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MSA Allocation to Indo-China

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD

July 29, 1953

MSA ALLOCATION TO INDO CHINA

MR. PRESIDENT: IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT A TRUCE HAS BEEN ARRANGED IN KOREA, I AM MORE APPREHENSIVE THAN EVER ABOUT THE ONE HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS CUT IN THE MSA FOR INDO-CHINA. PRESIDENT EISENHOWER HAD ASKED THAT FOUR HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS IN THE MSA PROGRAM BE ALLOCATED TO THAT AREA IN ITS FIGHT AGAINST COMMUNIST AGGRESSION.

IN MY OPINION, THE TRUCE IN KOREA WILL MAKE IT MUCH MORE DIFFICULT TO HOLD INDO-CHINA BECAUSE NOW THE ARMIES OF COMMUNIST-CHINA CAN BECOME STRONGER IN THE SOUTHEASTERN PART OF THEIR COUNTRY AND, FURTHERMORE, AN ADDITIONAL STEP-UP IN WAR MATERIALS TO HO CHIH MINH CAN BE EXPECTED. I DO NOT NEED TO TELL THE SENATE THAT FROM A STRATEGIC POINT OF VIEW, THE MOST IMPORTANT AREA IN ALL ASIA IS IN THE SOUTHEASTERN PART OF THAT CONTINENT. SHOULD INDO-CHINA FALL, IT WOULD MEAN THAT THE OIL, RUBBER, RICE, AND TIN OF SOUTHEAST ASIA WOULD SHORTLY BE IN COMMUNIST HANDS. IT WOULD MEAN ALSO THAT A CHAIN REACTION WOULD BE STARTED WHICH WOULD ENDANGER THE VERY EXISTENCE OF BURMA, THAILAND, MALAYA, INDIA, PAKISTAN AND ALL THE COUNTRIES EASTWARD TO THE SUEZ AND MEDITERRANEAN.

I REALIZE THAT THERE HAS BEEN MUCH CRITICISM OF FRANCE BUT I THINK THAT IN JUDGING THAT NATION, WE SHOULD LOOK AT ALL THE

FACTS AND RECOGNIZE THEM FOR WHAT THEY ARE. IT IS TRUE THAT MUCH NEEDS TO BE DONE AND MUST BE DONE TOWARDS GIVING THE STATES VIET NAM, CAMBODIA AND LAOS, A GREATER DEGREE OF INDEPENDENCE. IT IS TRUE ALSO THAT THE RULES OF THESE STATES MUST HAVE DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES OF FOREIGN POWERS AND IT IS TRUE ALSO THAT THE OLD FRENCH COLONIAL BUREAUCRACY MUST BE REVAMPED OR ABOLISHED. I BELIEVE, IN VIEW OF THE PRONOUNCEMENT FROM PARIS IN RECENT WEEKS, THAT IT IS THE INTENTION OF THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT TO ALLOW GREATER NATIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE CONDUCT OF THEIR OWN AFFAIRS AND I THINK THIS IS A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

I SHOULD LIKE TO POINT OUT TO THE SENATE THAT GENERAL HENRI-EUGENE NAVARRE, THE PRESENT COMMANDER IN INDO-CHINA, HAS STATED THAT HE IS ADOPTING A NEW TYPE OF WARFARE WHICH WILL GIVE GREATER MOBILITY TO THE FORCES OF FRANCE AND THE ASSOCIATED STATES IN THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE VIET MINH. I BELIEVE IN VIEW OF THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES THAT INDO-CHINA IS THE WRONG PLACE TO CUT AT THIS TIME AND I CANNOT ENVISAGE A GREATER CATASTROPHE THAN THIS REDUCTION IN THE AMOUNT FOR THAT AREA. I DO NOT WANT AMERICAN BOYS SENT TO INDO-CHINA BUT I AM AFRAID THAT A POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCE WE FACE, IF THIS CUT IS UPHELD, IS A WITHDRAWAL FROM INDO-CHINA BY THE FRENCH.

I SHOULD LIKE TO CALL TO THE ATTENTION OF THE SENATE THAT

FOR SOME YEARS NOW THE MOST POPULAR MOVE WHICH ANY FRENCH GOVERNMENT COULD HAVE MADE, WOULD HAVE BEEN TO WITHDRAW FROM INDO-CHINA COMPLETELY. FRANCE IS SPENDING MORE IN CARRYING ON THAT WAR THAN SHE HAS EVER RECEIVED FROM US UNDER THE MARSHALL PLAN AND MUTUAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT. FRANCE IS CARRYING ON THAT WAR BECAUSE IN DOING SO, SHE HAS BEEN GUARDING OUR FLANK IN THE COMMON STRUGGLE WHICH WE ARE ENGAGED IN AGAINST COMMUNIST AGGRESSION THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. WITH THE TRUCE IN KOREA, THE POSSIBILITY OF GREATLY INCREASED COMMUNIST CHINESE ASSISTANCE IS HEIGHTENED AND THERE IS ALWAYS THE PROBABILITY OF DIRECT CHINESE-COMMUNIST INTERVENSION THERE. WE ALL KNOW THAT FOR YEARS NOW THE COMMUNIST INDO-CHINESE HAVE BEEN RECEIVING WEAPONS OF WAR AND OTHER MATERIAL ASSISTANCE FROM RED CHINA AND WE KNOW, ACCORDING TO DISPATCHES WITHIN THE PAST TWO WEEKS, THE MAIN PURPOSE BEHIND THE FIVE THOUSAND-MAN FRENCH PARATROOP DROP TEN MILES BELOW THE CHINESE BORDER AT LANGSONG, WAS TO DESTROY STOCKPILES OF MATERIALS WHICH HAVE BEEN SHIPPED TO THAT AREA FROM COMMUNIST CHINA.

WE CANNOT AFFORD, MR. PRESIDENT, TO ALLOW OURSELVES TO THINK THAT THE TRUCE IN KOREA WILL MAKE THINGS EASIER FOR THE FRENCH AND ASSOCIATED STATES IN INDO-CHINA. WE CANNOT AFFORD TO ACT IRRESPONSIBLY BECAUSE WHAT WE ARE DOING IN THE WAY OF AID IN THAT PART OF THE WORLD IS IN OUR OWN DEFENSE AS WELL AS THAT OF THE FREE WORLD. IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING, ACCORDING TO A RECENT

DISPATCH FROM INDO-CHINA, THAT THERE IS WIDE-SPREAD AGREEMENT AMONG THE FRENCH AND AMERICAN MILITARY AUTHORITIES AS WELL AS THE VIET NAM GOVERNMENT, THAT THERE IS A GOOD POSSIBILITY OF VICTORY IN INDO-CHINA WITHIN A PERIOD OF TWO YEARS IF WE WILL NOT SLACKEN IN THE SENDING OF MILITARY MATERIALS TO THAT AREA.

MR. PRESIDENT, I URGE THAT THE SENATE EITHER ON THE FLOOR OR IN CONFERENCE RESTORE THE ONE HUNDRED MILLION DOLLAR CUT IN THE AMOUNT OF FUNDS TO BE ALLOCATED TO INDO-CHINA. I WANT TO EMPHASIZE AS STRONGLY AS I CAN THAT IN MY OPINION, THE TRUCE IN KOREA, WITH ITS POSSIBILITIES OF INCREASED CHINESE INTERVENTION IN INDO-CHINA EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, MAKES IT ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT THAT THE FULL AMOUNT BE MADE AVAILABLE IN THAT SECTOR. WE CANNOT IN OUR OWN SELF INTEREST OR IN OUR OWN SECURITY AFFORD TO TAKE THE PERILOUS CHANCE WHICH THIS TWENTY-FIVE PERCENT CUT IN AID TO INDO-CHINA ENTAILS.