Interview with Senator Saltonstall on Report to Massachusetts

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001
Assistant Majority Leader of the U. S. Senate
Mike Mansfield

Interviewed by
U. S. Senator Leverett Saltonstall

"Report to Massachusetts"
(To be seen and heard on stations listed on attached)

PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEES: Mansfield says Senate is "presidential cockpit." Senator Kennedy "extremely hard to stop if not impossible to stop," he says, if he wins Wisconsin and West Virginia "handsomely." If he doesn't, Mansfield says, "man to watch is Lyndon Johnson." **

CAMPAIGN ISSUES: Mansfield says that issues of campaign will be foreign policy, defense, farm problem and high cost of living. **

CONGRESSIONAL OUTLOOK: Assistant Majority Leader agrees with Saltonstall that Congress will adjourn by July 1st. Says not much will be accomplished with social legislation because of lack of time remaining. **

MUTUAL SECURITY: Mansfield, ranking member of Foreign Relations Committee, predicts between 500 and 750 million dollars will be cut from President's 4.2 billion dollar budget. **

CASTRO AND CUBA: Mansfield commends Administration for its "patience" in handling Cuban crisis. Says "Castro is losing some of his prestige in Cuba." **

SUMMIT CONFERENCE: Mansfield pessimistic that Summit Conference will produce any real accomplishments. Says he is skeptical. Praises Herter who has "performed magnificently in his job under difficult circumstances." **

DIVIDED GERMANY: Mansfield says no immediate solution to question of divided Germany. Says Khrushchev can act any time to precipitate new crisis in Berlin. **

BAN ON HIGH-LEVEL FLIGHTS: Mansfield and Saltonstall reject charge that Administration has been submissive towards Soviets. Assistant Democratic Leader says President right in not defying Soviet ban on high-level flights into Berlin. **

DISARMAMENT: Mansfield optimistic on negotiations to ban nuclear tests. **
Sen. Saltonstall: What can Congress accomplish in the remaining three months of this session? Will the Summit Conference help ease world tensions? What are the big issues in this 1960 election year? These questions, Senator Mansfield, you are well qualified to discuss. As a ranking member of the all-important Senate Foreign Relations Committee and as Assistant Majority Leader of the Senate, I know you have some firm ideas on these great questions, and I am awfully pleased, Mike, that you are able to join me in this interview for the folks in Massachusetts.

Sen. Mansfield: Well, Leverett, it's always a pleasure to be with you, and I hope that we can give them a good bipartisan set of arguments before we're through.

Sen. Saltonstall: Well, I'm sure we will with you here. Now as a Senior Member of the Foreign Relations Committee, you, I know, have given a lot of thought to the Summit Conference, and you've made several speeches on the subject. That conference will take place this summer. Can we expect that any real achievements will come out of the meetings, in your opinion?

Sen. Mansfield: Well frankly, Lev, I'm a little dubious, a little skeptical, because I cannot forget the Geneva Conference of 1955, wherein Khrushchev took the ball and achieved a propaganda victory. I do not think that too much can or should be expected out of summit meetings because I think most of the work should be done at the ambassadorial and the foreign minister level, so that the ground work can be laid for the final stamp of approval, so to speak, at the Summit when the leaders of the nations meet. This is a meeting in which I hope something can be accomplished, and I'm sure that the President will do all that he possibly can, but until the meeting is concluded I am going to be from Missouri -- a little skeptical -- I'll have to be shown.

Sen. Saltonstall: Well, I think you take the same position on that as the Secretary of State, Mr. Herter, in his testimony recently.

Sen. Mansfield: Well, I think that Chris Herter was being realistic, was being honest, and was being as factual as he could in his testimony before the Foreign Relations Committee. I think a great deal of Mr. Herter who has performed magnificently in
Sen. Mansfield: his job under difficult circumstances, and I know that it's not his intention to try and fool the American people into expecting something which likely will not happen.

Sen. Saltonstall: Well I'm glad to hear you say that. Now do you think we can achieve any easing of tensions in Berlin as we try to work out a solution to the question of a divided Germany?

Sen. Mansfield: Well, under the present circumstances, I would say no, because Mr. Khrushchev is reiterating and iterating what he has said many times over. All that we've achieved, as far as Berlin is concerned, is an extension of the time in which Mr. Khrushchev would want us to get out, but I note that in Southeast Asia recently Mr. Khrushchev stated that he thought a special status should be set up for West Berlin and he threatened once again to conclude a treaty of peace with East Germany. Well, he shouldn't talk about just West Berlin because I think if there's going to be a settlement in Berlin, it should include both Berlins, and in that way maybe something could be accomplished which would bring about the creation, in time, of a unified Germany. As far as a peace treaty with East Germany is concerned, anytime Mr. Khrushchev wants to sign one, he can, and there's nothing we can do about it.

Sen. Saltonstall: Yes, but when he signs it, it violates an agreement that he had with us when Berlin was put in the jurisdiction of all four countries.

Sen. Mansfield: No question about that. Secretary Herter issued a document a few days ago which proved in writing that we were in West Berlin by legitimate right; by what Chancellor Adenauer calls "right of conquest" and there is, of course, a special situation which exists in that country and we have every right to be there and to stay there.

Sen. Saltonstall: Yes. Now, Senator, there has been some criticism that we are being submissive towards the Soviets. For example, the President's decision not to defy the Soviet ban on high-level flights into Berlin has been interpreted by some as a sign of weakness. Personally, I don't think it is a sign of weakness. How do you feel about it?

Sen. Mansfield: Well I agree with you Lev, because I think it was just a chip on the shoulder, a move just as the Soviet move as far as the passports for the Western Allies were concerned coming into Berlin goes. I'm glad that both of these matters have
Sen. Mansfield: been alleviated, that the chips on the shoulders have been taken away, because I think that if we have too many of these chips on the shoulders we may well have an accident or a miscalculation and then, of course, we would all be in the soup.

Sen. Saltonstall: In other words, an inconsequential -- or what might be an inconsequential point of view in relation to the question of our staying in Berlin and of our position in Germany as a whole -- if we're too firm about that -- it might lead to trouble.

Sen. Mansfield: That's right, and these 10,000-foot flights, this revocation of passes, these are all side shows -- these aren't too important; the big thing is to try and work a solution for all of Berlin and, in time, for all of Germany.

Sen. Saltonstall: I agree. Now you and I both have been mightily interested in the question of disarmament. I feel we must work towards practical disarmament controls just as quickly as we can, don't you?

Sen. Mansfield: Yes indeed I do, Lev, and I'm delighted with the visit recently of Prime Minister MacMillan with President Eisenhower. I'm hopeful that these two leaders will give every possible consideration, and I'm sure they will, to the proposal made by the Russians at Geneva, though I must point out that there is nothing in writing as yet on which they can go, although, as result of a press conference in Geneva by the Russians, certain postulates were laid down. I think the people of the world are very interested in the field of disarmament and especially in the field of nuclear disarmament, or perhaps I should say, a stop to nuclear testing, and if we do not face up to this problem and try and do something tangible, then, I'm afraid, the Soviet Union once again is going to take the ball and run away with it. And, after all, what the Soviet Union is offering to accept now is what President Eisenhower, in large part, offered in the first place, so it's our baby.

Sen. Saltonstall: It's our baby, and what we've got to do is to make certain that the position is taken clearly and not just left to generalities.

Sen. Mansfield: That's right. And we ought to, as much as we possibly can, get in the highest degree of regulation and inspection so that there will be no difficulties on either side.
Sen. Saltonstall: Now Mike, may I turn to another subject. Several weeks ago, the Secretary of State, Mr. Herter, was on this program, and he expressed grave concern over the explosive situation in Cuba. How do you think we can best cope with Castro's fiery outbursts against the United States and what do you foresee in the months ahead with respect to our relations?

Sen. Mansfield: Well, that's what we used to call the $64 question. All I can say is that the Administration is to be commended for its patience, for its leaning over backwards, for its attempts to try and get along with Castro. I think that Castro is losing some of his prestige in Cuba because, while the majority of the people -- the great majority of the people -- are still behind him, I think his tactics day by day are losing support at home. I would say that in the field of Latin America as a whole this country has achieved added stature because of the way we've handled Mr. Castro. I'm delighted also that the Administration has seen fit, and I think this is overdue, to force a tighter control over the planes which are emanating from Florida and going out to the Caribbean.

Sen. Saltonstall: That's very important because that's the item, if you will, on which they base their complaints to us.

Sen. Mansfield: Yes, and what we see is a number of adventurers using this as a means to enrich themselves, who get their own country, the United States, into trouble and we just can't afford that.

Sen. Saltonstall: And what we've got to think of in our relations in Cuba is the whole Latin American problem as a whole and how they're going to look towards what we do in Cuba.

Sen. Mansfield: Exactly, and it isn't so much a matter of Castro. The question is, what the effect will be on the Cuban people who I think by and large are still extremely friendly toward us and we hope they'll continue that way.

Sen. Saltonstall: I hope so too. Now, Mike, your Committee has just been considering this year's mutual security program. I know you feel quite strongly on this program. What do you think Congress will do with the President's request this year?
Sen. Mansfield: I think that the request of the President will be trimmed somewhat.

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Sen. Mansfield: Yes. I think it will be trimmed; I don't know how much, I would guess anywhere from 500 million to 750 million dollars. I'm glad to see, though, that the shift is going away from military aid, which now comprises about 50% of the program, towards loans on a long-term, reasonable-rate basis. For example, the Development Loan Fund is getting more and more in the way of what used to formerly be grants. I think that what we're trying to develop and we should develop is not a feeling of dependence, which has marked the program under both Democratic and Republican Administrations through the extensive use of grants, but rather a feeling of interdependence based on long-term loans at low interest rates. The move is in that direction and I hope it will continue that way.

Sen. Saltonstall: And these small countries which are feeling so strongly their nationalistic spirit -- that interdependence instead of a dependent relation is what they want.

Sen. Mansfield: Oh, and it's very important because they want to feel equal to the rest of the world, and as long as they operate on a grant basis they are going to feel inferior and we can afford long-term loans at low interest rates in our own interest and in the interest of the countries which we are seeking to help.

Sen. Saltonstall: Now turning, Mike, to domestic concerns -- the civil rights debate in the Senate over the past several weeks has slowed up other legislation that must be acted upon.

Sen. Mansfield: That's true.

Sen. Saltonstall: Of course, the civil rights debate was one of the most important things for Congress to consider this year, and in that, I'm sure that you agree with me.

Sen. Mansfield: Yes indeed.

Sen. Saltonstall: But now what we've got to do when that is finished is to accelerate our other domestic issues and that's going to be hard to do because Congress will close about July 4th or 5th, don't you think?
Sen. Mansfield: Yes, we'll have to because of the fact that the Democrats have their convention in Los Angeles on July the 11th, and the Republicans, as you well know, a week or so later.

Sen. Saltonstall: Now what do you think are the most important matters that the Senate should accomplish between now and the end of the session?

Sen. Mansfield: Well frankly, I don't think that we'll do too much in the Senate or in the Congress as a whole because of the shortness of the time remaining. I anticipate, though, and you're far more qualified to speak on this than I, that we will, for the first time in many years, complete all our appropriations bills by the first of July, 1960. I would think also that we would pass a fairly good mutual security bill in the meantime. But as far as social legislation is concerned, because of the shortness of time, I don't think that much will be done in that field.

Sen. Saltonstall: There will be efforts on several items, but how much actually will become law is the question.

Sen. Mansfield: Well, as you know, Lev, the difficulty is that you might get action in one house but not in the other.

Sen. Saltonstall: That is correct. Now, Senator, you are an astute political observer. Would you care to comment on what will be the leading issues in this Presidential election campaign and who do you think will get your party's nomination?

Sen. Mansfield: Well I think the leading issues will be foreign policy, defense, the farm problem, the high cost of living. As far as the Democratic candidates are concerned, we have to recognize the fact that the Senate this year is really a Presidential cockpit because Vice President Nixon on the other side is the presiding officer of that body. But at the present time Senator Kennedy I think is away in the lead. I think Senator Johnson, the Majority Leader, is second, and that Senators Humphrey and Symington are coming up fast. Much will depend on what happens in Wisconsin and West Virginia. If Senator Kennedy wins both those states in a fairly good fashion, then I think he's going to be extremely hard to stop, if not impossible to stop. If he does not win those states handsomely, then I think the man to watch will be Lyndon Johnson who will go to the Convention, I think, with something on the order of 450 to 500 votes pledged to him.
Sen. Saltonstall: That's a very frank answer from a very distinguished man. Now, Senator Mansfield, this has been a helpful and interesting interview, and I am certainly grateful to you, as I know our friends back in Massachusetts are, for your appearing with me on this program. These have been timely comments indeed. Thank you very much for being with us Senator Mike Mansfield... and thank you for being with us. I hope you'll join me in two weeks when I will bring you another report from Washington.

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Senator Leverett Saltonstall
Interviews
Assistant Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate
Mike Mansfield

on
"Report to Massachusetts"
(to be seen and heard over the following stations)

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Sun., Apr. 3 12:15 p.m.
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Sun., Apr. 10 1:15 p.m.