

In WASHINGTON

BY RALPH de TOLEDANO

WHO'S STALLING THE FREEDOM ACADEMY BILL?

With an overwhelming percentage of the American people favoring the creation of a Freedom Academy, congressional approval should have been almost automatic. The American people want the academy, if the Gallup poll is to be considered any kind of indication, but there are forces on the right and on the left blocking the bipartisan group seeking authorization. The Gallup figures are somewhat astonishing, for with very little publicity having been given to the Freedom Academy bill, 69 percent of those polled favored it, 14 percent opposed, and 17 percent had no opinion.

The bill proposes to set up a school that would train government personnel and private citizens in the strategy and tactics of the cold war -- and in Communist methodology. At present, as Dr. Gallup noted in reporting his findings, "we still operate with far too many amateurs who have the desire to win but who completely lack the needed training and background with which to succeed."

Why is the bill stalled in the machinery of Congress? It has, of course, been attacked on the left by the New Republic, which believes that the academy will "propound dogma," and by the Washington Post. It has also been sharply criticized by right-wing patriotic groups which fear that the wrong people may be entrusted with this very necessary task and that the ends sought can be perverted. Proponents of the bill argue that adequate safeguards will be taken to prevent this.

But it was clear to me that something more was involved than the opposition of these groups. For the bill was sponsored and strongly supported by Republican Senator Karl Mundt, who has been one of its staunchest advocates, by liberal Democratic Senator Paul Douglas, and by a group of men whose ideologies vary considerably -- Senators Goldwater, Proxmire, Dodd, Case of New Jersey, Keating, Fong, Hickenlooper, Smathers, etc.

Their influence got the bill through the Senate in 1960, but it died in the House when Chairman Francis Walter of the House Un-American Activities Committee expressed a frigid attitude. (He was commended for this by the Washington Post, a newspaper which usually takes a dim view of Mr. Walter, and amusingly this praise worried the Congressman.

But a careful check now points to two other sources of opposition -- both formidable. The State Department is one. Though it has notably failed in giving its Foreign Service the ideological weapons to fight Communism, it emphatically rejects the idea of a Freedom Academy. Recently, at conferences between those pushing for the bill and Ambassador Charles E. (Chip) Bohlen -- a real power in the department's policy planning -- the nature of that opposition was outlined.

Mr. Bohlen insisted that work in the field now being done at Harvard and other universities was sufficient, that the academy was not needed. Mr. Bohlen refused to concede that these universities merely do "area studies" for the government -- and however excellent this work may be, it is no way substitutes the kind of training which



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xx give.

The real reason: A fear by the department's middle echelon that a new generation of young diplomats will begin to question the ill-conceived viewpoints from which much of our foreign policy is derived.

But the biggest obstacle to passage remains Chairman J. William Fulbright of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. It was his memorandum which led to the muzzling of military officers. It was Senator Fulbright who has insisted that "we must learn to overcome our emotional prejudices against Russia" so that in time the Communists will learn to trust us.

The Freedom Academy bill is bottled up in Senator Fulbright's committee and will remain there unless it is yanked out by main force. He has said that the U.S. Constitution was "designed for an 18th Century agrarian society far removed from the centers of world power," but he is ready and willing to use the Congressional system set up by that Constitution to thwart the will of the majority.

But the chairman of one of the Senate's most powerful committees will have a fight on his hands. For Karl Mundt and other supporters of the Freedom Academy are determined to give Congress the opportunity to vote on the bill. And Senator Mundt is a dogged man. The fight will be behind the scenes, but before it is over, the sparks will fly.

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