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Eisenhower Middle East Doctrine

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Mr. President:

In his press conference on May 20, the Secretary of State had occasion to refer to the "Eisenhower Doctrine" which he described as the "Middle East Resolution." He noted, and I quote, that:

"There is a provision of the Middle East Resolution which says that the independence of these countries is vital to peace and the national interest of the United States. That is certainly a mandate to do something if we think that our peace and vital interests are endangered from any quarter."

Later in his remarks he referred to this provision as "the so-called Mansfield Amendment."

I ask unanimous consent to insert at this point in the record the relevant portions of the transcript of the Secretary's press conference.

Let me note, for the Secretary's information and to keep the record straight, that there was only one so-called Mansfield Amendment adopted to the Middle East Resolution. It had nothing to do with the provision to which he referred in his press conference.

A resolution which I offered on the Floor and the only "so-called Mansfield Resolution" which was adopted reads as follows:
"The President should continue to furnish facilities and military assistance, within the provisions of applicable law and established policies, to the United Nations Emergency Force in the Middle East, with a view to maintaining the truce in that region." (Sec. 4 PL 85-7, 85th Congress)

May I say, Mr. President, that this amendment was adopted over the opposition of the Administration.

Let me say, further, Mr. President, that the Secretary or, whatever assistant advised him, might have been confused in referring erroneously to the "so-called Mansfield Resolution" by the fact that I did offer several amendments to the Eisenhower Doctrine, for purposes of discussion and clarification, which were considered and rejected in Committee. One of these did have something to do with the matter to which the Secretary referred. As for the intent of those amendments, however, it was made perfectly clear in a speech in the Senate on February 21, 1957. I ask unanimous consent that the text of this speech be included at the conclusion of my remarks.

It was not necessary for the Secretary, however, to, - and I quote - "assume that the introduction of that resolution had a meaning and had a significance. You cannot, as a matter of legislative history, assume that when you put a new sentence
into a resolution that it is utterly meaningless. We assume that the Congress does not do things that are utterly meaningless." (laughter)

The Secretary of State is quite right when he assumes that when the Congress and the Senator from Montana as a part of it, introduce amendments to a resolution he hopes that they are not "utterly meaningless" even if they are not adopted.

Where the Secretary erred, however, is in assuming a "meaning" and "significance" when he could very well have discovered the actual meaning and significance of any and all "so-called Mansfield Amendments" by reading the speech previously referred to.

I introduced these resolutions because the Eisenhower Doctrine seemed to me faulty in several respects. It was sprung upon the world with a disgraceful fanfare of publicity as a kind of salvation of the Middle East situation when it did not begin to get at the basic causes of the difficulties and we are seeing some of the consequences of this fault now in the Middle East. The so-called "Mansfield Amendments" were, in part, an attempt to direct the resolution more to the basic causes of Middle Eastern difficulties. The Administration firmly opposed them.
The Eisenhower Doctrine was faulty, too, in that it obscured, as
did the Formosa Resolution before it, the Constitutional division of
powers and responsibilities and between the President and Congress. It
was to correct this fault, too, that a "so-called Mansfield Amendment"
was introduced. It was rejected in Committee but a modified version
proposed by another member was adopted by Congress. It is this amendment,
I believe, which the Secretary had in mind when he erroneously referred
to the "so-called Mansfield Amendment". I supported that amendment which
had only one objective, the clarification of the constitutional question
of the division of powers as between the President and the Congress.
That it was urgently needed is, perhaps, best illustrated by the
Secretary's remarks at his press conference on May 20.

What that amendment tried to make clear, but apparently still did
not make clear enough for the Department of State, was that the President
had the constitutional power to act in a military fashion in a situation
involving the vital interests of the United States but that he could not
expect Congress to be bound in advance by his action. There was no
intent to enlarge the scope of the President's proposed resolution and,
if the Secretary did not know that he could have easily ascertained
the facts by sending one of his assistants to read the transcript of the
record of the discussion on the point which took place in Committee. In
short, Mr. President, the sole purpose of "the" so-called Mansfield Amend-
ment" which was not, as adopted a Mansfield amendment at all, was to make
clear that Congress conceded the right of the President to act in the
Middle East but it did not concede the congressional right to approve
or to question his judgment as to how he acted. To interpret this amend-
ment as a "mandate" is to misread its intent completely. The Amendment
was simply designed to bolster the President in the execution of the powers
of his office, a bolstering which he apparently felt that he needed.

It is not without significance, Mr. President, that when a reporter
used the term "Eisenhower Doctrine", the Secretary corrected it to
"Middle East Resolution." That is a measure of the basic difference
between my intent and the Eisenhower Doctrine as originally presented to
Congress, regardless of how the Secretary may have chosen to interpret
my intent. In short, Mr. President, it seemed to me essential that the
President act as the President of the United States and not as an agent
of Congress and that he be willing to assume the responsibilities for
his actions, as other Presidents before him have assumed them. In short,
if the President wanted a "Doctrine on the Middle East" then it was in-
cumbent on him to claim authorship and not pass this honor to the Congress
as the Secretary of State apparently sought to do in his press conference.

I thought it necessary to set the record straight on this matter.

Further, Mr. President, the Secretary's comments at his press conference
on May 20 make it all the more essential, it seems to me, to explore a
new approach to policy in the Middle East. This I propose to do in a
full statement to the Senate tomorrow on the situation in the Middle East.