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Guest (s): Senator Strom Thurmond (D-SC)

Title: Fulbright Memorandum and Muzzling the Military

Note: Questions were paraphrased and/or shortened by the transcriber. For the exact question, please consult the audiotapes.

Morphew: Introduction...last week we were discussing the Fulbright Memorandum and the muzzling of the military and the right of the american people to be aware of the menace posed by communism...I'd like to start by asking this question...some in the United States say that communism is just another political movement and that it doesn't pose any serious threat to our national security...is this true or is there a serious threat?

Thurmond: Dick, the communists in this country would like to have our people believe that, but the people of America must know that the Communist Party in this country is part of the worldwide conspiracy of communism that is headed up in Moscow. They must understand that the Communist Party in this country is not just a political party. It is a part of this machinery of communism throughout the world. Now, Mr. J. Edgar Hoover has made this statement, "The knowledge of the enemy, alertness to the danger, and everyday patriotism are the brick and mortar with which we can build an impregnable fortress against communism." He wrote a book on it, on this subject, and pointed out the dangers of communism. Mr. Hoover says, "We must understand communism." Now General Powell, who is the strategic air commander, made this statement, "So far, people just don't fully understand the communist threat." And I'm afraid a great many people don't understand. We must understand that the communists have as their goal the domination of the world. They have made great progress. I just want to give you some figures here to show you what progress they have made. In fact, they have taken over a large population and they have taken over a great area in the world. More than one-third of the people of the world are now behind the Iron Curtain. More than one-third of the area of the world is behind the Iron Curtain, so they have made tremendous progress and we must take that into account and we must understand that they are not just a political party in this country.

Morphew: Shortly before Congress adjourned, on September 20th, the Senate Armed Services Committee voted as a result of efforts by yourself and others to investigate this situation...what was the vote?

Thurmond: Dick, the vote was fifteen to one, in favor of the investigation.

Morphew: Was it a result partially of efforts by patriotic Americans back home getting in touch with their officials in Washington?

Thurmond: I am sure that this was a great impetus in the result that was attained. The people sent letters and telegrams that just came spontaneously. We received in our office alone 40,000 letters and telegrams, and I feel confident that members of the Armed Services Committee and other senators received a large number of communications on this subject.

Morphew: What field will this investigation cover?

Thurmond: Well, Dick, it's going to cover three fields. The first is censorship, the second is troop training information education programs, and third is the seminars.

Morphew: Let's take these in order...by censorship, do you mean censorship of speeches made by our leaders?

Thurmond: That's correct. The Pentagon has been censoring the speeches of our military leaders. Our military leaders have contained in their speeches statements about communism, about the aims and designs of communism, about the insidious manner in which it operates, but those statements have been censored out. Now, I can give you some examples if you'd like to hear.

Morphew: Yes, please do.

Thurmond: Well, now hear is a statement that was contained in a speech by a military officer that was deleted, that is, it was censored: "Communist conspiracy directed toward absolute domination of the world." Do you see anything wrong with that? Certainly, the communist conspiracy is directed toward absolute domination of the world, and as I said on your program last week, Mr. Khrushchev now says that by 1975 that communism will dominate the world, and that means, of course, that he expects to take the United States by 1975. Now, second, "soviet infiltration menacing this nation and extending throughout far corners of the globe." Well, certainly Soviet infiltration does menace this nation and it extends throughout every section of the globe, all over the world, so that's a true statement but that was censored out. A third is, "a steady advance of communism." Well, communism has certainly steadily advanced. Since World War II ended, 900 million people and 15 or more countries have been taken behind the Iron Curtain. Another example, "insidious ideology of world communism." Well, communism operates in a very insidious manner. It operates through infiltration and subversion and it operates in ways that people don't know about, and that is the reason our people must understand communism. Another example, "soviets have not relented in the slightest in their determination to dominate the world and to destroy our way of life." Well that is certainly a true statement, and why should anyone object to our military people making that statement in a speech? Another example is, "nothing has happened to indicate that the goals of international communism have changed." They have certainly not changed since

Lenin took over in 1917. The communists have made a steady drive. They have taken one country after the other and as I have stated here, they now have a large part of the world, geographically and numerically by people. Now, another example, “today in the face of the worldwide threat of international communism,” now that was taken out. They don’t want you to say anything about the worldwide threat of communism. In other words, Dick, this pattern of censoring out penetrating phrases on communism is relatively consistent wherever such material is submitted. There appears to be complete consistency in the deletion of any use of the word ‘victory’ or the word ‘war.’ Anytime ‘victory’ or ‘war’ is used, they take it out, and each and every instance that I have found, such words were deleted and a substitute was made. Now these were carried to rather ridiculous extremes. For instance, in a speech of a technical nature prepared for delivery on May the 1st, 1961, an officer used the following sentence: “The X-15 is the man-of-war of the stable of research aircraft today.” The phrase ‘man-of-war’ was deleted and the censor wrote in the margin, and I quote, “let’s use another steed, ???, Gallant Fox” and so forth. Even in this remote connotation, the term ‘war’ cannot be used. Why, they even deleted what Mr. Khrushchev did at the United Nations. They said he banged his shoe on the table, well, they took that out. They don’t seem to want anything that hurts the communists. They seem to want to take out it. Now, our people ought to know the dangers of communism and it’s well for our military leaders to tell our people about that. Our military leaders are supposed to know the enemy. They are supposed to be experts on the enemy. Communism is our enemy. Communism is the only enemy of the United States and of the free world, and we are the only country that stands between freedom and communism. Our people must understand this.

Morphew: Who is responsible for this censorship?

Thurmond: Well now, that’s another question. Now, the Secretary of Defense gave a list of people who did the censoring. Well, of course, they are little people, some in uniform, they merely carry out orders. They get their orders, they get their directives from higher up, from the civilian leaders full up, in the Defense Department. Now the Defense Department sends these speeches where they contain anything about foreign affairs and even sometimes if they don’t, if it’s about communism, to the State Department. The State Department has recommended censoring in a great many instances. However, the decision was made by the Defense Department because they didn’t have to act on what the State Department recommended, and so the Defense Department accepted their responsibility.

Morphew: So an American military officer would not be allowed to make a speech in which he talked about the United States winning a victory or about communism as a danger?

Thurmond: Well, Dick, that has been the pattern in the past. Now and then, well, they let something get by, but that’s the general pattern. Now, the second field is troop information education programs, and on your program last week, I referred to the film, “Operation Abolition” as being an example. They took this tough film which shows the insidious nature in which communism operates off the proscribed list of training films.

They do not allow it to be shown now as a training film. Now the other films that were not allowed to be shown, "Communism on the Map," and others. We think the troops ought to see these tough films on communism so they would understand how communism operates. Then, the third field is the seminars. Now, these seminars have been cancelled in various places. These seminars have been canceled in Virginia, Indiana, Louisiana, Illinois and other places. These seminars are very important to teach the civilian leaders and the people generally about the dangers of communism. We must understand the dangers of communism because communism is our enemy. They want to take us over. They want to take the world over. They are making great progress, and America must understand this enemy menace.

Morphew: You mentioned that you received 40,000 pieces of mail on this subject, what can the American people do?

Thurmond: Well Dick, there are a number of things they can do. I would suggest that they study communism and learn all they can about it. There are two books I would suggest they read. Of course there are many others. The Naked Communist, Brainwashing from ??? to Powers. Incidentally, this last book is written by Mr. Ed Hunter who is a consultant to the Internal Security Subcommittee of which Senator Eastland is chairman. Now the other thing they can do, they ought to learn about communism and socialism and the interrelationships. They should teach young people about communism. Mr. J. Edgar Hoover, the director of the FBI, and Mr. Hunter, the psychological expert, say that the young people are the primary target. They should be active politically, write their senators and their congressmen, write their president, Secretary of Defense, and object to this censoring and other things going on. They should not be lulled into a socialist sleep with Washington handouts. They should promote more patriotism, downright true love of country. They should organize and attend anti-communist seminars. They should make sure, as Lincoln put it, not only that God is on our side, but more importantly, that we are on God's side. Our churches should push this campaign. You know the fate of our liberties, even our survival, is being decided by our actions today. All that is necessary for the forces of evil to win in the world is for good men to do nothing, said Edmund Burke. And this is a true statement. There are many things that can be done. These are some of the things that would help greatly.