1-1-1959

Memo Comments on the State of the Union Address

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.
Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mansfield_speeches

Recommended Citation
https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mansfield_speeches/396

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 by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.
MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Mansfield
FROM: Frank
SUBJECT: Comments on the President's Address to Congress

Introductory Paragraph (p. 1)

It is ironic that an address on the State of the Union should begin largely on the note of the state of another Union -- the Soviet Union. Further, in saying that the Russians' announcement does not mean it very unfortunate that the

of their intention to abandon their responsibilities in Berlin is a

that we are sorry to see them go.

Section 1, (p. 2) deals largely with our defense and its cost.

One can hardly argue that we have formidable forces and that they are expensive to operate. However, one can argue that our military and related scientific progress has been "highly

gratifying" as the President says. We have evidence in the comparative performance of the rocket, in the recent reported failure of the warning system off the Florida coast that the progress may not be "gratifying" at all.
Until we see the military budget we can hardly determine whether it advances the aims of "a sensible posture of defense" and "increased efficiency and avoidance of waste" which he says it will.

Section II (p. 4) The section deals largely with the state of the national economy but digresses on the point of establishing a committee of non-governmental experts to do some "five-year" planning of economic and social goals.

The President says that "the recession is fading into history." The several millions unemployed would hardly agree with him.

As for his idea of a Committee to plan national goals, certainly we ought to be using our best brains to look ahead. One wonders, though, what bonafide Republicans with their deep-seated aversion to imagination and socialism in government are going to think of a Committee on Five Year Plans. The idea seems to have a faint tinge of

for, mind, even a faint tinge of both imagination and socialism into Five Year Plans, indeed! Where have we heard that term before.
The President says, "if we are wise and resolute, we will not tolerate inflation in the years to come." Fine, but what are the Republicans suggesting that we do about it? Further, he speaks of inflation almost exclusively in terms of the "wage-price spiral."

But what do Republicans think the effect is on supply and, hence, on prices of factories and mines shut down for months on end as they were last year, and 44 millions of men not working? Might these factors not

have something to do with high prices, just as price-increases and the wage-increases which more often than not chase them, rather-than-

precede them?

The President says that he will submit a balanced budget axilk

and, then, he leaves the impression that inflation occurs it will be the fault of Congress because of its power of the purse. Well, who has been responsible for the record budgets of recent years? Who has cut those budgets?
Other statements in this section deal with tax reform, the
specific veto on appropriations items and federal credit reforms. There
is nothing new very spectacular in them.

Next, he turns to agriculture. This section makes very
clear that we have a very serious situation on our hands and he
promises prompt action. We shall have to wait to see what he
proposes.

In addition to the above matters, the President returned
to the question of price stability at the end of the section. He promises
to call for amendment of the Employment Act of 1946 and to study the
problem through various means.

Section III (p. 8) -- The International Situation.

There is nothing new in this section, except perhaps the
statements concerning an increased contribution to the World Bank and
Monetary Fund and a program designed to marshal the full potential of
American business for foreign economic development -- a program which
is not spelled out.
Section IV (p. 10) - Civil Rights

The talk of the necessity for new effective Federal legislation ... to insure the rights and economic freedoms of millions of American workers." Is he suggesting, since he uses the term "millions" that the AF of L-CIO are corrupt from top to bottom?

Is that a Republican concept? Or, isn't it a fact, that the McClellan Committee's findings largely to the behavior of one union which has been expelled from the AF of L-and the CIO. In short, is it the Republican to wage war on all unions or on corruption in the few? If it is the latter, then, the President would hardly have said that what Congress tried to do in this field was half-hearted. He would have worked with Congress in support of the Kennedy-Ives proposal. After all, it was Congress which had uncovered the corruption -- not the Department of Labor -- and, perhaps, Congress had some idea on how it ought to be eliminated.
On the issue of civil rights, it has taken the President a little while to get around to remembering "the supremacy of the Constitution." If he had done it earlier, perhaps some of the uglier incidents might have been avoided. Apart from indicating that he will propose new laws in this field when he is only beginning to implement the one which was placed on the statute books in the last Congress, he also says that in making the concept of equality meaningful, we all have a solemn obligation. He says further that we can fulfill that obligation by our leadership in teaching, persuading, demonstrating and in enforcing the law. It can hardly be said that he or any of the Republicans in his Administration are setting a very inspiring example in any of these ways.