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Legislative Origins of the Fulbright Program

By HARRY P. JEFFREY

ABSTRACT: This article briefly summarizes the scope of the Fulbright scholarship program. A biographical sketch of J. William Fulbright indicates how his experiences before he ran for public office and his activities and concerns as a representative and senator shaped the origin of the exchange program. In some depth the article examines the strategy Fulbright employed to produce a politically palatable bill and his tactics of quietly pushing the proposal through to enactment. More than most pieces of congressional legislation, the Fulbright exchange program is the product of the efforts of one man, Senator Fulbright.

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THE Fulbright scholarship program is the largest and most important project of international educational exchange in the history of the world. Indeed, Ronald B. McCallum, J. William Fulbright's Oxford tutor, maintained that his former pupil had been "responsible for the largest and most significant movement of scholars across the earth since the fall of Constantinople in 1453." However, the law setting up this educational activity slipped through Congress with little notice or debate. Perhaps more than any other major piece of congressional legislation in post-World War II American history, the Fulbright exchange program is the product of one man, former Senator Fulbright.¹

THE FULBRIGHT PROGRAM TODAY

Since the Fulbright Act became law in 1946, some 54,000 American professors, researchers, teachers, and students have gone abroad, and approximately 101,000 foreign scholars have come to the United States via the program. Today, over 1000 American scholars and professionals travel to other countries yearly, and an equal number of foreign professors, researchers, and specialists visit the United States under Fulbright auspices. In addition, large numbers of American students have studied in other countries, and many foreign nationals have gone to college in the United States or in American universi-

ties abroad through the program. Over 500 American students currently study overseas while 1500 foreign students pursue academic training in America. More than 200 schoolteachers, American and foreign, now work abroad each year as Fulbrighters.

Some 117 nations presently participate in the Fulbright program. At this time, individuals receive Fulbright awards in approximately fifty academic disciplines ranging from American studies and agriculture to social work and zoology. Moreover, grants are made for cross-disciplinary areas such as Japanese-American trade relations, North Atlantic Treaty Organization research fellowships, Islamic civilization, and the production of small animals in tropical regions.²

FULBRIGHT'S EARLY YEARS

James William Fulbright, the father of the Fulbright scholarship program, was born in Missouri in 1905. While still a baby, Bill Fulbright, who never used his first name, moved with his family to the Ozark Mountain town of Fayetteville, Arkansas, close to the Kansas and Oklahoma borders. There he grew up, secure in a prosperous and respected family, attending public school and the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, where he was a solid *B* student, campus leader, and star football halfback. Because of the death of his father, Bill Fulbright dropped out of the university for a semester to help his mother manage the multiple family businesses, so at 18 he became the youngest railroad vice-

1. John Richardson, Jr., "Preparing for a Human Community," in *A Process of Global Enlightenment*, ed. Robert Armbruster (Washington, DC: Board of Foreign Scholarships, 1976), p. 32; Tristram Coffin, *Senator Fulbright: Portrait of a Public Philosopher* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1966), p. 87; Don Oberdorfer, "Common Noun Spelled f-u-l-b-r-i-g-h-t," *New York Times*, 4 Apr. 1965.

2. "Fulbright Program: Fact Sheet" (Letter, United States Information Agency, 1986); "Fulbright Scholar Program: Faculty Grants, 1987-1988" (Pamphlet, Council for International Exchange of Scholars, 1986).

president in the country. At age 20 he won a Rhodes Scholarship.

Until sailing for England, Fulbright had never taken a drink, been to a big city, journeyed east of the Mississippi River, or seen the ocean. Staying abroad four years, Fulbright earned two Oxford degrees and traveled throughout Britain and much of the European continent, sometimes in the company of sophisticated journalists. Returning to the United States, he spent a little time in Fayetteville, then left for Washington, D.C., where he married a Philadelphia Main Line woman, Betty Williams, and graduated second in his law school class. He worked in the Justice Department during the early New Deal on the Schecter sick-chicken case and taught law at his alma mater, George Washington University Law School.

Leaving Washington in 1936, he came back to Fayetteville, where he taught at the University of Arkansas Law School, again became involved in the family businesses, and lived as a gentleman farmer in a three-story so-called log cabin, Rabbit Foot's Lodge. When the university president unexpectedly died, the local boy who had made good was the dark-horse choice who became the new college president—at 34 the youngest in the nation.³

Politics had a good deal to do with Fulbright's becoming president of the University of Arkansas, and politics had everything to do with his being fired from that position. Roberta Fulbright, Bill's mother, was perhaps the leading citizen of Fayetteville and thus of north-west Arkansas. Using her position as a newspaper owner and columnist, she

3. Coffin, *Senator Fulbright*, pp. 35-50; Haynes Johnson and Bernard M. Gwertzman, *Fulbright: The Dissenter* (New York: Doubleday, 1968), pp. 12-41.

had launched a successful crusade to oust a corrupt courthouse ring from office in her hometown. Mindful of her political influence and Bill Fulbright's accomplishments, and his own lack of political strength in that part of the state, Governor Carl Bailey tapped young Bill for the university presidency. But Bailey lost a reelection bid to Homer Adkins, a Bible-belt fundamentalist whom Roberta Fulbright characterized in a column as a mere "handshaker." A self-styled common man, Adkins had no use for the establishment Fulbright clan. After packing the university board of trustees with his own people, Adkins arranged for the firing of Bill Fulbright, without cause, after less than two years in office.⁴

FULBRIGHT'S EARLY POLITICAL CAREER

Much to Adkins's regret, politics then became Bill Fulbright's profession. Repeatedly, Fulbright had urged involvement in politics and public affairs to his students and through his speeches. When an open seat became available for the U.S. House of Representatives in the Fayetteville area, a former pupil reminded his old professor of his own injunction. Fulbright did run, beating an Adkins-backed candidate in the Democratic primary. In overwhelmingly Democratic Arkansas, that meant victory in the November general election.⁵

Although only 38 years old when

4. Johnson and Gwertzman, *Fulbright: The Dissenter*, pp. 41-50; Allan Gilbert, *A Fulbright Chronicle* (Fayetteville, AR: Fulbright Investment, Co., 1980), pp. 135-40; Mary Lynn Kennedy, "Politics in Academe: Roberta Fulbright's Role in Her Son's University Presidency" (Paper in possession of author, Fayetteville, AR., 1975), pp. 1-15.

5. Johnson and Gwertzman, *Fulbright: The Dissenter*, pp. 53-58.

sworn into the House in 1943, and inexperienced in politics, Fulbright became the most conspicuous freshman representative. In his maiden speech he outpointed the sharp-tongued Clare Boothe Luce for her deriding as "globaloney" the foreign policy of the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Winning a seat on the Foreign Affairs Committee, Fulbright became engrossed in the subject of postwar planning: how to wage a "creative war" in order to secure a "creative peace." He repeatedly spoke about America's new role in the world, advocating U.S. membership in a United Nations with a strong peace-keeping military force.

For this freshman, "the first time [he] got any notice" came when the House overwhelmingly passed the one-sentence Fulbright Resolution, which urged creation of an American participation in "international machinery with power to prevent further aggression." When the Senate followed suit with a similar resolution, a giant step was taken toward formation of a United Nations with American membership. While maneuvering the resolution through the House, Fulbright learned a great deal about how to get legislation passed. Purposefully, he skirted the Democratic Foreign Affairs Committee chairman who acted, said Fulbright, in a "pompous" and "very dictatorial and extremely contemptuous" manner toward "junior members." Instead, Fulbright quietly lobbied key House members and worked with Democratic and Republican leaders, the two top officials in the State Department, key White House staffers, and even President Roosevelt.

Secretary of State Cordell Hull then appointed Fulbright to chair the American delegation to a 17-nation ministerial conference on postwar education in

London. Unanimously selected chair of the conference, Fulbright lunched with Prime Minister Winston Churchill and addressed the British people on the radio. "I live in an old log house on a small farm . . . and am sometimes called a Hillbilly," the "egghead from the Ozarks" began his BBC broadcast.⁶

Even before the London conference, Fulbright declared his candidacy for the U.S. Senate. Stiff competition in the Democratic primary would come from the incumbent, the ineffectual Hattie Caraway, and the man reputed to be the state's wealthiest citizen, Colonel T. H. Barton, who hired the Grand Olde Opry, including Minnie Pearl, Jam-up, and Honey, to draw crowds for him. But Governor Homer Adkins would prove to be Fulbright's major opponent. In one of the most vicious campaigns in Arkansas history, the other contenders denounced Fulbright as "British Billy," a "Lord Plushbottom," and a draft dodger, a pet of the Congress of Industrial Organizations labor unions and Communists, a "nigger lover," and a legislator whose votes helped to induct hard-working chicken farmers into the armed forces. However, Fulbright's record aided him in turning back these slurs. As newspapers such as one in

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 59-76, 79-81; J. William Fulbright, "A Creative War," 1 Feb. 1943, Papers of J. William Fulbright, Special Collections Mullins Library, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, (hereafter cited as Fulbright Papers); *idem*, "Sunday Postscript," 30 Apr. 1944, *ibid.*; Harry P. Jeffrey, "Interview with J. William Fulbright, August 28, 1984" (Manuscript, Oral History Program, California State University, Fullerton, 1985), pp. 2-3, 15-22; Oscar Cox to Harry Hopkins, 6 Oct. 1943, Oscar Cox Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, NY; Fulbright to Cox and Cox to Fulbright, 23 June 1943, *ibid.*; Diary of Oscar Cox, 30 Sept. and 4 Oct. 1943, *ibid.*; Beverly Smith, Jr., "Egghead from the Ozarks," *Saturday Evening Post*, 2 May 1959, pp. 31 ff.

Little Rock stated, "Congressman Fulbright, in his first term in Washington, has gained more favorable publicity than any other Representative we have ever sent to the Congress." After finishing first in the primary, the freshman congressman trounced Adkins by 32,000 votes in the runoff campaign. "Miss Roberta" Fulbright could not resist mocking the governor's ungrammatical style in her newspaper column: "Homer Adkins has came and went."⁷

In his early years in the Senate, Fulbright's interest in international affairs grew. As a freshman he failed to win a Foreign Relations Committee seat, but he did secure a position on the Education and Labor panel. Working closely with Republicans in early 1945, he initiated a round-robin letter by the 16 new members urging vigorous action by the administration to create a United Nations. A resolution introduced by Fulbright, and passed by the Senate and the House, advocated American participation in an international office of education and encouraged "the exchange of students and scholars."⁸

THE PROBLEM OF THE LACK OF GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

As Fulbright well knew, the scholarship program bill he was formulating would be the first large-scale effort by the U.S. government in the field of international education. Nineteenth-cen-

tury American activities in this area involved private groups and individuals, not the government. This reflected traditional isolationism, the belief in limited government, the feeling that education should remain a local concern, and a certain distance of the State Department from the people of the United States. Philanthropic foundations, religious missions, institutions of higher learning, and private societies carried out some international educational activities. During the early years of the twentieth century the role of the government increased slightly. Boxer Rebellion indemnities to the United States of \$16 million built up a Chinese college and helped send 2000 Chinese to study in America. After World War I, left-over relief funds for Belgium, allocated to the Belgian-American Educational Foundation, a group led by Herbert Hoover, were used to educate 700 Belgians and Americans in each other's country.

Only after World War I did Americans studying abroad reach significant numbers; however, the U.S. government remained indifferent to scholarly exchange. Indeed, when the director of the Institute of International Education inquired why the State Department neglected to answer his letter, he received the reminder that the "department paid attention only to communications from other governments." Under provisions of the 1936 Buenos Aires Treaty the United States pledged to exchange two professors and two graduate students yearly with other Latin American signatories; however, no provision for federal funding was implemented. To counteract Nazi and Fascist activities in Latin America the State Department established a Cultural Relations Division in 1938. The division asked American universities to offer scholarships to Latin American

7. Johnson and Gwertzman, *Fulbright: The Dissenter*, pp. 64, 77-79, 81-85; Allen Drury, *A Senate Journal* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), pp. 19, 35, 49, 62, 224; *Little Rock Arkansas Democrat*, 20 Oct. 1943; *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 9 July 1944.

8. Johnson and Gwertzman, *Fulbright: The Dissenter*, pp. 89-106; Fulbright to John Gunther, 24 May 1945, Fulbright Papers.

students, but provided little money for this activity.

During World War II the division ran a small-scale educational program including scholarly exchanges in China, Africa, and the Near East. In the war years the State Department Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, using presidential emergency funds, provided for a limited exchange of students and professors. However, after the war both bureaus were terminated, although educational programs did become a part of the American occupation efforts in Japan, Germany, and Austria.⁹

THE PROBLEM OF WAR DEBTS

Senator Fulbright also spent a good deal of time pondering the question of debts that the wartime allies owed the United States. He had first considered this subject in an Oxford paper he wrote, and later he encountered the problem during House Foreign Affairs Committee hearings on lend-lease. Controversy over repayment of similar war debts had disrupted international relations and the global economy after World War I, and it threatened to undermine Fulbright's creative peace

9. Walter Johnson and Francis Colligan, *The Fulbright Program: A History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), pp. 15-20; Henry Kellermann, *Cultural Relations as an Instrument of United States Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 1978), pp. vii-viii, 3-6, 9-13; Wilma Fairbank, *America's Cultural Experiment in China, 1942-1949* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 1976), pp. vii-xiii, 4-6; Committee on Educational Interchange Policy, *Twenty Years of United States Government Programs in Cultural Relations* (New York: Institute of International Education, 1959), pp. 1-12; Manuel Espinosa, *Inter-American Beginnings of United States Cultural Diplomacy, 1936-1948* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 1976), pp. vii, 1-17, 79.

efforts as World War II ended. The Arkansan introduced a bill, which failed to pass, to repeal the act that barred credits to nations that had defaulted on their World War I debts.¹⁰

THE PROBLEM OF SURPLUS PROPERTY

Linked to Fulbright's concerns about war debts and the lack of governmental involvement in international education was the thorny question of surplus American war property. Over 4 million items remained scattered in warehouses and storage depots around the globe after World War II. No one knew the value of this property; estimates varied from \$60 million to \$105 million. This excess material included planes, trains, tanks, and bulldozers as well as food, tools, clothing, telephones, and hospitals. Items ranged from agricultural implements and air pumps to zippers and zwieback. A surplus-property law passed in 1944 prohibited sending them back to the United States. Transportation costs would have eaten up most of the value of the goods anyway.

Nevertheless, American special interest groups clamored to have the law changed. They maintained that their special interest affiliation, whether veterans, business, farmers, or educators, be given the first chance to buy the surplus, or even that it be given to them free. These groups pointed out that when American troops left an area abroad they abandoned, destroyed, or left the goods under questionable guardianship.

10. Jeffrey, "Interview with Fulbright," pp. 2, 4-5, 23; Johnson and Gwertzman, *Fulbright: The Dissenter*, pp. 107-9; *Report from the Committee on Education and Labor, Report No. 286, 25 May 1945* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1945).

Also, the interest groups reiterated that often armed services personnel remained in a region merely to watch over excess material.

Racked by wartime devastation and unsettled economies, foreign nations pleaded for some of the surplus. However, they lacked the currency or even the goods, much less the dollars, to pay for the materials. "They were all broke, you know," claimed Fulbright years later. If the United States took the dollar exchange available when selling the surplus to other countries, future American export trade would suffer and the debtor nations would be less likely to repay their war debts. Thus this excess equipment spread around the globe really meant that the United States had substantial amounts of currency, or the equivalent of currency, frozen abroad.¹¹

OBTAINING EXECUTIVE BRANCH APPROVAL

As Fulbright declared, all of his concerns about surplus property, war debts, international education, a creative peace, a strong United Nations, and America's new and larger role in the world "converged at that moment" after "the atomic bombs had just been dropped" and "the war was just over." Therefore he introduced in September of 1945 a seemingly innocuous bill to amend the 1944 Surplus Property Act. His short 30-line, somewhat vague bill authorized funds from the sale of overseas surplus equipment to be used for an international student exchange in the fields of science, culture, and education.

11. Jeffrey, "Interview with Fulbright," p. 2; Army-Navy Liquidation Commission, "Statement," 26 Sept. 1945, Fulbright Papers; *Congressional Record*, 79th Cong., 1st sess., 30 Apr. 1945, pp. 3943-4.

In November of 1945 Fulbright introduced a second and broader piece of legislation, which also was couched as an amendment to the Surplus Property Act, incorporating recommendations of various executive branch agencies. It made the State Department the sole disposal agency for surplus property located outside the United States and its possessions. Such property could be paid for in foreign currencies or credits. Agreements could be entered into by the secretary of state with foreign governments to finance educational activities for Americans in other countries, foreign nationals in overseas American institutions, and transportation of visitors from abroad to study in the United States. Funding for educational exchanges would be in money, other than dollars, acquired from selling surplus goods. This bill, Fulbright argued, would help cut the surplus property knot, prevent the war-debt question from becoming "a source of irritation" between nations, promote trade and commerce, strengthen political relations with other countries, build up goodwill around the world, help ensure "the future peace of the world," and aid the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization by coordinating education programs with them.¹²

Fulbright then painstakingly lined up backing from the executive branch. He consulted with the Bureau of the Budget, the Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion, the Surplus Property Administration, the military, and the State Department. Because the State Depart-

12. Jeffrey, "Interview with Fulbright," pp. 1-3, 31-32; J. William Fulbright, "Statement," 27 Sept. and 30 Nov. 1945, Fulbright Papers; *Congressional Record*, 79th Cong., 1st sess., 27 Sept. 1945, p. 9044.

ment looked suspiciously at this rare congressional foreign policy initiative, Fulbright's second bill gave the secretary of state broad statutory power to dispense funds for matters other than education alone. State Department officials did not want any of the money designated specifically for education, but Fulbright insisted on it. The Arkansan agreed with the department on questions such as not specifying by law the age or other qualifications of candidates or a maximum dollar figure for scholarships or living expenses, and not having grants divided equally among the states. After a long struggle he overcame Budget Bureau contentions that money received from surplus property sales had to be submitted to the Treasury and that money could not be earmarked for education without specific congressional appropriations.

Finally, he secured the blessing of the new president, Harry Truman, although the chief executive, according to Fulbright, "didn't know anything" about the bill and did little to support it. Thus, incorporating revisions negotiated with the executive branch, Fulbright submitted a new bill before Senate hearings began. Because of the warning of a member of Congress, he placed a yearly limit of \$2.5 million to be spent in any one country on educational exchange. The title of this revised second proposal deceptively read, "A bill to amend the Surplus Property Act of 1944 to designate the Department of State as the disposal agency for surplus property outside the United States, its Territories and Possessions, and for other purposes."¹³

13. Jeffrey, "Interview with Fulbright," pp. 2-4, 10, 22-24, 31-34; Fulbright to Perrin Galpin, 28 Jan. 1946, Fulbright Papers; Fulbright to John Nason, 11 and 18 Feb. 1946, *ibid.*; Haldore Hanson to Mr. Reynolds, "Report on S. 1636," 30 Jan. 1946, *ibid.*; *Congressional Record*, 79th Cong.,

SENATE PASSAGE

With great skill Fulbright piloted the bill around the legislative shoals. He cleared the first hurdle, the Subcommittee on Surplus Property of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs. While deferring to the subcommittee chair, Democrat Joseph O'Mahoney of Wyoming, Fulbright organized the hearing for the ill O'Mahoney, who was often back in Wyoming recuperating. Fulbright lined up an impressive array of witnesses who favored his bill, and he saw to it that no one testified in opposition. The subcommittee hearing lasted just one day, in February of 1946, with O'Mahoney and Fulbright the only senators present. Those testifying included representatives from the five most concerned executive agencies plus nongovernmental organizations interested in international education. William Benton, the new assistant secretary of state for public and cultural relations, asserted that the Veterans Administration already had been sent "several thousand" letters from American soldiers desiring admission to foreign universities; he noted that New York State alone had a 20,000-student "surplus."

Given to the subcommittee was a great body of supportive letters and articles. All of these documents had been asked for by Fulbright over a period of many months. Proponents of the legislation averred that the bill amounted to a unique "golden opportunity" to begin an international education program very "inexpensively" through

1st sess., 15 Dec. 1945, pp. 12123-4; U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Military Affairs, *Foreign Educational Benefits and Surplus Property: Hearing before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Military Affairs on S. 1440 and S. 1636* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1946), pp. 1-2.

the sale of surplus property largely unusable by Americans.

Working assiduously, Fulbright won the backing of key Republicans. Securing the support of the party patriarch, Herbert Hoover, was especially important. Ex-President Hoover, who had chaired the Belgian-American Educational Foundation, carried great weight among conservatives of both parties. In a letter Hoover reminded members of Congress that as secretary of commerce, president, and ex-president he advocated proposals for government-funded international education efforts. New Jersey Republican Senator H. Alexander Smith also had served on the Belgian foundation and had worked with Fulbright on the round-robin letter; he gave the bill his approval and quietly lobbied for passage. Proponents of this "cultural currency" legislation repeatedly stressed the precedents, initiated by two Republicans, Theodore Roosevelt and Hoover, of the Boxer indemnity and Belgian relief funds.¹⁴

The Surplus Property Subcommittee and the Military Affairs Committee both reported out Fulbright's revised second bill. Wisely, Fulbright let the first bill die. Noting that "politically" it would be "exceedingly dangerous," Fulbright talked O'Mahoney out of inserting in a draft an antidiscrimination clause.

14. Committee on Military Affairs, *Foreign Educational Benefits and Surplus Property: Hearing before a Subcommittee*, pp. 1-56; Jeffrey, "Interview with Fulbright," pp. 5, 10, 31-32, 39-40; George Zook to Fulbright, 16 Jan. 1946, Fulbright Papers; Fulbright to Perrin Galpin, 28 Jan. 1946, *ibid.*; Fulbright to O'Mahoney, 30 Jan. 1946, *ibid.*; Fulbright to James K. Smith, 27 June 1946, *ibid.*; Hoover to Fulbright, 8 Feb. 1946, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Papers, Special Collections Mullins Library, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville; Fulbright to Hoover, 8 July 1957, *ibid.*

"For the purpose of making it palatable" Fulbright did not include in the subcommittee bill federal funding of exchanges of students with countries having no surplus property credit. He realized, correctly, that once established the program would be popular and could be broadened to include more countries. Later on, when surplus property funding dried up, the program could be funded by other means. American government funds could be appropriated, and so could money from foreign nations once world trade recovered from the shock of war and once dollars had accumulated abroad. At Fulbright's urging, O'Mahoney discarded the idea of adding complete funding of foreign students' education in the United States, not just the transportation costs to America that they would receive in the draft. Thus some potentially explosive items never saw the light of day in the bill.

To make the proposal more popular Fulbright added clauses to the bill. One stated that no foreign student studying in the United States could deprive veterans of an opportunity of an education; later the Arkansan broadened this prohibition to include any American citizen. The committee bill also placed a \$20 million limit on aggregate spending in any one nation. Fulbright incorporated a suggestion giving preference to American veterans of World Wars I and II, and another proviso calling for consideration for all geographical areas of the country in applicant selection. Still another revision required the State Department to make annual reports to Congress detailing agreements initiated that year, the names and addresses of all Americans attending school under the program, the names and locations of those schools, and the amount of credit or currency expended in each foreign country. Fi-

nally, Fulbright fended off another State Department effort to have all of its education programs funded by provisions of the proposed legislation.¹⁵

This revised and politically strengthened bill whisked through the Senate. In April of 1946, with one minor change and no debate, just six weeks after the subcommittee hearing, the Senate unanimously passed the Fulbright proposal without a roll call vote. Only a handful of senators were present—Fulbright had seen to that. Quietly he cleared the bill with the majority and minority leaders, announced their support, and late in the day presented the proposal as a routine measure under the unanimous consent calendar when the only suspected opponent, Kenneth McKellar, “just happened” to be off the floor.

“I didn’t want him there. I didn’t want any debate,” conceded Fulbright. “A roll call vote, we’d have probably lost.” Crusty old McKellar, the Democratic chair of the Appropriations Committee, worried about the surplus property funds being dissipated. Later the Tennessean told Fulbright that he would have killed this “very dangerous bit of legislation” if he had been on the floor: “Young man. . . . It’s a very dangerous thing to send our fine young girls and boys abroad. They’ll be infected with those foreign ‘isms.’”

Thanks to the work of Fulbright and O’Mahoney the Senate bill appeared almost unassailable politically. Fulbright later recalled how he worked with O’Ma-

honey: “He was very important” because “I was as fresh as can be. I was very ignorant about the procedures.” O’Mahoney, maintained Fulbright, “suggested certain provisions that were more in accord with the traditional practice of the Senate.”¹⁶

HOUSE PASSAGE

Passage by the House of Representatives came even more quickly than in the Senate. Before House consideration of the measure Fulbright headed off serious opposition by a “patronizing” Democrat from Mississippi, William Whittington, a high-ranking member of the Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments, which considered the bill. Adroitly Fulbright used a fellow Southerner, William Clayton, an assistant secretary of state and long-time friend of the Mississippian. ‘Well, if there’s any money around for education, we need money for education in Mississippi,’ Fulbright quoted Whittington as saying. ‘We’re not interested in educating foreigners.’ Later Fulbright recalled that Whittington considered him “a young whippersnapper” and “frowned upon” the Arkansan as “too obstreperous.” “I tried to explain [to him that] there’s a difference between a non-convertible German mark and a dollar that could be used in Mississippi,” Fulbright remembered, “but he wouldn’t listen to me.” But he “listened to Will Clayton . . . and allowed it [the bill] to come out” of his committee.

The expenditures committee made only one major change in the measure. Because members distrusted the State

15. Jeffrey, “Interview with Fulbright,” pp. 7, 13, 30, 32-35; Committee on Military Affairs, *Foreign Educational Benefits and Surplus Property: Hearing before a Subcommittee*, pp. 1-56; idem, *Foreign Educational Benefits and Surplus Property, Report No. 1039, 12 Mar. 1946* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1946), pp. 1-11.

16. Committee on Military Affairs, *Foreign Educational Benefits, Report No. 1039*, pp. 1-11; Jeffrey, “Interview with Fulbright,” pp. 5-6, 29-30; Oberdorfer, “Noun,” p. 82.

Department, they inserted a provision establishing a Board of Foreign Scholarships to supervise the program. Three other modifications were made: slightly changing the disposal powers of the secretary of state; striking out a proviso for the funding of State Department library operations; and limiting the amount to be spent in any one country to \$1 million, not \$2.5 million. In its report the committee stressed that "the appropriation of funds is not the subject of the instant bill."

On the House floor two Republicans and the Democratic committee chair advocated passage. Only one member raised an objection, saying in just two sentences that the measure appeared "detrimental to the best interests of the people of this country," but never explaining what he meant. Even though Fulbright claimed to be uncertain of the outcome a few days before the House debate, a debate that lasted less than ten minutes, the bill passed under suspension of the rules without a record vote with what one representative described as a "whoop and a holler."¹⁷

FINAL STEPS IN ENACTMENT

Just one day after the House approved the bill Fulbright asked the Senate to

concur with the House version. Only two senators other than Fulbright spoke, both asking what proposal they would be voting on. Then the Senate agreed to the measure unanimously.

President Truman signed the Fulbright Act, Public Law 584, on 1 August 1946, three days before Congress adjourned. Truman gave the pens he used to J. William Fulbright and Assistant Secretary of State William Benton, the key executive branch official supporting passage. The Fulbright scholarship program had come into being.¹⁸

CONCLUSION

Passage of the international education program came about because Fulbright shaped the proposal "to combine virtue and thrift in a single package." A national public opinion poll on the question of what "can be done that will give the United Nations a better chance of preventing wars" found that the overwhelming answer was to exchange students with other countries. And a magazine article on "cultural currency" brought a tremendously favorable deluge of letters from both general readers and "thought leaders." Clearly, international education seemed on the side of the angels. In addition, Fulbright hit upon a painless method of financing the exchange that required no congressional use of tax dollars. "I don't think we could have gotten to first base with a request for an authorization for appropriations at that time," Fulbright argued years later. Indeed, the sale of surplus property saved

17. Jeffrey, "Interview with Fulbright," pp. 3-4, 8-10, 28-29, 34-35; Clayton to Fulbright, 11 June 1946, Fulbright Papers; Fulbright to Henry S. Commager, 29 July 1946, *ibid.*; Fulbright to Clayton, 18 July 1946, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Papers; *Congressional Record*, 79th Cong., 2d sess., 7 July 1946, p. 9284; *ibid.*, 26 July 1946, pp. 10214-5; U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments, *Disposal of Surplus Property Abroad, Report No. 2546, 17 July 1946* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1946), pp. 1-11; *Pathfinder*, 28 Aug. 1946, in Fulbright Papers.

18. *Congressional Record*, 79th Cong., 2d sess., 27 July 1946, p. 10237; J. William Fulbright, "Statement," 1 Aug. 1946, Fulbright Papers; Francis Colligan to Mrs. Williams, 10 Oct. 1967, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Papers.

the public's tax dollars. Years after enactment of the measure President John Kennedy referred to the program as "the classic modern example of beating swords into plowshares."¹⁹

The second reason for passage of the bill came from Fulbright's shrewd tactics. Don Oberdorfer, a reporter, summarized Fulbright's role in securing approval:

In 1945 there was no pressure from educators or anyone else to launch the exchange-study program. Fulbright conceived it, pushed it through Congress, [and] sold the doubters in the executive branch. . . . Senator Fulbright consulted and convinced a few vitally important lawmakers that educational exchange was a worthwhile way to employ these funds. . . . Wisely, he kept in the dark everyone who didn't need to know what his proposal was all about.²⁰

"I was such a junior member, having been in the Senate such a short time—less than a year—that no one took notice of this legislation at all until it was passed," Fulbright stated. "The bill was allowed to pass," he wrote, "because influential senators who might otherwise have opposed it deemed it insignificant. I was content to have them believe that." "It didn't involve a lot of money," he said, "So what the hell? Nobody paid any attention to it."²¹

19. Oberdorfer, "Noun," pp. 79 ff; Jeffrey, "Interview with Fulbright," pp. 3-4; Committee on Military Affairs, *Foreign Educational Benefits and Surplus Property: Hearing before a Subcommittee*, pp. 31-34.

20. Oberdorfer, "Noun," pp. 80, 82.

21. Jeffrey, "Interview with Fulbright," pp. 10-11; J. William Fulbright, "The Legislator as Educator," *Foreign Affairs*, 57(4):722 (Spring 1979); Douglas Cater, "World Progress through Educational Exchange: The Story of a Conference" (Pamphlet, Institute of International Relations, 1959), p. 9.

In retrospect, the scholarship program came into being because of the efforts of one man. Fulbright's experiences as a student abroad, a traveler absorbing other cultures, a professor, and a university president convinced him that international educational exchange would promote tolerance and understanding among all peoples. As a member of Congress during and immediately after a devastating global conflict, the Arkansas senator became engrossed in attempting to establish, via a larger American role and a potent United Nations, "world peace and international community." Realizing that the mushroom cloud of nuclear Armageddon hung over all states, Fulbright creatively tried to use the quandary about war debts and surplus property to institute a mechanism to dampen hostility between countries. His strategy involved formulating a politically palatable measure that appeared to be an innocuous revision of a minor bookkeeping act. Drawing on his acquired political skills, he employed the tactic of rushing a bill through Congress by stealth. Fulbright quietly shepherded its passage through the iron triangle of interest groups, Congress, and the executive branch. That is why Webster's *Dictionary* now lists "ful-bright" as a common noun, a synonym for the scholarly exchange grant.²²

22. Jeffrey, "Interview with Fulbright," pp. 1-36; Avery Peterson, "Senator J. William Fulbright," *American Foreign Service Journal*, p. 18 (Feb. 1951); Fulbright to Frank Aydelotte, 6 May 1955, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Papers; Dean Albertson, "Reminiscences of J. William Fulbright" (Manuscript, Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, 1957), pp. 8-11, 32, 100, 112-28; Oberdorfer, "Noun," p. 79.