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How to Bring World Peace

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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REMARKS OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA)

Mr. President:

The President’s State of the Union message was a sober appraisal of the situation in which we find ourselves both at home and abroad. The President has given us the truth, without the embellishment of either panicky alarm or vacuous optimism. The State of the Union, as the new President finds it, calls neither for dancing in the streets nor for the despair of futility.

It calls most of all for honesty in facing the nation’s problems and for deliberate constructive action on these problems. At home, we have got to recognize that there is suffering or the serious threat of suffering to the well-being of millions of citizens, because of unemployment or inadequate employment or underpaid employment. There is a threat to the stability and the vitality of the nation’s economy in the persistent sluggishness of its key industries, in the farm situation and in a progressive stagnation in certain key manufacturing and mining centers. We have got to deal with these problems. In this modern era no rug is large enough to sweep them under. The gold outflow to which the President alluded, in part at least, is a reflection of these inner weaknesses and a spur to act to correct them.

In short, our economy must begin to move again. Our farms must provide a better livelihood to our farmers. Our educational plant must yield better opportunities to young people to train to the maximum of their individual capacities. Our faith in our great medical facilities must be cleansed of its present idle boast, insofar as these facilities fail to serve with decency and dignity, millions of our older citizens. In these matters, the President has promised to point the way.
As for the job of government housekeeping, let no one underestimate the sweeping significance of the President's intentions with regard to reorganization of the Defense Department and its programs and his implied promise to replace "Parkinson's Law" with "Kennedy's Law" as regards the Civil Service. In the latter case, the President has performed a great public service by announcing that: "A man's rank and reputation in this Administration will be determined by the size of the job he does and not by the size of his staff, his office or his budget."

It was to these and other domestic matters that the President initially addressed himself before turning to the even more complex problems which face us abroad. And may I say, Mr. President, that in so doing he put the situation in the proper order. For it is the inner condition of the house of the nation which will largely determine how the nation shall tower in the neighborhood of the world, not the coat of paint on the outside.

But let no one underestimate, either, the power of the new ideas which he has advanced in all aspects of foreign policy. He has offered a new promise of cooperation in matters of vital importance to all mankind, to friend and foe alike—in nuclear survival and in the common exploration of outer space. He offers a new approach to the spread of freedom in Latin America and in the newly burgeoning nations and even to those areas, such as Eastern Europe, where it has long been but a dim and receding hope. He is building upon the policies of the previous administration in this respect but it is clear that he intends to build anew, to build strong, to build purposefully.
This Congress—Republicans no less than Democrats and both no less than the Executive Branch—has a deep responsibility to work with the President to see to it that the house is put promptly in order. We must help him to close the inner cracks in the walls so that the point of foreign policy will adhere properly. Our basic task in the Senate is to give prompt and careful consideration to the legislation and other measures which he may propose. Let this be done with a high sense of national purpose and dedication and I am confident that the nation will begin to move again and that the outlines of a new and constructive foreign policy which his message contained will be filled in steadily with tangible achievements for the peace and common progress of mankind.