech before the Foreign Relations Committee to say that we had misinterpreted his comment about burying us. We had taken it to mean that he was going to drop bombs on us. His interpretation was that his system would outperform ours. I think he meant it. He used to brag about how socialism was going to give people an opportunity, how his country would produce more goulash for its people than we could for our people.

Q: Does Gorbachev's economic reform prove that even the Soviet leaders now realize that some elements of capitalist economics are indispensable to the further success of the Soviet system?

Fulbright: Well, I don't realize this, and I am not altogether sure that they have reached this conclusion. Consider the performance in Hungary and the change in China. The Chinese are beginning to make some progress. What we do is not very credible to them. But what they are doing, I think, is very impressive.

Capitalism has its faults, too. I have seen suffering here. We are having our troubles, and they are not isolated incidents. We have begun deregulating everything, which I think is stupid. A great and complex society cannot be run on the principle of "every man for himself." You cannot use a "back to the jungle" procedure. There has to be some government

intervention. All the best-run countries I know of use government intervention. Look around the world and observe which countries seem to be performing well for their citizens. The reason that they are performing well is not discussed in the papers. The only states one reads about in the papers are those that are having trouble. And there is an awful lot written about the United States recently, especially at its highest levels of government.

Q: Do you have any comments on the excerpts from Mr. Woodward's book, which was released recently, or on the situation with Admiral Poindexter and Colonel North?

Fulbright: Our government, it seems to me, is putting up a very bad show. I have always thought that a government's example is far more persuasive than its propaganda. No matter what the Voice of America or the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) says, foreigners look at what is going on here and they cannot believe it. USIA propaganda is not effective. We have an enormous propaganda machine. The government spends ten times more on propaganda than on exchanges, but I think that the exchange programs have done ten times more good than the propaganda programs. Opinions differ, of course, but I think that our public relations performance creates an image of our country conditions that is far worse than the reality. Our national government is not as well run as the rest of the country is. Most of the states are pretty well run. My state is very well run. We have not had a real scandal—even a rumor of a scandal—in fifty years, or anything comparable to what comes out in *The Washington Post* every day in reference to the national government.

Q: You mentioned the importance to the rest of the world of exchange programs. From my travels around the world, I gather that many people know the name Fulbright, even though they may not know the English language. They know a number of things about America, and Fulbright is one of them. I am curious, given all the benefits that Fulbright programs and similar exchange programs have brought to the world, as to why Americans are woefully ignorant of the rest of the world.

Fulbright: They *are* woefully ignorant. It only reflects the fact that we have not given any priority to education. Generally, basic public education is deplorable in this country. Not only is the level of education very bad in our public schools, the Fulbright Program has reached very few people. Only 55,000 Americans out of 250 million have participated. A number of them, however, have become what I consider influential people. They are teachers, particularly, and they certainly bring a different attitude to their students. Some of them are turning up in politics and business as well. When one looks at a smaller country like Japan, one sees how many very influential people at the highest levels have been in this program. They took full advantage because they needed it. We do not need it in the same way. Financially, our students are much better off. The Japanese were down and out after the war. In 1953, their best students took advantage of it. They came here, and now they have become leaders in business, academia, and government. It makes a big impression there. In many of the smaller countries--Norway, Finland, Sweden--one sees a far bigger percentage of Fulbright participants at the higher echelons than one does here.

They are more interested. Theirs are older cultures; ours is younger, only two hundred years old this year. Most others are one thousand, two thousand, and, in the case of Japan, four thousand years old. That is the big difference. We are a young, rich country. People once could get rich here without any education. They cannot do that in Japan without going to a major university. So there is a great incentive for discipline and education in those countries.

Also, we have such a disparate ethnic and cultural mix; our whole political environment is different.

U.S. Presidential Elections

THIS RAISES ANOTHER issue: our approach to public affairs. The way we select our leaders has become utterly obsolete and deplorable, and the way that we treat our candidates is bizarre. We have already had two embarrassing, disgraceful incidents: the withdrawals from the race of Gary Hart and Joseph Biden. We would probably have a more qualified group of contenders from which to choose, if it were not for our electoral system--a demeaning two-year process that requires unlimited resources to buy television time. Television, I think, is the major culprit. It has been imposed upon an election system which was already obsolete. The two together make an impossible system.

The people many voters say they would like to see run are not even candidates. Why? Because the system is so bad, so disagreeable, so demeaning, that they will not run. Sam Nunn decided not to do it because the procedure is outrageous. Few sensible, decent fellows would want to get involved in that kind of election.

Contrast this process with the recent election in England. The campaign there lasts four weeks. It has been estimated that the cost of running for Parliament is about ten thousand dollars. Here, it costs a minimum of \$500,000 if one wants to run for the Senate. We will change. I do not think that anything is permanent. I was a member of the Committee on the Constitutional System with Lloyd Cutler. Professor Hardin from California was one of the originators of the Committee. Professor Hardin and I thought we might be able to move the discussion at least a little bit into the sphere of recognition that changes in the parliamentary direction might have advantages for our system. But no, Mr. Cutler put his foot down; he would not permit anything in the report that might undermine our faith in the Constitution. He made a few suggestions, like changing the terms of congressmen so that all

would be elected at the same time for four-year terms. These are minor amendments that do not get at the major problems, such as a separation of powers so extreme that Congress is, in a real sense, an adversary to the executive. People should review our constitutional convention of two hundred years ago. We seem to have forgotten that the original Virginia Plan provided that Congress was to select the president. This method of presidential selection would have been very similar to the way in which the executive is chosen in a parliamentary system, and was not such a radical idea in 1787. Furthermore, it was abandoned for reasons that did not have to do with distaste for the idea itself.

In fact, it is quite clear that the Founding Fathers were not at all in favor of popular elections. It is not radical to go back to the framers of the Constitution to look for some constructive ideas. The problem is that television makes millions of dollars from the elections, and thus the whole political organization of the country is going to be as difficult to unravel as the arms race. There is such a momentum, and so much economic power built into this system, that changing it will require a lot of pressure. For instance, on the Constitution Committee, there were a few others who felt the way I did: Henry Reuss, Professor Hardin, and other committee members, but we were by no means in the majority. Most of the others did not want to be associated with a movement that would seem to undermine the sanctity of the Constitution.

The power of Congress to impeach a president is there, of course. But this power is used only under extreme conditions. It is a very difficult way to proceed. We should have a procedure for a vote of "no confidence" in our day-to-day operations. Because of television, the president has the capacity to get the attention of all the people whenever he desires to do so. For example, President Reagan could tell his story about what happened in Grenada before anybody else. We were all made to believe that there was great danger to the students, that there was a terrible situation, that he had to save American lives, he had to go in. I doubted whether this was the actual case, but

the effect could not be undone. There was no other way. Congress--535 people--has difficulty in using television. They have been unable to agree on a single representative spokesman. There has been a slight gesture: The party out of power is now given time to make responses to presidential addresses, but these probably get a small audience. To the average American viewer, there is quite a difference between seeing the President defending his policies on prime time network television, and then seeing a relatively unknown Congressman criticizing those policies.

Television is giving the president the capacity to inject himself into everyone's living room. That was not true a few years ago. When I first ran for Congress there was no television. The president has the people's ear; he can tell his story, and nobody can get equal attention. It takes a long time to put across an opposing point of view. When events are moving quickly, there just is not enough time. The structure is giving the President too much latitude, too much control over political decisions that ought to be shared with other officials.

Valenta: Many American, and even Soviet writers accepted the notion that presidential power declined in the 1970s because of Vietnam and Watergate. Is President Reagan's showmanship responsible for the recovery?

Fulbright: Oh, yes. I think that President Reagan has had an unusual amount of influence, at least until very recently. He is being injured by the Iran-Contra affair and the revelations of duplicity. The stories in the paper about Mr. Woodward's talk with Mr. Casey confirm much that I suspected.

Ambassador Alvaro Taboada: Is it possible for a superpower like the United States, which willingly took responsibility after World War II for supporting so-called Western culture, to have a cohesive and consistent foreign policy in light of what is often a divisive and inconsistent congressional contribution? Or do you think that it would be feasible if the president were given authority to conduct the nation's foreign policy, and were made liable or responsible for actions unacceptable to Con-

gress? In your opinion, what would better enable a large country like the United States to carry out an effective foreign policy? A powerful executive with a popular mandate and congressional authority to carry out a consistent foreign policy, or a very powerful but divided Congress seeking to conduct its own foreign policy and thereby possibly obstructing that of the executive?

Fulbright: When they are divided as they have been, with Congress dominated now by one party and the executive dominated by another, there is not likely to be very much cohesion. Consider the Soviet Politburo as an extreme example of concentrated power. It is not a democracy in our sense, but it provides for consistency and an effective foreign policy from the Communist Party's perspective. They can do what they want to without quibbling with a Congress. In a democratic system like this one, however, if we want to ensure the continuity of all the other benefits, the best solution I can think of is one enjoyed by nearly every other democracy in the world except ours. In a parliamentary system, the executive is part and parcel of the party in power. So it is routine, under a parliamentary system, that the executive has the support of the majority of the elected legislators, and the division which is so characteristic of our system is simply not a problem. Of course, our trouble comes primarily and directly from the principle of the separation of powers between the executive and legislature. Our executive is in trouble if he becomes arbitrary, as he has recently, and violates the law and the will of Congress. Of course, I happen to think that Reagan was wrong. But suppose that he had been right, and the Congress did not agree with him? He would still be in trouble. Alexis de Tocqueville, one of the best observers ever to write about our country, wrote 150 years ago that our system was not created in a way that enables it to administer foreign policy with efficiency. He outlined certain weaknesses, and we have proved every one of them to be correct. The implications of the question would be rectified by a parliamentary system. I think that, historically, foreign policy has been manageable under parliamentary sys-

tems. The British gradually evolved a parliamentary system from their monarchy, and had a consistent policy for two hundred to three hundred years--a rather successful one from their point of view. Yes, they made a dreadful mistake in 1914 because of their inability to deal effectively with the Germans. And other mistakes in judgment stopped them from preventing World War II. But they were the mistakes for which the entire government was responsible. They were not attributable to Parliament's interference with the executive, but, rather, mistakes that both made together. Division of authority was not to blame. It was lack of judgment.

Craig Simon: One of our true foreign policy successes was the Marshall Plan. Perhaps it was a success for the wrong reason. The goal of that plan was to help to restore the West European economy, recognizing that this restoration would help the American economy as well. However, it was finally sold to the American people as something to bolster Western Europe against Soviet encroachment. We did the right thing economically, but in a way that exacerbated East-West hostility. Now the United States does not even have the power to enact a program like the Marshall Plan.

Fulbright: We do not have the money.

Simon: Even if we had the will, we have not been able to sustain our leadership within our own bloc. We have terrible divisions now, motivated by protectionist hostility. Japan should be one of our closest partners in the world, but we are having problems. The American people are losing confidence in U.S. economic strength. We do not even have the self-confidence to tolerate Soviet membership in GATT [General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade], which is supposed to be a universal trade organization. Although other communist countries have been allowed to join it, people from the State Department simply say that the Soviet Union is too big. The implication is that we have less confidence in the ability of our capitalist system to serve our interests. The question is: do you see this declining confidence among the American people as something irreversible?

Fulbright: No, it is not irreversible. It is very serious. All we need is a reasonably intelligent leader who has the support of Congress.

Q: You stress leadership. Do we not also need intelligent people? The confidence problem seems so widespread.

Fulbright: Yes, but a lot of that is due to the political leadership. Everybody recognizes that the presidency is the best forum--what President Theodore Roosevelt called the "bully pulpit." Whatever the president can do, he can educate people. Reagan set the national tone toward Russia with his attitude right at the beginning. He emphasized that the Soviet Union was the "evil empire." This created a big effect. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was quite a leader under the circumstances, and led the country effectively. There was one big mistake, of course; his effort to enlarge the Supreme Court created considerable animosity toward him and his program. But outside of that, he got by very well. We have to have some decent leadership, which is why I emphasize the way that we select the president. The president is a very important figure, not just a functionary who signs papers. He creates the attitude of the people, particularly since the invention of television. He is far more powerful than he used to be in that respect, because he has direct access to people's minds.

We are not a very sophisticated people. We are a parochial people. Where I come from, most people are not interested in foreign affairs. They just do not understand them. The only way you can deal with them is by persuasion in small steps. But they have prejudices, and their impressions of events are manipulated because they believe what the president says. At least they used to believe him; I am not so sure that they do now. I used to be taken in by what the president said. I did not realize that presidents lied. I found out about this under Lyndon B. Johnson. It seems endemic in the White House. Anyway, we cannot manage this system without a good president. When we do get a good president--which is by accident--it usually works.

I cannot over-emphasize the differences among systems of democracy. People seem to

think that all democracies are the same, but they are not. In our system, the incentives for performance, for following through, are quite different from those of a parliamentary system. In a parliamentary system, even the Congress would be far more effective, and would attract far more capable people than it now does, because serving there would be seen as an essential step toward entering the executive branch. Today, presidential candidates have to leave Congress. Howard Baker, for example, had to resign from the Senate to run for president. In a parliamentary system, perhaps he would already be president. He would probably be a good one, too, because he has experience. Due to the present system, we have recently elected two presidents with no experience--not a bit in the federal government, and none in foreign relations. Both of them were failures in my view.

Valenta: Any predictions for 1988?

Fulbright: No. Under this system it is difficult to say. I have no idea. They voted in England the other day. In that parliamentary system, one has a clearer picture of the alternatives for the entire executive branch before the election. Here, I have no idea, nor do I think that any of you know who is going to be elected or even nominated. In the early days of this country, the party and the Congress nominated the candidate. This is far better than the process that we now have. There would be many ways to change our system, but none of them can be implemented under present circumstances. But the parliamentary system has been proven by so many others: all the Scandinavian countries, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. There are slight variations. There is one hybrid: France is always a little different from all the others. The French system imposes a president on top of a parliament. This is not bad if the president is not given too much power. I like systems with ceremonial heads of state. Kings and queens fit in very well. They take ceremonial burdens off the chief executives, and cannot interfere in the actual running of the countries. We make the presidency almost impossible by requiring the president to be a political leader as well as a social lion. He goes to all the recep-

tions and banquets, and makes speeches at the Gridiron Club. He has to be funny, and then he is expected to perform as a political leader. We need to change this system, but I am afraid that it will be difficult. I have tried to suggest some changes, but I no longer have influence. I argue my position, but that is all that I can do.

One can imagine the benefits of parliamentary-style reform for our Congress. If one were considering running for Congress, and one knew that fifteen or twenty years of good work and good performance would make one eligible to be president, secretary of state, and so on, regardless of how bad one looked on television, one might be attracted to the job. As it is now, Congress is a dead end. One can be there, get a good salary, but go nowhere. The result is a lot of old-timers serving time; some of the best people resign. I remember that Abraham Ribicoff of Connecticut was one of the best senators--very influential and very wise. He resigned. I had always liked him very much, so I had lunch with him and asked, "Why in the world did you resign?" He was only about sixty-five years old and should have had ten or more years in that position. He said, "Well, it's just not any fun anymore." He simply was not interested any longer, and he was bored. He thought he had talents, and he wanted to apply them, but he had no place further up to go, so he preferred to resign and go to New York to practice law. Others have also resigned. Charles Mathias from Maryland, the best Republican in Congress, declined to run for reelection. Others have declined to run for the presidency. This procedure is demeaning. One is expected to spend half of one's time soliciting the money necessary to buy advertising on television. This is a terrible merry-go-round. It is not working now, and it is not going to work. If we do not have a miracle in this next election, and get somebody that can turn it around, we are going to have continuous trouble. I do not like to discourage anybody. One might say that I am an old, disappointed, frustrated, pessimistic old man, but I do not make many public speeches. When I do, I try not to come across as negative as I really feel about this electoral process.

The country is basically good. What is impressive is that so many states are good states. Arkansas does not owe anybody to speak of. We may be poor, but we are honest, and we are solvent, a lot more solvent than the federal government

U.S. Foreign Policymaking

Q: *DO YOU BELIEVE the United States has tried to derail the Contadora process?*

Fulbright: Yes, I think that it has. I was in favor of the so-called Contadora process long before now. We are making a mistake by throwing our weight around and intervening in little countries--among them Nicaragua. I do not think that it is good policy. It is counter-productive for big countries like the U.S. and the Soviet Union to intervene and try to direct the political and social systems of smaller countries. They have to make their own mistakes. If our idea of society is as good as we say it is, they will find that out on their own, and much more quickly and effectively than if we try to impose it on them. Intervention just does not work. It is not a moral question. It is a practical one.

Q: *The number of scholarships granted by the Soviet Union to students in Central America and the Third World is much greater than the number granted by the United States.*

Fulbright: That is a different matter. When the Soviets offer exchange scholarships, it is a kind of competition to which we should not object. The proper response to that is for us to give scholarships, and expose more people to our own society. It would be great to compete with the Russians in education. Who can educate people the best? Who can promote a better understanding of philosophy and science? I would be in favor of that kind of competition.

Q: The other side of this coin is the Soviet commitment to the use of force. Given their brutality in Afghanistan, isn't force the only kind of competition that the Soviets really understand?

Fulbright: As long as we have deterrence, we can compete with them in non-military ways. If one goes back and reviews the Soviet success record in the world over the last forty years and compares it to ours, we do not come out too badly. They have had as many or more failures. The Chinese certainly did not turn out to be such strong allies of the Soviet Union, although we originally thought that they were. In fact, they have become major critics of the Soviet Union.

The existence of different social and political systems does not seem to me to justify the kinds of intervention in which we have engaged. I do not know if we Americans really should believe that our system is the best one. History may show that it is not. The Soviets may be able to make their system work, and, if they do make it work, we are damned fools if we try to use force to stop them. It is perfectly legitimate for us to try to stop their challenge in the rest of the world by means other than force. Persuasion is legitimate in this context. Furthermore, interventionism does not work; in the long run, it is not profitable. The British, in the old days, found it fashionable to incorporate a colony and physically to dominate it. Now, the world outside the Soviet Union has accepted the idea that this is no longer a civilized way in which to behave. Everything has been decolonized except the Russian empire, which has a very special physical relationship with its colonies. I am talking about the Siberian area, which was taken long before the Bolshevik Revolution.

I am not sure that the Russians are inherently more brutal than other people under similar circumstances. Comparable examples that come to mind are the Americans in Vietnam, the Germans under Hitler and the recent violence in the Middle East.

Valenta: Would you describe Leonid Brezhnev as a man who, as a leader, accepted the notion of the 'arrogance of power' and

sought to enlarge the Soviet empire? You were right, there were some defeats, as in Egypt and Somalia. But there were successes: Ethiopia, Angola, Nicaragua, Afghanistan. The Soviets have a physical presence in those places now. Has not the Soviet Union attempted to extend its empire beyond what we can accept?

Fulbright: They may have allies in Angola, for example, but I do not think that this is very significant. If Angola is given some latitude, and the superpowers stop intervening there, the country will be able to decide for itself what system it wants. My guess is that the Angolans will come up with a hybrid. Soviet Marxism has not proved itself to be very effective, and our system is showing defects in certain areas.

Q: You were in office during the Cuban missile crisis. Can you make any comments on this critical event?

Fulbright: I think that our attitudes toward Cuba are greatly mistaken. We should have let them alone a long time ago. In the meantime they probably would have changed very dramatically.

Roberto Lozano: But this gets back to the problem of change in totalitarian states. You are saying that, in the long run, the people will be able to choose the kind of society they want, that they can have change if they want it. It seems to me that the processes of totalitarianism are irreversible. How, for example, can Cuba get rid of communism, when there is no legal way to present an alternative? There are only two cases in which communism was reversed, and these required force: Hungary in 1919 and Grenada in 1983. There is no historical case of a peaceful transition from communism to democracy. Do you really think that it is possible to reverse a Leninist regime without force?

Fulbright: I think so, in the long run. Not right away. In Cuba, this cannot be done as long as Castro is there. I expect that, when Castro dies, there will be a succession crisis, and then there will be a new approach. The people generally have an effect upon the nature of their society in the long run. That has been the trend of history. Historically, many authoritarian states have changed into

democratic polities. But it takes time for changes to occur. One cannot expect them to take place overnight. As with our own system, it is going to take time to correct the problems in government that we were just discussing.

It is very dangerous to attempt traditional-style interventions with nuclear weapons looming in the background. If we continue in this way, a major conflict could erupt. Consider a scenario in which Syria and Israel get into a fight, with Syria seeming to be on the verge of winning. What do you think the United States would do? This country, you know, is very emotional, and very subservient to pro-Israeli views and Israeli interests. A scenario like that, given the existence of so many weapons, could quite possibly lead to a major war.

Why are we sending so many ships into the Persian Gulf? Because years ago we made a big investment in the Rapid Deployment Force. We bought all these ships, and people in the military get awfully bored with doing nothing. Everything was all set to go, and, all of a sudden, there was an opportunity... My God! We have 30 ships in the Gulf! No other country has anything like it. Our interests in the Gulf are minimal compared with European or Japanese interests. Japan gets about seventy to eighty percent of its oil from the Gulf. It is important to Japan. It is not very important to us. Should not our allies do something about it? Some of them just joined us, but that is not the point. What I object to is the fact that we are out in front. We are number one. We are the most provocative of all modern countries in this area, and in the Islamic world. We precipitated a state of affairs which is very dangerous, and we have not seen the end of it. I will be very surprised if we get out of it without very serious problems.

Q: Speaking of the Persian Gulf situation, we have recently been engaged in actions such as capturing terrorists in international waters, and sinking Iranian gunboats. Do you think that this greatly increases the danger of the situation in the Gulf?

Fulbright: I sure do. I think that it is very dangerous. I do not want to act like such a peacenik that I cannot recognize the difficul-

ties. I want to find out what really works, and what is the most effective policy. I am not exclusively interested in the right way, in a strictly moral sense, although principle and practicality often coincide. Nevertheless, overt intervention by a superpower leaves that superpower open to taunting. Bullies have been unpopular since the days of David and Goliath. The little guy loves to hit the big one in the head if he can.

Q: What does a country do if it catches the rat laying the mines? Can a superpower tolerate such behavior?

Fulbright: In the particular case to which you seem to refer, since we were already there, we had to do what we had to do. I object to our taking the lead this way for seven years. It was not our war, but we have become the number one issue in it. Superpower intervention is dangerous. There is not a good excuse for it. The danger to the oil supplies was not that great, and the interruption in the flow of oil so far has been minimal. In fact, during the last two years, the scarcity of oil has been replaced by a glut. The price went down from \$20 a barrel to as low as \$10. I reckon that it is back up to about \$18 now. Oil was not the problem. I do not see any good excuse for the intervention.

Q: The Soviets are supporting both parties.

Fulbright: The Soviet engagement is very small. The situation is like it was in Vietnam. There, the Soviets supplied some arms; we had 500,000 men deployed. There is a big difference in the means of intervention.

Cunningham: What do you think was the motive of the United States when it reflagged the Kuwaiti tankers?

Fulbright: There are a number of them. I am just an observer like you, but it seems to me that it was a useful way to divert attention from the Iran-Contra scandal. Another reason is that it gave our ships a task to perform. We have all these ships sitting around with nothing to do. This gives them something to do, although it costs extra millions of dollars a day. For one thing, it increases everybody's pay.

Q: What about the Soviet threat? Do you buy that?

Fulbright: The Soviets did not threaten us.

Q: In the long run, we had to be involved because the Soviets have geopolitical ambitions in the region.

Fulbright: We use that argument for everything. The Soviets went in because the Kuwaitis asked them in. They have not done anything threatening of which to speak. The Soviet response was to lease some of their ships. They wanted to get a little money and it was a good deal.

Q: It is true that the Russians have expanded in the past. The situation in northern Iran after World War II is an example. It was very hard for Harry Truman to get the Soviets out. It took some pressure.

Fulbright: I would not say that they are nice, easy people to get along with. I do not mean that. We have not played the situation in a way that strengthens our position. I think that both powers ought to leave the smaller countries to work out their problems by themselves, without the big powers intervening. We are not good enough, for if we set a good example, they would follow it. We simply have not yet given them a good enough example.

Q: The obvious problem in the Persian Gulf is the Iran-Iraq war, but doesn't the conflict in the region threaten something much larger: the international flow of goods?

Fulbright: Yes, that is involved, but nothing very serious has happened. Most of the concern is speculative. What business did the *Stark* have in the Gulf? It is said that what happened was an unintended mistake on Iraq's part. We have accepted Iraq's apologies. The *Stark* was out there like a sitting duck. I suspect that anytime a small country can give this big, arrogant power a black eye, it will do it, and then call it a mistake. The Israelis attacked one of our ships, the *Liberty*, and killed thirty-four people. They later said it was a mistake. I think that they got some pleasure out of showing this big country that it was not so big after all.

Valenta: Do you still believe that you were right in the debate with LBJ over the war in Vietnam?

Fulbright: Yes, I think so. I think that history will bear me out.

Valenta: The purge of Boris Yeltsin is seen by many analysts as a setback for Mikhail Gorbachev. Do you think that he is going to recover?

Fulbright: I hope he does, but I do not know. Actions of the U.S. government will have some influence. Gorbachev is dealing with a very dangerous situation. There are tremendous internal problems, and he is challenging established privileges and positions. What a terrific struggle it was to remove Dinmukhamed Kunaev, just one official! And Vladimir Shcherbitsky is still there. It is very difficult to remove people who have enjoyed certain privileges. There are analogies to the French Revolution: There will be trouble for those who want to change social relations. Gorbachev needs very strong support from his colleagues. Apparently, the other members of the Politburo have supported him, until now. They may change their minds if they see us going the other way. Americans say the Soviet public has no influence. That notion is not altogether true. Party members at various levels throughout the country have considerable influence in the long run, I think. Gorbachev is not free to do as he pleases in the same way as Stalin did, by brute force.

I do not know whether Gorbachev can survive. It is a big question. He is not solely dependent on us, of course, but we can help the situation by making progress on arms control. This will relieve the Soviet economy of certain burdens. We need relief from those same burdens; we should not ignore our own economic problems. We are now the biggest debtor in the world. We wasted our resources in a profligate manner for the last twenty years, especially the last eight. Our debt has doubled in the last seven years. In the long run, this weakens us as an economic power in the world. We cannot afford to do things by force, though we act as if we can. The President has conned people into believing that we have never been so well off. In reality, he has undermined the economy.

Valenta: It is said that the Russians prefer Republicans in the White House. They got

along very well with Nixon and were hoping to make a deal with Reagan. Perhaps they still can. Do you think it is true? Who is 'their' candidate in 1988?

Fulbright: I do not have any idea. I do not know enough about it. It seems that most of the differences between the Soviets and the Americans are not fundamental. What differences there are relate to such things as at-

titudes about human rights, and so on. Our carping on human rights is very offensive to the Russians. I am sure that they cannot help but say, "Look to your own."

Valenta: We are most grateful to you for this time. Thank you very much.

For the Record

On Friday May 6, 1988 the Washington Post reprinted a portion of the ISEES Occasional Paper Vol. II, No. 2 titled "The Strategic Significance of Afghanistan's Struggle for Freedom" by Lt. General William E. Odom, Director of the U.S. National Security Agency. The paper is a transcription of a speech given by Lt. Gen. Odom in Miami on October 1st, 1987. Copies of this paper are available from ISEES. Please see page 21 for more information about ordering ISEES publications.

SOME WESTERN observers have expected Gorbachev to seek an early settlement of the war through negotiations leading to some form of Afghan independence. Thus far they have been disappointed. While not placing any confidence in the likelihood of such a Soviet move, I am struck by what Gorbachev could achieve by a withdrawal, conceding Afghanistan to the freedom fighters. It would make his policy of an opening to the West, particularly for economic interaction, likely to succeed beyond any prospects it now has. It would help his opening to China, and it would improve his hand in the Islamic world. At the same time, it would remove a problem for his domestic policy of perestroika. In fact, the ad-

vantages of an early withdrawal are so impressive that one is inclined to believe that Gorbachev will soon decide to try to take them. The longer he waits, however, the less impressive they will be. He needs them now. They could give his foreign policy a remarkably positive impulse. Let us hope that he sees things in this way because they are both in his best interest and in the interest of the Afghan people.

In the meantime, we are witnessing a struggle of immense moral and geostrategic implications, implications only dimly appreciated in much of the world affected by them. While we in the secure states of the West can consider the struggle with detachment, the Afghans cannot. And they have not. They have chosen to resist, and they are resisting with more success than the world believed possible.

**The Washington Post
May 6, 1988**

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