FROM: Phyllis Schlafly

68 FAIRMOUNT, ALTON, ILLINOIS 62002 / (618) 462-5415

RELEASE: JUNE 28, 1983

WHEN THE AMATEURS RUN THE MILITARY

A hundred years from now, when our descendants open a time capsule and read American history of the 20th century, they will be at a loss to understand how the United States could wage and win (in 1945) such a successful "world" war on two farflung fronts, and then fall on its face in Korea only five years later. Then, apparently learning nothing from t experience, the United States 15 years later suffered a devastating defeat in Vietnam.

Since it is obvious that neither North Korea nor North Vietnam was anywhere near as formidable an enemy as Nazi Germany or Imperial Japan, the mystery becomes even harder to fathom.

Major General Dale O. Smith, USAF (Ret.) thinks he has discovered the answer to that puzzle. It is that, shortly after World War II, amateurs took control of U.S. military doctrines, strategy and tactics. The vehicle for that fundamental change in a vital segment of the American decision-making process was the National Security Act of 1947.

The rationale behind that statute was a desire to reduce costly rivalry among the military services by imposing unification of command. But somehow, in the legislative process, the military were outlobbied by an elite group of men whom General Smith identifi as "defense intellectuals" -- a corps of civilians who proclaimed themselves as "experts."

The result of the statute, therefore, was that unification was imposed at the civilian Cabinet level rather than at the military command level. The military profession were downgraded to third-level assistants taking orders from a giant bureaucracy of Pentagon civilians who had never seen either a military school or a battlefield.

The office of Secretary of Defense was originally planned to be a small all-civilian policy headquarters of a few hundred people. In the hands of the "defense intellectuals," it quickly grew to a giant bureaucracy of tens of thousands of civilians who not only made policy but determined every detail of military strategy and tactics.

Americans rightly honor the principle of "civilian control of the military." But that means (or should mean) that the President and Congress establish our policies of war

and peace and decidewhether and when to go to war. Civilian control of the military should not mean that civilians plan and execute military campaigns.

General Smith points out that the office of Secretary of Defense (not our military commanders) ran the Korean and Vietnam wars. We lost because professional military men ha to take orders from "amateurs susceptible to every crackpot idea and political wind."

General Smith details the "dangerous doctrines" to which these inexperienced civilian committed the United States: "parity" (which gave our blessing to the Russians' catching up and getting ahead of us), "mutual assured destruction" (which made our cities hostage to the enemy), and "flexible response" (which announced to the enemy in advance that our objectives were less than victory).

The amateurs led our country into dangerous posturing such as parading a carrier task force in the Indian Ocean when it was obvious that any military move byus in Iran would lead to a confrontation in an area where Soviet forces were massively available and vastly superior. That showed we were just a paper tiger in Iran.

The amateurs decided the day-to-day conduct of the Vietnam War, selecting targets of meager strategic value and conspicuously failing to close down important ones such as Haiphong harbor. President Lyndon B. Johnson kept a map of Vietnam in the White House on which he and his amateur advisers selected the targets for the next day's bombing raids.

General Smith isn't the only one to warn America against the dangerous influence of the self-styled "defense intellectuals." President Dwight Eisenhower, in his farewell address on January 17, 1961, issued this strongly-worded warning: "Yet in holding scientific research and discovery in respect, as we should, we must also be alert to the equal and opposite danger that public policy could itself become the captive of a scientific-technological elite."

Despite the pro-strength military policies of the Reagan Administration, hundreds of these "scientific-technological elite" are still holding captive many aspects of our public policy about peace and preparedness. One good way to escape that captivity, and to avoid repeating the military failures of Korea and Vietnam, would be to start Congressiona hearings on General Smith's suggestion that we repeal the National Security Act of 1947 so that professional military men can again be responsible for military strategy and tacti