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Speech of Senator Mike Mansfield

POLITICS AND FOREIGN POLICY

1958 Campaign Conference for Democratic Women. April 21, 1958.

As I look around the room I see the faces of very good Americans. I also see the faces of very good democrats. They are the same faces. As a matter of fact, I cannot detect a single American in the room who is not a very good democrat or a single democrat who is not a very good American.

The company could not be nicer.

As democrats we want a victory at the polls in November and we are going to win a victory. As Americans we want a secure America in a peaceful world and we are going to get that kind of America and that kind of world.

We have not won the victory at the polls, yet. We have not got a secure America or a peaceful world, yet. To achieve both requires the ablest thought and the most dedicated work of which we are capable. To achieve both requires competent, concerned, and consistent leadership. I am confident democrats are capable of that kind of thought and that kind of work and that kind of leadership.

I want you to have this thought on foreign policy in mind before we plunge into the 1958 political campaign. As democrats, I know that you will work and work hard to defeat Republicans and to elect democrats. As Americans, however, I call upon you to cooperate, to cooperate responsibly with all Americans regardless of party in the search for the peace that will give us a secure nation in a secure world.

In an election year, cooperation with the opposition on any issue is not easy. It will be difficult for democrats and with good reason. We have seen in the past an irresponsible opposition grow so reckless

as to ignore the needs of the nation on foreign policy. We have seen members of that opposition seize on international difficulties as the occasion to cast vile slurs upon the integrity and the patriotism of our great party and the tens of millions of Americans who have supported the party through the years.

The temptation is there to reply in kind. It is an understandable temptation but I urge you not to yield to it. I urge you not to follow the ugly precedent set a few years back by the opposition in its desperate search for political victory. We want, as I said, a victory in November. But I say to you in equal earnestness that if we can win only by deliberate distortion of the truth, by willful destruction of the personal reputations of our opponents, by ruthless sacrifice of the nation's position in the world, then we do not deserve a victory.

We are going to win but we are going to win on the issues. Foreign policy is one of those issues. To cooperate responsibly with the opposition on foreign policy, as I have urged, is not to bury this question. It means, simply that we do not distort the question for party advantage. It means that we act with restraint, bearing in mind at all times that what we say and do here is heard round the world. It means that we do not slander the character, we do not, by innuendo or otherwise, cast doubt on the personal integrity or the patriotism of any member of the opposition simply because we may disagree with him, simply in order to win votes.

In short, we stick to the issues in foreign policy. Believe me, there are issues in this matter. The American people are entitled to a full discussion of them in the months ahead. Let me, in the remainder of these ^{brief} remarks, try to summarize some of these issues as I see them.

This Administration is trying to sell the American people on the idea that there is peace in Korea, in Formosa, and Viet-Nam - in the Far East - It is not very modest, either, about claiming credit for this peace. I tell you that there is no peace in those areas, and the Administration knows there is no peace. What there is, is a tenuous truce. It was won not by any magic of this Administration but by the bloody sacrifices of thousands of Americans and others and by the expenditure of billions upon billions of dollars.

We made the effort in the Far East - in Korea particularly - because Americans - democrats and republicans alike - believed it was necessary to make it for our own security and freedom. The Republicans will try to tell the American people that Korea was a democratic war but look back through the records of 1950. You will find that the intervention in Korea was just about the only act of the Truman Administration that Republicans fully and wholeheartedly endorsed. As a matter of fact, they were so enthusiastic about it many of them even wanted to carry the war into China. That is where Americans would be fighting now if the democrats had not restrained this Republican enthusiasm.

The job of peace in the Far East is not yet finished. This Administration has had five years to do it but it has merely sat with its eyes closed on the brink, propped up by American military commands on 24-hour alert within sight of the coast of China and by aid to others of a billion or more a year. This is called "peace" and the American people are asked to thank the Republican Administration for it.

That is one issue of foreign policy. There are others. There is the whole question of foreign aid and its maladministration. One of the things we need to find out and find out soon is whether the aid-program is supposed to serve the ends of foreign policy or to provide a dumping-

ground for voluntarily or involuntarily retired Republican politicians and surplus colonels.

The world has changed drastically since the days of the Marshall Plan. But except for the pressures that have been exerted by Congress to reduce expenditures and to improve methods, this Administration goes on in foreign aid as though everything has remained the same. It has passed out arms from Cuba to Japan, throughout the world, with inadequate thought to the ultimate effects of these weapons. It has gone on giving away aid when it is clear that other countries and our own people would both be better off if we would put an equivalent effort into helping these countries become self-supporting.

That, too, is an issue of foreign policy on which republicans and democrats differ. There are others. We have not yet got stability in the Middle East despite the so-called Eisenhower Doctrine. This Administration has tilted with windmills in that region. It has toyed with autocratic and dictatorial movements and nations, while it overlooks with almost snobbish disdain countries like Lebanon and Israel which are struggling to keep the concept of freedom alive in an area that reeks of terrorism, militarism and conspiracy.

That, too, is an issue on which Republicans and Democrats differ and there are others. We democrats do not believe that public relations are a substitute for intelligent policy, that generalities on peace are the actualities of peace. We do not believe that this country is remotely secure so long as the weapons of mass destruction continue to pile up throughout the world.

We democrats do hold that peace can be achieved and that it is going to be achieved by a leadership which, first of all, believes peace is possible and, second, is willing to work day and night, seven days a week

to get sound and equitable agreements for its preservation.

Let me say, finally, democrats in Congress will cooperate responsibly with leadership of that kind, regardless of its party label. By the same token, I know that all democrats are going to work to see that this nation gets that kind of leadership.