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PRESIDENT'S INTERESTS DOMESTIC

LBJ Needs Strong State Department

By MARY GOODELLOW
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WASHINGTON — Even before the grandstands of the inaugural parade had been dismantled, Washington was buzzing with the rumor that Dean Rusk would soon leave as secretary of state and that his place would be taken by Sen. William Fulbright of Arkansas.

Bill Fulbright has a lot going for him. The author of the Fulbright Scholarship Act is a longtime expert on foreign affairs. He has a reputation for hard-headed intellectual ability, plenty of grit and fearless honesty.

Never afraid of thinking unthinkable thoughts himself, Fulbright last fall urged Americans to do just that, and in the doing, to face up to the world as it is instead of as they wished it were.

Now 59, and a Rhodes Scholar like Dean Rusk, Fulbright has another big qualification for the job — his 21-year service in the Senate. For some time he has been a member of both the Joint Economic and Finance committees, and chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations.

WHETHER the choice is Fulbright or not, the situation demands a strong, competent and sure-footed secretary of state. For it has long been known — from his speeches, the emphasis he puts in his legislative program — that

President Lyndon Johnson is far more interested in domestic affairs than in foreign.

The bills for medicare, education, the war against poverty and so forth, are geared for America's "Great Society" — in America.

Throughout the United States' 176-year history, those presidents with strong interest in foreign affairs have generally chosen secretaries of state who were easy to dominate.

Franklin D. Roosevelt was a prime example. Like Teddy Roosevelt, who rode roughshod over John Hay, Elihu Root and Robert Bacon, FDR dominated Cordell Hull and Edward R. Stettinius Jr. He often dealt with Undersecretary Sumner Welles without informing Hull, and then undercut both of them by his use of Harry Hopkins, Averell Harriman, Gen. Bedell Smith and James Byrnes.

AS A RESULT of Roosevelt's off-the-cuff domination of America's foreign policy, President Truman inherited the chaotic aftermath of World War II with few guidelines and little experience in foreign affairs.

He had little patience with the State Department. At the Potsdam Conference in August, 1946, lacking confidence in his first (out of three) secretary of state, James Byrnes of South Carolina, Truman found himself up against such astute diplomatic traders as Stalin and Churchill.

Byrnes and Truman did not like each other, which only made matters worse. At one point during the conference, Truman became so irritated that he turned impatiently to Byrnes and whispered: "Jimmy, do you realize that we have been here 17 whole days? Why, in 17 days you can decide anything!"

Subsequently Truman began to grasp how complex foreign affairs can be, and with the appointment, early in 1947 of a man he felt he could trust — George Marshall — the State Department

came back into its own. This was evidenced by the Marshall Plan, which sealed our economic involvement in Europe.

IF STRONG presidents tend to choose weak secretaries of state, the reverse is also true. The foremost recent example of this is Dwight D. Eisenhower, who practically abdicated foreign relations to John Foster Dulles, and to a lesser extent to the Central Intelligence Agency.

When the U-2 affair took place in 1960, Eisenhower obviously didn't know whether a U-2 had been over Russia or not. Dulles dominated foreign affairs completely, flying around the world as an airborne diplomat and making far-reaching commitments. When Dulles died in 1959, his replacement, Christian Herter, could only attempt to pick up the pieces of what had been a one-man show.

When John F. Kennedy came to office, not only did he have to face the problems of Cuba and Vietnam, but the deterioration of our relations with Europe — namely Charles de Gaulle. It was a new era in world politics, and a new set of issues were imminent.

This time it was the young President who was fascinated by foreign relations. Before his tragic death he had begun to recreate America's political image abroad. Here again, there was little teamwork with the State Department, for Kennedy had his own personal clique of advisers.

TODAY, President Johnson talks about "teamwork" in government. But does he mean it? Immersed as he is in The Great Society, will he find the time or temperament to devote to foreign problems?

These problems loom so large that they will require consecutive direction, either by a secretary of state who is fully in charge, or by a President who can spare the time.