

University of Montana

## ScholarWorks at University of Montana

---

Mike Mansfield Speeches, Statements and Interviews

Mike Mansfield Papers

---

7-1954

### Bipartisanship in Foreign Policy for INS

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mansfield\\_speeches](https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mansfield_speeches)

**Let us know how access to this document benefits you.**

---

#### Recommended Citation

Mansfield, Mike 1903-2001, "Bipartisanship in Foreign Policy for INS" (1954). *Mike Mansfield Speeches, Statements and Interviews*. 111.

[https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mansfield\\_speeches/111](https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mansfield_speeches/111)

This Speech is brought to you for free and open access by the Mike Mansfield Papers at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Mike Mansfield Speeches, Statements and Interviews by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@mso.umt.edu](mailto:scholarworks@mso.umt.edu).

Release for Theis International News Service

Release for Theis International News Service

32

There is no place in the national interest for conflicting Democratic and Republican foreign policies. The issues which have been raised by aggressive communism confront us all, Democrats and Republicans alike. We will meet them successfully only if we face them together.

To say this, however, is not to say that there is no room for individual viewpoints, for debate and discussion of every issue which arises. It simply means that both parties avoid seeking partisan advantages out of the difficulties which face the nation. It means that the advice of both parties is sought in the Senate and elsewhere in formulating policies to deal with the difficulties. It means that both parties close ranks behind a united policy once it has been set.

That is the essence of bi-partisanship. My party favors this approach. I believe that members of the other party also favor it. In general, both parties have abided by it in recent years.

The system of bi-partisanship, however, has been strained during the last few months, largely because of the situation in Indochina and the Geneva Conference. Perhaps the principal reason for this has been the attempt to shift the blame for the failure of policy in Indochina where it does not belong. No sooner had the impending failure become evident when the search began for scapegoats. The names of the former President and

Secretary of State were brought up by leading members of the other party. So, too, were those ancient place names of Yalta, Teheran and Potsdam. These attempts were made for partisan purpose and were resisted justifiably by my party.

We have got to examine the causes of the failure in Indochina in order to prevent similar occurrences in the future. But if such an examination is to be useful to the nation, it must be free of partisanship.

Furthermore, if we are to retain bi-partisanship, it is essential that both parties be taken into confidence before policy is set. This was not the case in the early stages of the developing Indochina crisis.

Finally, bipartisanship depends on having a clear-cut understandable policy behind which decent men can unite and to which free nations will be drawn. In recent months too many officials of the Administration have been issuing too many conflicting statements on policy. As it is now, we seem to have not one but many Secretaries of State and all of them talking. The multitude of voices serves only to confuse the American people and people in friendly countries. It apparently does not trouble the communists at all.

We want this tendency towards glibness stopped. We want less bombast, fewer loud words and an end to confusion.

All of the factors which are mentioned above -- tardy and inadequate bipartisan consultation, conflicting statements on policy, a tendency to equate loud words with strength -- all of these factors undermined



American diplomacy at the Geneva Conference. Furthermore, they helped to carry the country to the brink of military involvement in Indochina, an involvement for which we were ill-prepared.

In pointing out these deficiencies, I would like to make clear that I do not believe they were the only cause of the failure to turn back the communist advance in Indochina. The French and Viet Nameese nationalists must share the blame for that failure.

I believe that the Administration will always find support from the American people, regardless of party, provided that foreign policy is in the national interest, provided it is enunciated clearly and conducted with dignity and quiet strength. Only the President can make possible this unity of the people and the parties on foreign policy. The manner in which he acts to promote or to destroy bipartisanship is a major test of his leadership.