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News Release Interview of Senator Mansfield

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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RELEASE Interview of Senator Mike Mansfield (D.) Montana by George Remington, UPI, shortly before Senator Mansfield left Montana on October 19, 1961. Released on October 20, 1961 from Senator Mansfield's office, Washington, D.C.

In an interview with George Remington, UPI, Senator Mike Mansfield stated that he will look into atomic waste proposal on Blackfoot Reservation, the stopping of the school lunch program on the Fort Peck Reservation, the possibilities of the Tiber Dam being used in a more diversified capacity along the Hi-Line, the chrome situation in Stillwater County, and the many individual problems of the people of Montana which have been called to my attention since my return to the state.

Referring to the international situation, he stated that Berlin was only one of the many crises facing President Kennedy and the free world. He mentioned the grave difficulties in Laos, still far from settled; South Vietnam where the Communist Viet Cong from North Vietnam were stepping up their penetration and offensives; the situation in the Middle East, the Congo, Cuba, and Latin America, especially the Northeast part of Brazil which he termed a "potential powder keg", an area which he said could, if not handled right, be far more explosive than Cuba.

Turning to the question of defense, he stated that the Soviet Union was, for the moment, ahead in Long range (ICBM) missiles, but that the U.S. excelled in medium range (IRBM) missiles. In long range bombers, we have an advantage of three to one over the Soviet Union and in medium bombers and fighter bombers an advantage of around two to one.

In Polaris type subs, each carrying 16 missiles, we have 5 operational, 4 launched, and 36 more authorized. In other submarines, the Soviet Union has an advantage of three to one.

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On land, the Soviet Union still has 175 divisions with their equipment modernized while the U. S. has under 20 divisions and is just starting to bring its weapons systems, except in missiles, up to date.

The best and most dependable missiles we have at the present time are the Minuteman on land and the Polaris at sea.

Since President Kennedy has assumed office, he has endeavored to balance out and beef up our defense posture. The Army and Marine Corps have been increased in size, more SAC planes have been placed on the alert, the number of Polaris subs have been increased considerably, the space and missiles programs have been speeded up and our armaments, in certain categories, are being modernized as rapidly as possible.

The Senator emphasized the tremendous burdens and responsibilities which are President Kennedy's. Under the Constitution he is charged with the conduct of our foreign policy and is the Commander-in-Chief of our armed forces. Unlike Krushchev, who can act almost on his own, and at a moment's notice, President Kennedy is subject to the people, the press, and the Congress. Any president, regardless of party, is entitled to the full support of the American people because, as our duly elected head of government, his is the decision-making responsibility, and his task is not easy.

The times call for unity and understanding, and not division and discord. Our personal feelings should be subordinated to the national welfare. The people of Montana and the nation should always remember that in this dangerous decade in which we live, there is no easy, no quick, and no cheap way out of the difficulties which confront all of us.

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Senator Mansfield will wind up his stay in Montana with talks at the Yellowtail Dam dedication on Wednesday, and at the National Reclamation Association meeting at Billings on Thursday. At that time he will have visited 49 of Montana's 56 counties.

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