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The Reports of Rioting and Repression from Korea

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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Statement of Senator Mike Mansfield (D., Montana)
April 27, 1960

THE REPORTS OF RIOTING AND REPRESSION FROM KOREA

Americans cannot be indifferent to the reports which are now emanating from Korea. If for no other reason, our involvement in that country has been too direct and too personal.

It is not a pretty picture when people must take to street demonstrations. It is not a pretty picture when high school youths and others are shot down.

Americans do not want South Korea to fall into a chaos which would invite renewed communist aggression. Neither do we wish to see repressive denial of freedom which invites the same thing.

American aid -- military and economic -- has been a major factor in the situation in Korea. In that sense we cannot escape a major responsibility for what is now transpiring, even if we do not and cannot and should not attempt to dictate to the Korean government. The Secretary of State has offered friendly advice to the Korean government. It may or may not be helpful. More to the point, I believe, is that we ask ourselves now, "What have our policies on Korea, within and without the UN, and billions in aid to the South Korean government produced since the truce was established in 1953? Have these policies - this aid - built/conducive to a durable peace, or have they merely served as a holding action, and one that is now apparently beginning to fail, even to hold?"
In the light of the current developments in Korea, these questions suggest that the Administration should take a long and careful look at these policies and aid programs respecting Korea. They suggest the need to point these policies and programs in a fashion which will offer free Korea hope and the United States the chance, in time, to withdraw when the situation has been stabilized and the Koreans can conduct their own affairs in on a fully sovereign and independent basis.
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