

By Ken Retallic

General William C. Westmoreland, Army chief of staff, who spoke here Saturday on the role of the Army and of the military in the United States today, stressed the need for public awareness against what he called the pitfalls of letting anti-war feelings become antimilitary in nature.

One such "pitfall," a small group of anti-war demonstrators waiting outside the Armory Auditorium for the general, was successfully avoided by Westmoreland as he arrived at the hall in an unmarked car and entered by a rear door.

"Short-run frustrations should not blind us to long-range needs of national security. If the military is continually made the scapegoat for national problems and shortcomings, if the military is continually demeaned within our society, this can only have an undesirable effect over the long run," he told a luncheon audience of about 120 at the Armory.

Westmoreland, who came here to make an inspection tour of the Safeguard antiballistic missile site near Nekoma, was guest of honor at the luncheon sponsored by the American Legion Post 6 and the Grand Forks Chamber of Commerce.

At an earlier press conference, the general noted that his visit to the ABM site was not in any way connected with the July 22 inspection made by Robert F. Froehlke, secretary of the Army. Westmoreland indicated that his decision to inspect the northeastern North Dakota site was made prior to Froehlke being named to his new post and that it was coincidental that the two tours occurred so close together.

"I was very much unimpressed with what I saw," said Westmoreland of his tour of the site. He added later at the luncheon that in conjunction with the Safeguard weaponry and the numerous Minuteman II intercontinental ballistic missiles scattered throughout the rich Red River Valley, "you have the most highly protected farms in the whole world."

However, he also cited the Safeguard construction as an example of the needed cooperation between the military and the people it is charged to defend. Such cooperation and sympathy is needed, he said, because "Today more than ever, it is essential that the American people understand and support the military in this role. Not to do so is to handicap not just the military but, more importantly, the nation itself at a critical time."

And to build a new Army, such as the proposed all-volunteer military force, he said public awareness is especially needed to combat the "many misconceptions in America about the military as an institution."

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