MEMORY, COMMEMORATION, CRISIS

Fulbright, Arkansas, and the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Fulbright Program, 1946–2021

Part I

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The commemoration of a program that is as well established and well-known as the Fulbright Program is problematic even under the best circumstances. The post-Second-World-War origins of the Fulbright Program are distant; its history and architecture are complicated; and there are many different stakeholders in the global program, each of which has its own story to tell.[1] Historical memory is generational and requires each generation to revisit, construct, and sometimes reconstruct the past. Recently this has become an extremely conflict-laden and precarious enterprise, fraught with differences between generations and among interest groups operating with diverging premises, methodologies, and agendas.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s in Western Europe, the Fulbright Program was mentioned in the same breath as the Marshall Plan[2] as a shining example of US post-war foresight and magnanimity, and for decades the Fulbright Program dominated what now is called the global international academic mobility market. However, 'Fulbright' and 'Marshall' certainly do not enjoy the same currency they once had today. They have lost their weight and cannot be used to paper over the deficits of American foreign policy as in the past. Furthermore, 'Fulbright' certainly is no longer the household word it was in the 1960s, when the senator's reputation for establishing what was once the largest and best-known exchange program in the world overlapped with his high profile as a spirited opponent of the Vietnam War.[3]

The fact that the history of the Fulbright Program has been punctuated by a crisis every twenty-five years or so since its inception in 1946 is accidental, but almost appears systemic or cyclical. The commemoration of its twenty-fifth anniversary in 1971 and fiftieth in 1996 were overshadowed by dramatic budget cuts, followed by administrative gerrymandering that increased the amount of control the State Department could exercise over the program. The crisis in this seventy-fifth anniversary year has been coextensive with the second, third, and fourth surges of the global COVID-19 pandemic, with over 750,000 COVID-related deaths in the United States along with the collapse of in-person higher education, international travel, and international educational exchange.

The anniversary year of 2021 was prefaced by a wave of criticism by US Fulbright grantees who felt that the State Department's Bureau for Educational and Cultural Affairs handled the outbreak of the pandemic in an imperious manner in March 2020, when it pressured them to return to the United States, although many would have felt safer continuing their grants abroad and sheltering in place. Disaffected grantees criticized the 'disorganized and insufficient' management of situation in social media under the hashtag #fulbrightcrisis, and organized an online petition at www.change.org which garnered over 3,600 signatures.[4] A wave of bad press accompanied the US Fulbrighters as they returned home.[5]

After four years of 'America First', Donald Trump refused to acknowledge the outcome of the 2020 presidential elections, incited his supporters to 'stop the steal', and they stormed Congress on 6 January 2021 to frustrate the orderly and hitherto routine civic ritual of the constitutionally prescribed transfer of power. The widespread unpopularity of Donald Trump and his presidency has had a 'significant negative effect on America's overall image' according to the Pew Research Center, and ratings for the United States' image abroad reached record twenty-year lows in early 2021 in many countries, especially among long-standing friends and allies.[6]

Hal Brands's diagnosis of the legacy of the Trump administration in *Foreign Affairs* on 20 January 2021—the day of President Biden's inauguration—was sobering:

> By sowing doubts about the United States' long-term commitment to democratic norms and constructive global leadership, Trump has created a crisis of American internationalism that will outlast his presidency. The incoming Biden administration now faces a daunting task. U.S. allies may not come rushing back with open arms; the president cannot simply declare that the United States has returned.[7]

However, on 4 February 2021 this is exactly what President Biden did, when he declared: 'America is back. America is back. Diplomacy is back at the center of our foreign policy.'[8] The long-standing friends and allies of the United States—including the sceptics—were glad to hear this, of course. However, there is a tremendous amount of restorative work to be done to rebuild trust and goodwill: tasks that have been exacerbated by the dissonances and blowback associated with the US withdrawal from Afghanistan at the end of August 2021.[9]

A surge in the waves of ongoing Black Lives Matter (BLM) protest for racial justice in the United States—and abroad—triggered by the murder of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis in June 2020 also accompanied the dislocations of the pandemic and the imbroglio of the US presidential elections. The dynamics of

the political run-up to the seventy-fifth anniversary year of the Fulbright Program in 2020 can be captured with three acronyms, starting with Donald Trumps' 'Make America Great Again': MAGA, COVID, and BLM.

Finally, in Fulbright's home state of Arkansas, his voting record on civil rights in the 1950s and 1960s became an unprecedented object of scrutiny and contention at his alma mater, the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, where Black students, who were using the Twitter hashtag #BlackatUARK to discuss how they experienced racism on the University of Arkansas campus, had introduced an online petition to protest the university's memorialization of Fulbright.[10]

In 1981 the College of Arts and Sciences on the flagship campus of the University of Arkansas, which is housed in the historical and architectural centrepiece of this land-grant institution, Old Main, was named after Fulbright, and in 1988 the University erected an imposing forty-one-foot Fulbright Peace Fountain in the open square between Old Main and Walker Hall as a tribute to his legacy. Since 2002 a seven-foot-tall bronze statue of Fulbright on a chest-high pedestal has graced the open courtyard between the fountain and the main entrance of Old Main.

Fulbright (1905–1995) is indisputably one of the most famous alumni of the institution, and he is—after President Bill Clinton—undoubtedly one of the most famous Arkansan politicians in the world.[11] He grew up in one of the first families of Fayetteville, graduated from the University of Arkansas in 1924, and then spent three years as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford starting in 1925. He also travelled extensively on the Continent before settling in Vienna for eight months, where he frequented the Café Louvre, a hangout for correspondents writing for British and American papers. There he rubbed elbows with an illustrious group of journalists and authors, such as Dorothy Thompson, John Gunther, and William Shirer, and was adopted by Marcel 'Mike' Fodor (1890–1977), a Hungarian liberal with German and assimilated Jewish roots who grew up in an affluent family in *fin-de-siècle* Budapest. Fodor was a pacifist, who fled to England in 1914 to avoid serving in the Austro-Hungarian Army in the First World War, returned to Budapest in 1919, and became the Vienna-based correspondent for *The Manchester Guardian* the following year.[12]

Years later, Fulbright would recall that period: '[M]y experience as a Rhodes scholar [was] the dominant influence in the creation of the Fulbright awards.'[13] Living in Vienna, travelling in Central Europe, and Fodor's mentoring were equally formative influences.[14] In the late 1920s, Central Europe was a bubbling cauldron of ideologies and discontent. Fulbright's biographer Randall Woods noted the importance of Fulbright's exposure to this world: '[His] brief tenure

with Fodor [was] an education in itself, his introduction to the real world of international politics'.[15]

In Central Europe, Fulbright learned to see how deeply conflicts are rooted in what is genteelly referred to today as 'cultural difference'. Oxford *and* Vienna were equally formative influences for his philosophy of international education and the role it could play in international relations: a philosophy which he subsumed under the concept of empathy:

> The essence of intercultural education is the acquisition of empathy—the ability to see the world as others see it, and to allow for the possibility that others may see something we have failed to see, or may see it more accurately. The simple purpose of the exchange program [...] is to erode the culturally rooted mistrust that sets nations against one another. Its essential aim is to encourage people in all countries, and especially their political leaders, to stop denying others the right to their own view of reality and to develop a new manner of thinking about how to avoid war rather than to wage it.[16]

Fulbright returned to the United States in the spring of 1929. He then studied law at George Washington University and worked in Washington, DC, before returning home to Fayetteville in 1936 to manage family businesses and teach part-time at the University of Arkansas School of Law. In 1939, at the age of thirty-four, he was appointed president of the University of Arkansas, and this office served as his stepping-stone into politics. In 1942, he was elected to the House of Representatives, and two years later to the Senate, where he sponsored the legislation establishing Fulbright exchanges in 1946, securing his global reputation at the age of forty-one. He would go on to serve with distinction in the Senate until 1974.

However, paradoxically, when Fulbright was at home in Arkansas he was not the liberal, cosmopolitan, urbane intellectual he was known to be on the stage of national and international politics, but an orthodox Southern Democrat, who consistently represented those interests 'close to the hearts' of his white Arkansan constituents.[17] Consequently, he voted against every major piece of civil rights legislation in the 1950s and 1960s.

In the summer of 2020 after the murder of George Floyd, the online petition that #BlackatUARK students had previously posted demanding that Fulbright's statue be removed from campus and his name be stripped from the College of Arts and Sciences started picking up signatures and attracting the attention of the media, and it triggered a debate among students, faculty, and administration about the

'presence' of Fulbright on campus.[18] (Curiously, the Fulbright Peace Fountain was not mentioned as a point of contention in the petition, and was spared scrutiny.) In the forefront of the seventy-fifth anniversary commemoration of the Fulbright Program, Fulbright's name and statue were suddenly in the company of contested historical personalities ranging from Christopher Columbus; Robert E. Lee (and hundreds of other 'heroes' who fought for the 'Lost Cause' of the Confederacy during the Civil War);[19] Cecil Rhodes, whose statue at Oriel College in Oxford has been a source of unending controversy; and Woodrow Wilson, whose name has been removed from Princeton's school of international affairs.

The approach of the University of Arkansas to the Fulbright controversy was consummately reasonable, and it viewed the discussion of Fulbright's 'presence' as a learning opportunity for the university community. In August 2020, the university announced its intention to establish a representative twenty-one-person committee consisting of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community representatives to collect 'multiple and differing constituency views' and to work out recommendations for the university chancellor. The university's charter then obliged the chancellor to make a proposal to the university's president and board trustees for deliberation and decision.[20]

The committee organized a series of virtual town halls and an online portal soliciting input from the various constituencies of the university community.[21] It reviewed this input together regularly in virtual meetings and submitted a number of recommendations to the chancellor at the end of April 2021. With three members absent, its members voted eleven to five in favour of removing Fulbright's name from the college, arguing that it glorified 'a man who did not see Black Arkansans as full citizens' and signified 'that the university has not fully left behind its Jim Crow past'. The committee also voted fifteen ayes and one nay with three absent to remove the Fulbright statue from its location outside Old Main to the University of Arkansas museum or another off-campus location where it could be 'properly contextualized [...] honestly describing Fulbright's connection to the university and his legacy'.[22]

On 19 May 2021, Joe Steinmetz, Chancellor of the University of Arkansas, addressed a carefully reasoned seven-page letter to the president of the University of Arkansas System, Donald Bobbit, noting that the input he had received was 'diverse and highly polarized' and articulating his recommendations to the board of trustees.[23] Therein, he judiciously addressed the issues and interests at stake—pro and contra Fulbright—and acknowledged the different stakeholders' sentiments and feelings. In doing so, he distinguished between Fulbright the man and the institutional legacy of the international exchange program that bears his name.

With reference to Fulbright the man, Steinmetz recognized the deficiencies of his voting record on civil rights, reiterated the widely-accepted interpretation that Fulbright had succumbed to political expediency to appease 'a voting constituency that was not ready for social change'—with the additional qualification that 'his votes did not reflect a hardened personal racism toward African Americans'—and acknowledged how demoralizing this conduct had been for people struggling for basic civil rights.

Chancellor Steimetz then made a Solomonic proposal to navigate the university between the highly polarized shoals of public opinion. One the one hand, he suggested that Fulbright's name remain on the college, emphasizing the merits and accomplishments of the international educational exchange program that bears Fulbright's name. On the other hand, he suggested moving Fulbright's statue from its prominent place in front of Old Main, where some students had found it unavoidable and especially offensive, to 'another appropriate campus location' and contextualizing Fulbright's accomplishments as well as his failures in a manner that would tell the 'entire story of Fulbright'.[24]

Steinmetz's compromise would have required the proponents and opponents of Fulbright's 'presence on campus' both to make some concessions, but apparently there was not much give on either side of the issue. He resigned his position on 18 June 2021, after noting in an e-mail to university faculty, staff, and students 'the many challenges found in trying to manage a university in today's polarized society' and citing personal reasons and his readiness 'to make way for others'.[25] The following day Steinmetz observed in an interview that he had 'received more petitions and more letters with the word "demand" in them in the last, probably, year than I had in my entire [thirty-eight-year] academic career before that'.[26] Conjecture that the flak he took from all sides during the Fulbright affair played a role in his resignation is contextually legitimate and widespread.

Finally, at the end of July 2021, the University of Arkansas president Donald Bobbitt recommended that the board of trustees not remove Fulbright's name from the College of Arts and Sciences, and noted that the Fulbright statue could not be moved, citing a new state law prohibiting the removal of public monuments without a waiver from the Arkansas History Commission. After a year of debate, the Solomonic former chancellor Joe Steinmetz was gone, the name of the Fulbright College remained unchanged, the statue of Senator Fulbright stayed where it was, and the university was still faced with the task of addressing all of the issues associated with the 'contextualization' of Fulbright's presence on campus in a manner 'that affirms the University's commitment to racial equality and acknowledges Senator Fulbright's complex legacy, including his record on international affairs, Civil Rights legislation, and racial integration'.[27]

The two 2021 anniversaries of the Fulbright Program—the seventy-fifth of the signing of the Fulbright Act by President Truman on 1 August 1946 and the sixtieth of the signing of the Fulbright–Hays Act by President Kennedy on 21 September 1961—passed at the University of Arkansas with no mention of Fulbright the man, though he was among the most famous graduates of the institution, or Fulbright the program, his brainchild and most enduring legacy. This silence is indicative of a crisis, and also symptomatic of a national phenomenon that *The Washington Post* has called the 'broken debate of cancel culture'[28] and Anne Applebaum has identified as the discourse-stifling rise of a 'new Puritanism'.[29] Distinguishing between the man and the legacy of the program that bears his name is legitimate and necessary under these circumstances, and a closer look at Fulbright's three disparate legacies is warranted.

THE PARADOXES OF FULBRIGHT'S THREE DISPARATE LEGACIES

On 13 December 1974, J. William Fulbright rose for the last time in the Senate to reflect on his thirty-two years of service in US Congress, and recalled a 'few of the things [he had] tried to do and tried to prevent' as follows: 'Early in my career I focused on the two areas of activity in foreign relations that I considered to be the most crucial, and also the most promising. One was the need of an international peacekeeping organization, the other the need of international education.'

He also found himself 'resisting what seemed to be the excesses of the Cold War, culminating in the tragic and unnecessary hot war in Vietnam'. He advocated *détente* with the Soviet Union long before the concept became popular and politically operable, and ever since Hiroshima he had been deeply concerned about the prospect of superpower conflict escalating into a full-scale nuclear war. In the context of US foreign policy, the departing and longest serving chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations concluded that '[i]f I am remembered, I suppose it will be as a dissenter. That was not what I had in mind, but when things go contrary to your highest hopes and strongest convictions, there is nothing you can do except dissent—or drop out.'[30] Fulbright did not comment on his third and most problematic political legacy: his domestic voting record as a Southern Democrat, who 'maintained a perfect anti-integration voting record in Congress from his first election to the House in 1942 until 1970'.[31]

Fulbright's reputation as a liberal internationalist and international educator was established early on in his career by his sponsorship of the Fulbright Resolution in the House of Representatives on 21 September 1943, which called for the establishment of an international peacekeeping organization and US membership

in what was to become the United Nations,[32] and his proposal of a bill in the Senate on 27 September 1945 'authorizing the use of credits established through the sale of surplus properties abroad for the promotion of international good will through the exchanges of students in the fields of education, culture, and science'[33] that culminated in the Fulbright Act on 1 August 1946.[34]

This legislation established what was to become the most famous and the largest international educational exchange program in the world until it was surpassed in size in the 1990s by one of its many imitators: the European Union's generously funded, multilateral Erasmus Programme. It has traditionally been heralded by the Department of State as the 'US government's flagship international educational and cultural exchange program'.[35]

In this context it is important to recall that Fulbright conceived and established the educational exchange program in 1945–1946 in the spirit of liberal internationalism that prevailed among the policy-makers and diplomats responsible for establishing the great collaborative international institutions at the end of and in the immediate wake of the Second World War (the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund) that were designed to enhance international cooperation and collective security. The Fulbright Program *antedated* the advent of the Cold War in 1947 and the passage of the US Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948 (or Smith–Mundt Act), which provided federal funding for all US propaganda and information activities designed to inform and influence foreign audiences and public opinion in the interests of the United States, as well as appropriations in US dollars for exchanges 'to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries'.[36]

The popularity of the exchange program that bore his name, the prominence of his foreign policy leadership in the Senate, and his vigorous protest against the war in Vietnam made Fulbright a household name by the 1960s. At the same time, his poor voting record on civil rights and public reticence on issues associated with race was also an established part of his public image. Fulbright had a reputation for confounding his liberal admirers, which was well documented by the leading magazines and periodicals in the 1950s and 1960s that helped establish his national reputation as an Arkansan, an egghead, a paradox, and a Socratic gadfly.[37] For example, in its 1966 richly illustrated, full-length feature on Fulbright—'The Roots of the Arkansas Questioner'—*Life* observed: '[O]n civil rights, a disappointing silence.'[38]

As Daniel Yergin observed in *The New York Times* in a retrospective on Fulbright's career in 1974, after Fulbright lost his Senate seat to Dale Bumpers:

> For more than 30 years, he managed his trick, to be two things to two sets of people. To the people of the world, he was the urbane peace prophet J. William Fulbright, of the furrowed brow, the three-piece suit, the dignified mien [...]. To the folks down home in Arkansas, he was plain old Bill Fulbright, shirt sleeves rolled up, baggy pants held by suspenders and collar open at the neck, [...] and mostly keeping a discreet silence on the burning matter of race.[39]

What happened between the end of Fulbright's career in the Senate in 1974, his death in 1995, and the appearance of two comprehensive Fulbright biographies in the mid-1990s: one by University of Arkansas professor of history Randall Woods (*Fulbright: A Biography*)[40] in 1995 and another by Lee Riley Powell (*J. William Fulbright and His Time*)[41] in 1996? After his retirement and as time passed, Fulbright's paradoxical public political record no longer appeared to be as controversial as it had been. The passage of all major civil rights legislation in the 1960s, Fulbright's retirement in 1974, and the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 each contributed to making Fulbright a 'historical figure'. Furthermore, many members of the generations born and raised after the end of Fulbright's career were unfamiliar with his civil rights record, as well as his role as a dissenter in the 1960s, and the legacy of the Fulbright Program as an accomplishment of an aging senior statesman began to outshine everything else.

The appearance of Randall Woods's Fulbright biography in 1995 generated substantial controversy. The fact that Woods apodictically referred to Fulbright as a 'racist' at one juncture, in an eminently quotable formulation, overshadowed his otherwise highly differentiated treatment of Fulbright's record on civil rights in a 700-page opus regarded as a standard work.[42] In an obituary for Fulbright three years after the appearance of his Fulbright biography, Woods qualified his opinion by noting that Fulbright's 'racism had much more to do with class than skin color'.[43]

Fulbright's privileged and patrician childhood and youth in Fayetteville, Arkansas, and his subsequent career among the intellectual and political elites in Washington, DC, paradoxically limited him, too. Based on his own Rhodes experience, Fulbright understood the importance of experiential education; however, his experience in the United States was severely limited by his own caste, class, and colour. Fulbright had little contact with poor people, Black people, or poor Black people, whether they be his constituents in the 'Delta' along the Mississippi River in eastern Arkansas or on the north side of Washington, DC, not far from his home in Georgetown.

One way or another, Woods's Fulbright biography *seemed* to be revelatory when it appeared in 1995, but Woods was not 'unmasking' Fulbright. He was essentially

recalling facts from a historical record that was there for everyone to see but had slipped into an increasing distant past. He reminded his contemporaries in the mid-1990s about what had been common knowledge in the 1960s, but had been forgotten in the interim.[44] Memories had lapsed, while younger generations simply lacked historical context.

Lee Riley Powell details in his Fulbright biography how Fulbright appealed to political expediency to justify his stance on civil rights for thirty-five years in the aftermath of the Little Rock school integration crisis of 1957, with traumatic references to the political fate of his old friend and political associate Brooks Hays. Hays was an eminently popular Democratic politician, who had entered Congress with Fulbright in 1943 as the representative for the central Arkansan congressional district that included Little Rock. Hays's political pedigree was impeccable. He was a respected Southern Baptist minister and God-fearing patriot, who had sponsored legislation to insert the words 'under God' into the Pledge of Allegiance—'one Nation, under God'—and added the motto 'In God We Trust' to US currencies in 1954–1955.

Little Rock and Arkansas became the focal points of national and international attention after the Supreme Court's 1954 ruling *Brown vs. Board of Education*. This landmark piece of civil rights legislation overturned the doctrine of 'separate but equal' that the Supreme Court had established with its ruling *Plessy vs. Ferguson* in 1896, which provided the constitutional justification for all forms of legal discrimination in the South subsumed under the umbrella term 'Jim Crow'. In *Brown vs. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court declared that segregated schools were 'inherently unequal' and paved the way for the integration of schools, desegregation of public spaces and services, and subsequent landmark civil rights legislation, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Based on *Brown v. Board of Education*, civil rights organizations in Little Rock orchestrated the enrolment of nine Black students in a public high school, triggering an ugly and sensational struggle between segregationists and integrationists, constitutional advocates of states' rights and the supremacy of federal law, and Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus and President Dwight. D. Eisenhower. Faubus called in the Arkansas National Guard to prevent the students from entering the school, and President Eisenhower sent in the US Army's 101st Airborne Division to ensure that the Supreme Court ruling was upheld. The pictures of crowds of agitated white protesters taunting a few terrified Black teenagers as they were escorted into school by cordons of armed US soldiers told a devastating story, and if there was one issue that was problematic for the American image during the Cold War it was race.[45]

At the peak of the Little Rock school crisis in 1957, Hays attempted to mediate between the Arkansan state and US federal authorities to defuse the situation. One year later, he paid the political price for his efforts in the congressional elections of 1958 by surprisingly losing his seat in the House of Representatives to a last-minute write-in candidate and fellow Democrat, an outcome that was indicative of how strong and deep anti-integration feelings ran among his white constituents.[46] Southern resistance to the Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision to integrate schools in Little Rock and elsewhere was based on 'supremely confident racism: a belief among millions of white people that blacks were inferior and should be treated so under the law. Polls routinely showed in excess of 80% of southern whites opposing integrated schools.'[47]

Fulbright distinguished himself *negatively* in the Little Rock school crisis by choosing *not* to intervene, and his inaction and reticence disappointed civil rights advocates, who had hoped that he would rise to the occasion. In May 1958, his older sister Anne Teasdale wrote Fulbright a letter criticizing his inaction and identifying the principal inconsistency in his behaviour:

> Ever since you've been in public life you have represented, to many people in this country, and others, too, I'm sure, the moderate, rational, thoughtful unprejudiced point-of-view. Your exchange program implied feelings about the importance of understanding and appreciation of other cultures and the necessity of learning to live together. [...] So I think it's been very hard to understand your not speaking out against the lawlessness, violence, and hatred shown in Arkansas. The old saying 'Silence means consent' is accepted by people, I think.[48]

Two years previously *Harper's Magazine* had run a feature with a title that captured the same enigmatic nature of Fulbright's political posture: 'Fulbright: Arkansas paradox'.[49] In the summer of 2021 Charles King seized on the same diction in an insightful article in *Foreign Affairs*—'The Fulbright Paradox: Race and the Road to a New American Internationalism'—to extend the paradox beyond an analysis of Fulbright's personal faults and shortcomings to the very structure of American politics:

> What seems like a contradiction in Fulbright's outlook, however, is really a blind spot in America's own. The combination of open-mindedness abroad and bigotry at home was not unique to him. His opinions aligned with a deeper conviction in US statecraft that the interests of a great power are best pursued by placing a partition between domestic politics and foreign policy.[50]

Fulbright evidently did not appreciate the extent to which his domestic posture on civil rights not only damaged the international image of the United States abroad but also undermined the objectives of the international educational exchange program he espoused, and this is a paradox within a paradox.

A special advisory commission submitted a report on the effectiveness of educational and cultural exchange programs to Congress in 1963 which was based on a wide-ranging survey of over 2,600 former grantees from twenty countries and 131 US foreign service officers at twenty-six diplomatic missions. It noted a wide and varying range of opinion among different national respondents but arrived at overwhelmingly positive conclusions. There was 'impressive testimony that the exchange program increases mutual understanding' and 'has succeeded in helping dispel among foreign visitors many misconceptions and ugly stereotypes about the American people'.

There was, however, one notable exception:

> A bad experience, particularly perhaps a bad racial experience, may create bitterness rather than understanding. [...] America's intergroup (race) relations received the lowest rating of all aspects of the American scene, by all grantees from all areas. Of those who commented on race relations, only 24 percent found anything to commend. [...] The incidents, as the [African] grantees reported them to us, make sorry reading. [...] Experiences such as these could, we believe, wipe out, or embitter, all the grantee's other experiences in the United States.[51]

Fulbright sought to justify his conduct in Little Rock and thereafter by maintaining that he was not an opponent of desegregation per se. He considered himself to be a 'constitutional traditionalist', and as a lawyer and a former teacher of constitutional law had great respect for the Constitution and the rule of law. His reservations about the implementation of *Brown vs. Board of Education* were not in principle, but procedural. In the wake of Little Rock, he philosophized about 'the legacy of an ancient and melancholy history' in Southern states and 'the Southern mind' and believed 'that the problem of school integration in Arkansas is more likely—bearing in mind that flesh and blood is weak and frail—to yield to the slow conversion of the human heart than to remedies of a more urgent nature'.[52] He later called this 'gradualism'.

From 1958 onward, Fulbright assumed that antagonizing his white segregationist constituency would precipitate the end of his political career, and this ultimately was his justification for his reticence on civil rights in his re-election campaigns for the Senate in 1962 and 1968. Fulbright certainly understood the *moral dilemma*

of voting against civil rights legislation after *Brown vs. Board of Education*, but he made a *political decision* to do so: partially based on the sober calculation that the civil rights legislation rolling back Jim Crow would pass without his vote.[53] In this manner, he secured both the moral approbation of future generations and his seat in the Senate in the 1962 and 1968 elections. Congress was undoubtedly a better place in the 1960s with him than it would have been without him.

Finally, Fulbright was by no means fainthearted. He was not afraid to go against the grain and he had a reputation for being strong-willed and single-minded. For example, he was an early and a spirited critic of the excesses of Senator McCarthy and McCarthyism in the mid-1950s, and of the fallacious 'domino theory' that led to US over-engagement in Vietnam. Although he played a key role in facilitating the Tonkin Bay Resolution in August 1964 that granted the president special executive powers to deploy conventional forces in Southeast Asia, inside of a year he had become one of the most prominent public critics of the Johnson administration's anti-communist excesses in foreign policy in general, and of the escalation of the Vietnam War in particular.

The civil rights movement, the student movement, and the anti-war movement began to converge in the mid-1960s in a broad alliance for civil rights and social and political change, and in the storms of protest it would be difficult to find a more paradoxical figure than Fulbright: lawyerly, with thinning hair, in his sixties, wearing his horn-rimmed glasses and three-piece suits. He assumed a critical and leading role in the burgeoning anti-war movement, while at the same time dragging his feet on civil rights by voting against the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Fulbright was fundamentally conservative, and never comfortable with what he considered to be the juvenile or violent excesses of the countercultural and anti-war movements. Indeed, his great accomplishment was making protest and dissent 'more respectable and centrist'.[54] He brought the weight of Congress to bear on the administration in nationally televised public hearings—a political and a media novelty—and his critique of the war into the living rooms of American families. Fulbright viewed dissent as a duty: 'an act of patriotism, a higher form of patriotism [...] than the familiar rituals of national adulation'.[55]

In early November 1965, Dr Martin Luther King wrote Fulbright a magnanimous and noteworthy letter which warrants being cited at length:

> Your courageous and prophetic leadership in the whole field of foreign affairs is tremendous encouragement to me personally. In many respects the destiny of our nation may rest largely in your hands.

> I know the tremendous price you pay for your outspoken critique of administration policy, and I write to you these few words simply as personal encouragement and to let you know that there are many of us who admire and respect your role in our nation's international affairs.
>
> The challenge to our nation and to freedom and democracy is so much more than a military challenge. Yours is one voice crying in the wilderness that may ultimately awaken our people to the international facts of life. I trust that you will not let any pressure silence you, and that you will continue to speak in a firm, reasoned, objective manner to our nation and to the world.[56]

Dr King certainly understood the racist sentiments of Fulbright's constituents, and knew the manifest shortcomings of his voting record, too, but this did not prevent him from recognizing Fulbright as an indispensable moral leader and political ally in the movement to end a misguided, immoral, and wasteful war. Dr King's understanding of the relationships between race, war, poverty, and Vietnam as a perpetuation of 'white colonialism' were certainly more radical than Fulbright's perspectives on the war.[57] However, he also saw 'the need for sober thinking, healthy debate, creative dissent, and enlightened discussion'[58] and shared many of the ideas and sentiments that Fulbright expressed in his best-selling 1966 critique of American foreign policy hubris and the Vietnam War, *The Arrogance of Power*.[59]

Many years after Fulbright's active career in politics had ended in 1974, he noted in retrospect, and with a degree of resignation: 'I had no desire for martyrdom.'[60] At the age of eighty-four, Fulbright admitted in hindsight that 'civil rights was an issue that I felt unable to confront' and argued as he had since the Little Rock school crisis that '[i]f you oppose your constituents on an issue too close to their hearts, you are not going to get elected'. Fulbright also anticipated that his reticence on civil rights would be a blemish on his record: 'I don't think the "gradualist" school that I belonged to, looking back now, will receive the approval of history.'[61]

In a 1983 interview, Carl Marcy, Head of Staff on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1955–1973 and Fulbright's most important congressional aide, made the following observations connecting these three disparate legacies: Fulbright's civil rights record, its ideological disconnect from his otherwise liberal image, and how minorities benefitted from the Fulbright Program:

> As you know, Senator Fulbright was very independent. He told me many times that he thought he had a compact with the people of Arkansas. It was that if he represented the people of Arkansas on the issues closest to their hearts, they had given him, as the other part of that contract, freedom to act as he felt he should act in the field of foreign policy. The classic case

> of where he represented the people of Arkansas right down the line was in connection with Civil Rights. [...]
>
> I often had to defend positions which he took, in the sense that someone would come to me and say, 'I cannot understand how Senator Fulbright, liberal, broad-minded, can be like he is on Civil Rights'. And I would give the explanation which I have just given to you, and also pointed out that probably the Fulbright program did more for the international education of minorities than almost any other piece of legislation that came that early. Under the program people did go abroad as scholars, teachers, or artists, absolutely regardless of race, creed, or color.[62]

Furthermore, Fulbright was a realist in terms of his personal and political resources and limitations as a senator from Arkansas: 'I never supposed I could take a leading or creative role in more than a few areas of public policy', and he realized that with his white Arkansan constituency, desegregation was obviously not going to be one of them. He 'tried to be quite clear about what this meant from the beginning of my Senate career, [and] felt there were issues fundamental to this nation as a whole in foreign policy that I wanted to focus on, and these were for the most part beyond the experience of my constituents'.[63] Ultimately, world peace was Fulbright's overriding political priority: the establishment of a global peacekeeping organization and the avoidance of a nuclear holocaust.

After the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, Fulbright immediately recognized the implications of nuclear weapons for international politics. He later called 'the disaster of the bombing [...] the immediate cause of my sponsorship of the legislation to set up an exchange program'.[64] The advent of the nuclear age made the prevention of conflicts that could lead to a nuclear war one of his fundamental concerns. In a *New York Times* interview upon the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the Fulbright Program in 1986, Fulbright recapitulated this concern: 'The ultimate purpose of that program', Mr. Fulbright said, 'is to avoid a nuclear war.' 'You may think that's pretentious', he said, 'but that's its main purpose.'[65]

In this respect, the conception of the educational exchange program 'was also a natural corollary of Fulbright internationalism. It was the cultural equivalent of collective security and multilateralism.'[66] Fulbright saw international education not only as an antidote to the dangers inherent in American nationalism, isolationism, exceptionalism, evangelism, and anti-intellectualism, but also as an instrument for conflict prevention and the maintenance of peace. Fulbright saw these issues clearly, while being, as it were, blind in one eye, and this confirms the disconnect between Fulbright the Arkansan politician with his deplorable voting

record on civil rights and Fulbright the urbane internationalist. However, there is no evidence that the shortcomings of the Arkansan politician had any impact on the philosophy or the inclusive practices of the Fulbright Program that the internationalist conceived.

When Fulbright observed that his 'experience as a Rhodes Scholar was the dominant influence in the creation of the Fulbright awards' in 1955, he referred to the 20,000 recipients of Fulbright awards to date 'as grandchildren of Cecil Rhodes, scattered throughout the world'.[67] The fact that *Webster's Third International Dictionary* introduced 'fulbright' as a common noun and a synonym for the exchange grant ten years later[68] extended this intergenerational patrimony to the alumnae and alumni of the Fulbright Program, too, to the 400,000 plus grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren of the exchange program conceived by the Rhodes scholar and paradoxical 'egghead' from Arkansas, J. William Fulbright.

To be continued...

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[1] For an overview see Lonnie R. Johnson, 'The Making of the Fulbright Program, 1946–1961: Architecture, Philosophy, and Narrative', in Alessandro Brogi, Giles Scott-Smith, and David Snyder, eds, *The Legacy of J. William Fulbright: Ideology, Power, and Policy* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2019), 135–151.

[2] The European Recovery Program (ERP) was named after General George C. Marshall, who as Secretary of State (1947–1949) was one of its prominent architects.

[3] The executive directors of the binational Fulbright Commission all over the world responsible for managing the Fulbright Program tend to agree that the program is not as well-known as it was in the past among younger generations outside of the United States, in part due to the proliferation of other exchange programs seeking to imitate its successes.

[4] 'Petition 2019–2020 Fulbright Grantee Letter of Appeal to the Fulbright Program', *Change.org*, accessed 11 July 2020.

[5] There were scores of articles. See, for example, Elizabeth Redden, 'Among the Newly Unemployed in the U.S. Is a Prestigious Group: Fulbrighters', *Inside Higher Ed* (3 April 2020), https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/04/03/among-newly-unemployed-us-prestigious-group-fulbrighters; Alex Leeds Matthews, *Huffpost* (6 April 2020), https://www.huffpost.com/entry/coronavirus-fulbright-scholars-return-to-us_n_5e87af7fc5b6e7d76c63b823.

[6] Consult 'During Trump Presidency, Global Image of U.S. Has Declined', *Pew Research Center*, https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/11/19/the-trump-era-has-seen-a-decline-in-americas-global-reputation/, accessed 17 March 2021.

[7] Hal Brands, 'The Last Chance for American Internationalism', *Foreign Affairs* (20 Januar 2021), www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-01-20/last-chance-american-internationalism.

[8] 'Remarks by President Biden on America's Place in the World', The White House: Briefing Room, 4 February 2021, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/02/04/remarks-by-president-biden-on-americas-place-in-the-world/.

[9] Ishann Tharoor, 'As U.S. Leaves Afghanistan, Europe Sours on Biden', *The Washington Post* (31 August 2021), https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/08/31/europe-america-shift-afghanistan/.

[10] *Change.org*, https://www.change.org/p/remove-fulbright-statue-and-name-from-university-of-arkansas, accessed 7 July 2020.

[11] Only real insiders would know that Eldridge Cleaver, one of the leading figures in the radical African-American Black Panthers Party in the mid-1960s, was a native Arkansan, too.

[12] For a biography of Fodor and survey of his contacts and influences, see Fabienne Gouverneur, *Personal, Confidential: Mike W. Fodor Als Netwerker Und Kulturmittler* (Vienna: NAP New Academic Press, 2019), 61–130. After the Second World War, Fodor corresponded extensively with Fulbright and influenced his thinking about the East–West conflict, especially in the immediate post-war years.

[13] Lord Elton, ed., *The First Fifty Years of the Rhodes Trust and the Rhodes Scholarships, 1903–1953* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955), 212. Frank Aydelotte, a Rhodes alumnus who served as the American Secretary of the Rhodes Trust solicited a testimonial letter for this commemorative publication from Fulbright. His letter dated 6 May 1955 is cited here.

[14] Fodor was referenced prominently in the major magazine articles on Fulbright. See, for example, Beverley Smith, Jr, 'Egghead from the Ozarks', *Saturday Evening Post* (2 May 1959), 31.

[15] Randall Bennett Woods, *Fulbright: A Biography* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 37.

[16] J. William Fulbright and Seth P. Tillman, *The Price of Empire* (Pantheon Books, 1989), 217–219. Fulbright described the purpose of educational exchange programs in *The Arrogance of Power* over thirty years earlier in the following manner: 'No part of our foreign relations does more to make international relations *human* relations and to encourage attitudes of personal empathy, the rare and wonderful ability to perceive the world as others see it.' (New York: Random House, 1966), 177.

[17] Fulbright and Tillman, *The Price of Empire*, 89.

[18] 'Petition Wants "Fulbright" off UA's Campus', *Arkansas Online* (17 July 2020), https://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2020/jul/02/petition-wants-fulbright-off-uas-campus/.

[19] Lee and the 151 other graduates of West Point who fought for the Confederacy to institutionalize slavery in perpetuity committed high treason in the name of defending states' rights. See Chris Jenks, 'The Tangled History of Confederate Generals at West Point and in the US Army: What's in a Name?', *Just Security* (28 August 2017), https://www.justsecurity.org/44479/tangled-history-confederate-generals-west-point-army-robert-e-lee/.

[20] 'U of A Forms Committee to Evaluate J. William Fulbright's Presence on Campus', *University of Arkansas News* (6 August 2020), https://news.uark.edu/articles/54359.

[21] 'Committee to Evaluate J. William Fulbright and Charles Brough's U of A Presence Seeks Your Input, University of Arkansas', https://news.uark.edu/articles/54917/committee-to-evaluate-j-william-fulbright-and-charles-brough-s-u-of-a-presence-seeks-your-input, accessed 24 October 2020.

[22] 'Recommendations from the Committee, The Office of the Chancellor, University of Arkansas', https://chancellor.uark.edu/advisory-committees-commissions/u-of-a-committee-results/recommendations-from-the-committee.php, accessed 28 April 2021. The committee originally had twenty-one members, but these recommendations only tally nineteen.

[23] 'Recommendations Letter for UA System President 5-19-21, The Office of the Chancellor, The University of Arkansas', https://chancellor.uark.edu/key-communications/recommendations-letter-for-system-president.php, accessed 27 May 2021.

[24] 'Recommendations Letter', 3–4.

[25] 'E-mail to University of Arkansas distribution list, Subject: Message from Chancellor Steinmetz', Thursday, 17 June 2021.

[26] Emma Pettit, '"Whispers to Rumors to Resignation": U. of Arkansas Chancellor Resigns', *Chronicle of Higher Education* (18 June 2021), https://www.chronicle.com/article/whispers-to-rumors-to-resignation-u-of-arkansas-chancellor-resigns.

[27] 'Fulbright Statue Should Remain in Place on UA Campus, Top Official Says', *Arkansas Online* (27 July 2021), https://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2021/jul/27/fulbright-statue-should-remain-place-ua-campus-top/.

[28] *The Washington Post* Editorial Board, 'Opinion: A Blackface "Othello" and the Broken Debate over Cancel Culture', *The Washington Post* (22 October 2021), https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/10/22/blackface-othello-broken-debate-over-cancel-culture/.

[29] Anne Applebaum, 'The New Puritans', *The Atlantic* (October 2021), https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2021/10/new-puritans-mob-justice-canceled/619818/.

[30] *Congressional Record, Proceedings and Debates of the 93rd Congress*, Second Session, Vol. 120, Part 31 (19 December 1974 to 20 December 1974), 44075–44076.

[31] Neal Allen, 'The Power of the One-Party South in National Politics: Segregation in the Career of J. William Fulbright', in Alessandro Brogi, Giles Scott-Smith, and David J. Snyder, *The Legacy of J. William Fulbright: Policy, Power, and Ideology* (University Press of Kentucky, 2019), 33.

[32] *Congressional Record, Proceedings and Debates of the 78th Congress*, First Session, Vol. 89, Part 6 (4 July 1943 to 20 October 1943), 7725: 'That the Congress hereby expresses itself as favoring the creation of appropriate international machinery with power adequate to establish and to maintain a just and lasting peace, among the nations of the world, and as favoring participation of by the United States therein.'

[33] *Congressional Record, Proceedings and Debates of the 79th Congress*, First Session, Vol. 91, Part 7 (11 September 1945 to 18 October 1945), 9044.

[34] By its tenth anniversary in 1956, the Fulbright Program had provided 12,000 grants for international students, teachers, scholars, and scientists, and 9,000 grants for US citizens.

[35] That is the current language on the State Department's Bureau for Educational and Cultural Affairs website, https://eca.state.gov/fulbright/about-fulbright/history, accessed 28 October 2020. The Fulbright 'brand', logo, and program narrative was 'redesigned' and relaunched in 2018–2019 to appeal especially to US domestic audiences.

[36] See the Smith–Mundt Act, PL80-402: 'To promote the better understanding of the United States among the peoples of the world and to strengthen cooperative international relations', Section 2, enacted 27 January 1948.

[37] See Charles B. Seib and Alan L. Otten, 'Fulbright: Arkansas Paradox', *Harper's Magazine* (1 June 1956); Beverly Smith, 'Egghead from the Ozarks', *Saturday Evening Post* (2 May 1959); Sydney Hyman, 'Fulbright: The Wedding of Arkansas and the World', *The New Republic* (14 May 1962); and Brower Brock, 'The Roots of the Arkansas Questioner', *Life* (13 May 1966).

[38] Brock, 'The Roots of the Arkansas Questioner', 108.

[39] Daniel Yergin, 'Fulbright's Last Frustration: The Great Dissenter Finally Found Himself a Compatible Secretary of State and Now It's Too Late', *The New York Times* (24 November 1974).

[40] Randall Bennett Woods, *Fulbright: A Biography* (Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[41] Lee Riley Powell, *J. William Fulbright and His Time: A Political Biography* (Memphis, TN: Guild Bindery Press, 1966).

[42] 'That J. William Fulbright was a racist is indisputable.' Woods, *Fulbright*, 115.

[43] Randall Bennett Woods, 'J. William Fulbright (9 April 1905–9 February 1995)', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 142/1 (1998), 132.

[44] Powell is critical of the diction Woods used (*J. William Fulbright*, 493) to describe Fulbright's attitudes indisputably as 'racist' (see Woods, *Fulbright*, 115). Powell's sentiment has been largely shared by family, friends, associates, and admirers of Fulbright. See Hoytt Purvis, 'Context Required in Fulbright Debate', *Northwest Arkansas Democrat Gazette*, https://www.nwaonline.com/news/2020/jul/22/context-required-fulbright-debate/, accessed 22 July 2020. Purvis served as Fulbright's press secretary from 1967 to 1974 and concluded his op-ed: 'I spent a lot of time with him. I never remotely considered him to be a racist.'

[45] Michael L. Krenn, *The History of United States Cultural Diplomacy: 1770 to the Present Day* (London & New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), 83–91.

[46] For an extensive treatment of the Little Rock School Crisis, Fulbright's role therein, and his assumption that a proactive civil rights stance would mean the end of his political career in Arkansas, see Powell, *J. William Fulbright*, 102–162.

[47] Roy Reed, 'The Contest for the Soul of Orval Faubus', in Elizabeth Jacoway and C. Fred Williams, eds, *Understanding the Little Rock Crisis: An Exercise in Remembrance and Reconciliation* (University of Arkansas Press, 1999), 100.

[48] Letter of Anne Teasdale to Fulbright, 20 May 1958, cited in Woods, *Fulbright*, 230–231 (University of Arkansas Special Collections, Fulbright Papers, BCN 105, Fg7, SPF).

[49] Seib and Otten, 'Fulbright: Arkansas Paradox', 60–66.

[50] Charles King, 'The Fulbright Paradox: Race and the Road to a New American Internationalism', *Foreign Affairs*, 100/4 (August 2021), 93.

[51] United States Advisory Commission on International Educational and Cultural Affairs, 'A Special Study on the Effectiveness of the Past Educational and Cultural Exchange Programs of the U.S. Department of State: A Report to Congress from the U.S. Advisory Commission on International Educational and Cultural Affairs Pursuant to Public Law 87–256 Also Constituting the First Annual Report of the U.S. Advisory Commission on International Education and Cultural Affairs' (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1963), iii–vi, 12, 14–15.

[52] Karl E. Meyer, ed., *Fulbright of Arkansas: The Public Positions of a Private Thinker* (Washington, DC: Robert B. Luce, 1963). This is an excerpt from an *amicus curiae* brief that Fulbright submitted in the Supreme Court's landmark *Aaron vs. Cooper* ruling which denied the Arkansas School Board the right to postpone school integration for thirty months in the wake of the Little Rock school crisis. Powell notes that it was 'rare in his career, for it is one of the few times he ever discussed a race related issue in detail'. See Powell, *J. William Fulbright*, 133.

[53] The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 passed in the Senate with votes of 73–27 and 77–19, respectively.

[54] David Halberstam, *The Powers that Be* (New York: Dell, 1979), 706.

[55] J. William Fulbright, *The Arrogance of Power* (New York: Random House, 1966), 25–27.

[56] 'Letter from Martin Luther King to Fulbright', 8 November 1965 (University of Arkansas, Special Collections, Fulbright Papers).

[57] See King's speech 'The Casualties of the War in Vietnam', 25 February 1965, Beverly Hills, CA, recording on YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vuySX6Nj1AU and reprinted in Martin Luther King, 'Martin Luther King Jr. on the Vietnam War', *The Atlantic* (25 March 2018), https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2018/02/martin-luther-king-jr-vietnam/552521/.

[58] King, introductory remarks to 'The Casualties of the War in Vietnam', at 4.00 on the YouTube recording cited above but not included in *The Atlantic* reprint.

[59] Fulbright, *The Arrogance of Power*.

[60] In an interview on 16 October 1981. See Powell, *J. William Fulbright*, 144.

[61] Fulbright and Tillman, *The Price of Empire*, 94.

[62] Donald A. Ritchie, 'Interview with Carl M. Marcy, Chief of Staff, Foreign Relations Committee, 1955–1973, 12 October 1983', Oral History Project, United States Senate, 118, https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/resources/pdf/Marcy_interview_4.pdf, accessed 28 October 2020.

[63] Fulbright and Tillman, *The Price of Empire*, 89.

[64] J. William Fulbright, *Against the Arrogance of Power: My Personal History* (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Shimbum, 1991), 55–56. This is the last and rarely cited publication of Fulbright, who related his 'personal history' to Michio Katsumata, a journalist for *The Nikkei*, one of Japan's largest newspapers, which published it in May 1991. See note 5 to 'Book One: Prologue and Early Years', in Lee Riley Powell's *J. William Fulbright*, 511.

[65] Special to *The New York Times*, 'Fulbright Program: 40 and Still "Pretentious"', *The New York Times*, 26 June 1986, sec. B.

[66] See Randall B. Woods, 'Fulbright Internationalism', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 491/1 (1 May 1987), 22–35.

[67] Lord Elton, *The First Fifty Years of the Rhodes Trust and the Rhodes Scholarships, 1903–1953*, 212.

[68] Don Oberdorfer, 'Common Noun Spelled f-u-l-b-r-i-g-h-t', *The New York Times* (4 April 1965).