

# Maxwell Taylor revisited

A report by Webster Trammell Director of Student Activities

## INTRODUCTION

Many situations have arisen at Monmouth College but maybe none so important as the Taylor Incident.

This paper will explore and develop three essential areas. The first of these areas concerns itself with how and why General Maxwell Taylor came to Monmouth College on the night of April 22, 1970.

The second area covers in detail the incidents that took place on April 22, 1970 from the time General Taylor arrived at Newark Airport until he was taken back to the Holiday Inn in West Long Branch after his aborted lecture.

The third and last area of concern here deals with the events that transpired following the departure of the General from Monmouth College.

It is the intent of this paper to explore as deeply as possible the reasons for the disturbance that took place on the night of April 22 in Pollak Auditorium. The paper will then try to determine what effects this incident has had on the philosophy of academic freedom within the Monmouth College Community.

The paper will utilize various media, especially the press to make several points. Any conclusions that will be drawn are those of the author and are not necessarily those of Monmouth College.

The time General Maxwell Taylor was chosen to speak at Monmouth College was sometime late in the summer of 1969. He was chosen by a student organization called the Student Union Board. This student run and student financed board was empowered by its Constitution, which was passed by the Student Senate of Monmouth College, to select and book artists, lecturers or scholars for the Student Union Board's Arts & Letters Series.

The Student Union Board was empowered to use a portion of the Student Activities and Services fee which each full time student enrolled at Monmouth College pays each semester. Each student pays fifteen dollars per semester and the money allotted to the Student Union Board for the 1969-1970 Arts & Letters Series was ten thousand dollars. General Taylor's fee was two thousand five hundred dollars, one fourth the total budget allotment.

It is important to note here that this is a student fee and that no faculty, administrative or staff member of the College is required to pay this fee. It has been a long standing policy of the Student Union Board to admit, free of charge, any faculty, administrative or staff member of the College to any and all of its functions. This includes the Arts & Letters Series of which General Maxwell Taylor was part of. The Student Union Board, however reserves the right to independently select the people that are represented in the Arts & Letters Series because it is student financed.

At the time of the selection of General Taylor by the Board, Bruce Landis, Director of the Student Union and Webster Trammell, Director of Student Activities advised the Board on its choices for the Arts & Letters Series.

The merit of the idea to have General Taylor appear at Monmouth was discussed at length by the group. The result was to invite General Taylor to come and speak at Monmouth College on April 22, 1970. His topic was to be Viet Nam: An Historical Perspective. At that time the three members of the Board along with Mr. Landis and Mr. Trammell, were all cognizant of the fact that General Taylor might not be the most welcomed visitor on the Monmouth College campus. They felt however, that such a man with such a wealth of knowledge on the background of South-East Asia, could be the very tool needed to crack the surface of the bed of apathy which lay over the campus at that time.

They did expect some form of demonstration showing the students displeasure with General Taylor's appearance.

General Taylor was then booked through an agency to speak at Monmouth College. His contract had a provision for a question and answer period at the end of his lecture. The contract did not state in what form the period would take place.

## THE INCIDENT

General Taylor was to speak at 8:00 p.m. on the night of April 22, 1970. Arrangements for his arrival had been made well in advance. A room at the Holiday Inn in West Long Branch had been reserved for him and he was to be picked up at Newark Airport and driven by car to the College.

The fact that the General was to speak that evening was well advertised. It was announced on the Student Activities Calendar which was distributed to the entire College Community at no cost to the individual. News of his expected arrival was also published on the Student Activities Bulletin which is a weekly publication published by the Student Activities Office. There was a front page article in the Outlook, the weekly College newspaper announcing the arrival of the General. There were thirty five posters printed and hung at major places of congregation on campus, approximately two weeks before General Taylor's arrival. News releases were sent out to faculty, administration and staff well in advance of the General Taylor Lecture.

The point, is simply, that anyone (faculty, administration or staff) who wished to consult the Director of the Union, the Director of Student Activities, or a member of the Student Union Board concerning General Taylor's appearance at Monmouth College, he or she had adequate time to do so. There was substantial publicity on the matter and it was distributed well in advance of the lecture.

No one faculty member or student felt strongly to make his or her feelings publicly known until General Taylor arrived. There are some exceptions to this in a statement signed by Michael Greenberg of the History & Government Department. It reads as follows.

While supporting the right of open expression of all opinions we question the propriety of the appearance at the College on April 22, of General Maxwell Taylor. By his significant participation in America's Vietnam Policy, as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations, General Taylor has contributed to the destruction of a large part of Indo-China, to the deaths of hundreds of Vietnamese and tens of thousands of Americans, and to a condition which we, with many other Americans regard as a national disaster from which we as a Nation are struggling to disengage ourselves. The College's invitation to General Taylor implies an honor to a man who has no place in an academic community, particularly on April 22 a day devoted to the preservation of man and his environment.

Mr. Greenberg's comments on "a day devoted to the preservation of man and his environment" refers to Earth Day.

Beginning the Monday before General Taylor's arrival it was obvious that the event was stirring up some excitement. One could almost get the feeling that something was being planned but what it was no one could fully appreciate.

On Wednesday, Webster Trammell, Director of Student Activities left work early to pick up General Taylor at Newark Airport. This was standard procedure. Usually a student would drive to the airport to pick up a speaker. Realizing, however the stature of General Taylor, it was determined by Mr. Trammell and Mr. Landis, the Director of the Union, that one of them should pick up the General and the other would stay behind and make final arrangements for his arrival. The former task fell to Mr. Trammell.

General Taylor's shuttle arrived at 4:00 p.m. on time and Mr. Trammell met him in the lobby of the Airport. Greetings were exchanged and Mr. Trammell asked to take the General's luggage. He politely refused. He carried an overcoat and a small leather overnight case.

As they walked to the car Mr. Trammell was struck by a certain feeling by being near this man. At first he thought it might be the General's soft southern drawl. (Mr. Trammell is black) Could it be that he had expected to see the General arrive in full uniform and escorted by an entourage of aides and staff? No. Was it the fact that General Taylor had refused to let him carry his luggage? No. It was a strange and a little

frightening to Mr. Trammell to see this elderly man (by the General's own admission he is seventy-nine) be so stubborn and fiercely proud. It was also a little unsettling to hear a man of General Taylor's stature talk of nothing but the weather, his wife, and how much traveling he had been doing lately. One would expect a lively dialogue on the pros and cons of the Viet Nam War.

General Taylor asked Mr. Trammell if he thought there would be any violent type of demonstration or disturbance that night. Mr. Trammell assured him to the best of his knowledge there was no planned demonstration. General Taylor went on to tell of how, at a number of schools he had spoken at recently, violence has occurred.

At the time this conversation was taking place Mr. Trammell was noticing that the General was having obvious trouble hearing. The General asked him to turn off first the radio, then the air-conditioner so that he could hear.

Mr. Trammell asked him how he wanted the program set up for the evening. The General said that he wished to have a short biographical sketch presented and then he would speak. He said that he would rather welcome questions and answers. He stated at this time that he would like to have all the questions submitted to him on slips of paper. He said that this would eliminate the duplication of questions from the audience. He stated that he particularly enjoyed the question and answer period and became quite animated when he spoke of it.

Mr. Trammell asked if the General would care to take in dinner before speaking. He politely refused the invitation. He said he wanted to relax a bit and get his notes together.

They finally got off of the Parkway and arrived at the Holiday Inn where the General was to spend the night. At the desk was a note stating that Mr. Landis and Jack Lovett, President of the Monmouth College Student Body would pick up the General at six-thirty for dinner. Mr. Landis obviously had disregarded the instructions left with him by Mr. Trammell. The arrangement was that Mr. Trammell would ask the General about dinner and make the arrangements from the Holiday Inn. Mr. Trammell told the General to disregard the note and that he would be back at 7:30 p.m. to take him to the lecture. He then left the General.

Mr. Trammell then drove to the Student Union on campus and after a half hour of phoning finally found out that Mr. Landis was on the way to the Union with Jack Lovett. Mr. Landis arrived in his car and behind him followed Jack Lovett driving a black Continental limousine complete with telephone. Both wanted to know where the General was, Mr. Trammell replied that the General did not wish to have dinner. They asked why and Mr. Trammell gave them the General's reasons. Mr. Landis and Jack Lovett had already gone ahead and made dinner reservations, and Mr. Lovett had borrowed the car for the occasion. Mr. Landis and Mr. Lovett went to eat anyway and Mr. Trammell went home to change. All three were to meet back at the Union to pick up the General.

Earlier that day, Joseph Yanchik, Dean of Students had asked Mr. Lovett to introduce General Taylor. Mr. Trammell was unaware of these arrangements. Mr. Lovett took the attitude that he was running the show that night and assigned himself the responsibility of becoming the General's Aide-de-camp. He went so far as to contact the College Security Department and with the College plainclothesman established an escape route for the General which only he knew.

The party of Landis, Trammell, Lovett and Lovett's date for the evening met at the Student Union and drove to the Holiday Inn in the borrowed limousine. General Taylor was outside taking a walk when they arrived. Mr. Lovett immediately sprang from the car and introduced himself to General Taylor. Mr. Trammell introduced the rest of the party. Lovett had earlier that day asked Assistant Dean of Students, James Palcic about proper military protocol. Mr. Trammell then drove the party to the college through the Cedar Avenue Gate.

Mr. Lovett asked Mr. Trammell to drop himself, his date and General Taylor off in front of Woodrow Wilson Hall, then park the car at an easily accessible place in case of an emergency. The car was parked in the faculty lot and Mr. Trammell and Mr. Landis walked back to Woodrow Wilson Hall. They noticed that several members of campus activist groups were assembled on the front steps. A few were wearing red arm bands.

General Taylor and party were downstairs in a room adjacent to Pollak Auditorium. A red rug had been put down the middle aisle of Pollak Auditorium and ran right up to the stage. Mr. Lovett had arranged this. He then proceeded to assemble first Mr. Trammell, then Arnie Wilkens, President of the Student Union Board, then General Taylor and finally himself in a line. They then marched through the audience and onto the stage.

As the group approached the stage there were numerous catcalls and boos from the audience. Mr. Wilkens was to have introduced Jack Lovett who in turn was to introduce General Taylor. He never made it that far. He announced that questions would only be accepted in writing. For this purpose he indicated a nearby student holding slips of paper. The student then proceeded to pass out the paper. As he did so a recent graduate of the College, Tom Clerico, stood up to inquire whether the General would answer questions from the floor. Mr. Wilkens repeated his previous announcement and there was immediately widespread audience dissatisfaction.

From the center of the audience Professor Michael Greenberg began to speak above the noise. He condemned the General as a mass-murderer because of his responsibility for U. S. involvement in Vietnamese policy. His comment elicited loud support from sections of the audience. Now standing and raising his arms to the audience, Professor Greenberg condemned the General's refusal to be questioned on that policy from the floor and cried out, "I protest!" More support from the audience followed. The room was in an uproar. Suddenly without warning Professor Greenberg left his position and began striding up the aisle toward the stage. When he reached the first step of the stage Jack Lovett stood up from his seat and moved to the top of the steps leading to the stage. When Professor Greenberg reached the second step Mr. Lovett threw a glancing punch to Greenberg's jaw. Greenberg made no attempt to retaliate and stumbled backwards. People immediately got out of their seats and moved toward the stage. Mr. Lovett had fallen forward and was being restrained by some students.

Professor Greenberg, in the confusion had somehow managed to once again get on the steps and come up on the stage. He looked around and started to go between Mr. Trammell and the podium. Mr. Trammell, now standing and not knowing whether Mr. Greenberg was going for the microphone or General Taylor, seized Professor Greenberg immobilized him with a full-nelson.

Professor Greenberg did not struggle and appeared pale and stunned. Several students were also trying to get onto the stage but were fended off by Jim Finucane, a graduate student who was Assistant to the Vice-President for Student Services, Mr. Pollack. Professor Illo had managed to get onto the stage from the left of Mr. Trammell and started "hitting and pulling" his arms and shouted "What are you doing? Let him go". Mr. Trammell finally did so and both Illo and Greenberg descended from the stage and went back to their seats. Everyone else did likewise. The following is a description of events after this episode from Mr. David M. Martin, Assistant Professor of English at the College. "Strong voices of opposition to the General (and to the violence from the stage which was being associated with the General) could be heard from parts of the auditorium. Mr. Pollock took over the microphone about this time in an attempt to restore order. Unable to do so effectively, he surrendered the microphone to Professor Fell, who had stridden up from the audience requesting to use it.... the audience became silently attentive. Professor Fell pleaded that General Taylor be allowed to speak; that everyone listen to what this man who would live forever in infamy in the pages of history had done; that once they had listened, then they could tear him down. ... the audience continued to be restless and notably hostile."

"Mr. Pollock returned to the microphone and a rather lengthy debate of sorts followed between him and the audience. In summary its major points were approximately as follows. (a) Mr. Pollack criticized the assemblage for its lack of courtesy towards an invited guest of the College. From his position in the middle of the auditorium, Professor Greenberg objected that as a member of the faculty he had not been consulted about the invitation to the General. Mr. Pollack responded that the matter did not involve the faculty. (b) Mr. Pollock, in addition, appealed to the audience to remember that the College community should willingly tolerate unpopular views in a spirit of free and impartial inquiry. Addressing himself to this point.... Tom Clerico asked Mr. Pollock whether the General would therefore answer questions about his speech from the floor. Mr. Pollock turned to the General to check, then announced, as before, that the General would answer only those questions submitted in writing in advance of his speech. The announcement was not well received.... (c) Several times Mr. Pollock asked the audience if it was going to allow the General to speak. Negative responses and foot stomping dominated. Tom Clerico then asked Mr. Pollock whether anyone would

be permitted to speak in rebuttal after the General had finished. Mr. Pollock agreed to this request..... (d) .....Professor Greenberg made it known that he wanted to speak before the General spoke.....Mr. Pollock told him to shut his 'big fat mouth'.....Professor Greenberg did not push the matter further. There being an apparent consensus about ground rules, Mr. Pollock then introduced General Taylor."

"The General stepped to the podium amid exaggerated cheering and applause.....he announced that he was going to talk about Vietnam in the perspective of history..... He would start off with a story. The General then told of the time Bob Hope once visited him in downtown Saigon and the hotel across the street from where they were standing was bombed. 'Max', Hope had said to him, 'I didn't expect such a warm welcome.' The immediate reaction from the audience to this anecdote was a groan which turned into booing and individual shouts. When the reaction subsided, General Taylor made a remark about not caring whether the audience agreed with him. This drew additional comment from scattered individuals.....When the General seemed about ready to continue, he turned instead to Mr. Pollack. Mr. Pollack quickly stepped to the microphone and announced that the meeting was over."

General Taylor was escorted from the building and taken to the limousine. Mr. Trammell drove the party of Taylor, Wilkens, and Landis back to the Holiday Inn.

General Taylor did not seem to be unnerved one bit by the incident and asked if events if this type occurred often at the College. When the party arrived at the Holiday Inn the General invited the party into the bar and ordered a round of drinks. The party apologized to the General for the disturbance, but he shook it off. He did not seem to mind one bit.

Instructions were left at the desk that no one was to see General Taylor without first contacting Dean Yanchik, Mr. Trammell or Mr. Landis. Jack Lovett had been waiting in the lobby all the time the party was in the bar. He also apologized to the General and the party departed.

The next morning Mr. Landis drove the General to the airport.

#### AFTERMATH

The day following General Taylor's visit was enlightening. The local papers carried full page stories and complete picture stories, and banner headlines. The New York Times ripped the College in an editorial.

All staff members and administrators attending the aborted lecture were asked to write an accurate account of what had happened that night and forward a signed copy to the appropriate administrator conducting the level of investigation. These documents were all compiled by the Vice President of Student Services and sent to the President of the College at his request.

President Van Note immediately appointed an ad hoc committee to investigate the incident. The Committee was headed by Dr. Spiegle of the Biology Dept.. Half-way through the investigation, the President asked the Committee to also accept the added responsibilities of making recommendations for any action to be taken on faculty and student involvement in the affair.

Two other committees were also appointed to look into faculty involvement of the incident. One was headed by Dr. Barnes of the Chemistry Department and the other by Dr. Clayton of the Education Department.

After reviewing the report of the Ad Hoc Committee headed by Dr. Spiegle, Dr. Van Note made the decision to send letters to Prof. Illo and Prof. Greenberg. They were ordered to appear at separate hearings and at that time to "show cause why you should not be separated promptly and permanently from the Faculty of Monmouth College on a charge of grave moral delinquency.....as a member of the academic community on April 22, 1970." The letters charge them with "adding in the prevention of freedom of speech" and states that, "you will be faced by persons and statements that give substantial basis to these charges and you will be given a full opportunity to refute them."

Professors Illo and Greenberg had also sent a letter. This was to General Taylor. It was written in conjunction with the now functioning Strike Committee. It reads:

"We regret the direction which the protest of your Monmouth College address took, particularly because it involves a confusion between the

protest of your appearance and compromise of your freedom of speech."

"We endorse your right to speak at Monmouth College, as we endorsed it in a petition circulated before your address, though we continue to protest your role in the construction of the Vietnam War."

"We are gratified that you have indicated a willingness to return to Monmouth College and we would welcome your addressing the Monmouth College students and faculty in the fall and directly answering their questions about the War."

The aforementioned hearings were both cancelled several times and to date only Professor Greenberg's has been held. Dr. Van Note then covered a special session of the History and Gov. Department faculty to further hear Prof. Greenberg's case. He has made no announcement to date of the disposition of Prof. Greenberg's status at Monmouth College.

Letters were sent to nine students giving them the choice of Ad Hoc Administrative hearings in the Summer or Judicial Council hearings in the Fall.

Five students had already had administrative hearings and the strongest punishment meted out so far has been to Jack Lovett who received two semesters of disciplinary probation and a strong letter of censure. Mr. Lovett is appealing the judgment.

Dr. Van Note praised the Ad Hoc Committee's work but dismissed the last of the three recommendations by stating "it is not entirely consistent with the findings of the Committee that the action of some faculty and students constituted a breach of academic freedom". This recommendation was to have letters of apology sent to General Taylor and to have the students and faculty members instrumental in the disturbance work on a seminar type program on Freedom and Dissent. Recommendations one and two called for the hearings already mentioned.

On April 29, 1970 a meeting took place organized by the Departments of English, Sociology, and Anthropology. It was dominated by a representative of the Peace and Equal Rights Committee. Its purpose was to air publicly the Taylor Incident. It turned out to be a sounding board for elements of the New Left movement.

On June 16, 1970 another meeting of this type was held. It was a special Alumni Meeting, called at the request of Dr. Van Note to "clear the air" about the Taylor Incident and the subsequent Student-Faculty Strike.

Professor Philip Donahue and Travis Opedyke, a student, represented the Strike Committee while Dr. Van Note defended the College's position. No one was allowed into the meeting except Alumni of the College and invited faculty members and administrators. Several faculty members were barred from entering.

The meeting was opened by a welcome from the President of the Alumni Association, Rodger Cozzens. He then introduced the panel members and invited each to make opening comments.

Professor Donahue and Travis Opedyke told of the Strike Committee's position on the Taylor Incident and the actual strike. Both attacked the College's position on the grounds that the charging of the two professors and nine students in the Taylor Incident was an "arbitrary use of power" and "a study in the use of power and politics".

Dr. Van Note replied by saying that the College was following established procedures as outlined in the Monmouth College Faculty Handbook. A question and answer period then followed. Many Alumni backed the administration's position, but many of the recent graduates said they would endorse the convictions of the Strike Committee, as long as their motives were for peace and conducted in a peaceful manner. At times the language and tension was very thick.

(It must be noted here that the Strike occurred about two weeks after the Taylor Incident. Feelings on campus were still running high over the letters received by the two professors and nine students. Because the reason for the Strike was to protest President Nixon's move into Cambodia, support for the charged individuals would seem to come natural as General Taylor was a chief policymaker in the South-East Asian war.)

Also, brought out at the Alumni Meeting was a letter to Dr. Van Note from the Board of Directors of the Alumni Association that demanded the following:

- The dismissal of Professor Greenberg.
- Suspension or expulsion of any student involved in the Taylor Incident.
- A more thorough investigation of the Incident.
- Making the results of investigations and actions based on the results available to the public.

This issue was debated with no point of agreement reached and the meeting was then adjourned.