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Women's Journey, USA

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001
First, let me thank you for the invitation to come here today and talk with you. No man is so old or so tired that he likes to admit that he has nothing of interest to say to a group of attractive young ladies. So, while I am not sure I can do the trick, I very much appreciate the chance to try.

I am glad to be here for another reason as well. You young women along with other young men and women who have been given the blessed gift of education, will bear a special public responsibility in the future. This is true of course in all areas of national concern, but nowhere more so than in the difficult area of our relations with foreign governments. Here emotionalism easily runs wild, if it is untempered by education and contact with the day to day realities. In foreign affairs, more than elsewhere, there is a need for an up-to-date, sophisticated and restrained outlook. Without it, free government can be locked into postures made obsolete and dangerous by the shifting tides of international affairs. Without it a nation is likely to be always fighting the last war or the last diplomatic encounter over again, instead of facing directly and with fresh and penetrating thought the issues of the contemporary situation. And, finally, without an informed approach on the part of the people, the nation may be unable, in its foreign policies, to take advantage of changes which occur continuously in the
world, in order to strengthen the security of the nation and the prospects for an enduring peace.

It is of some of these international changes of the past fifteen years which I would like to speak today. These are changes which began as trickles just after you were born and are now coming into flood as you enter adulthood.

An over-riding change since the Korean War has been the emergence of a kind of stalemate between Russia and the United States in terms of destructive nuclear capacity. Nuclear technology in both nations has now reached a point at which no significant military advantage is likely to be gained merely by pushing the accumulation of more destructive power. That is not to say that the Russians are not alert to possible technological breakthroughs or that we have gone to sleep. The search goes on here and it also goes on there. But a decisive altering of the basic nuclear is not in sight.

The fact is that both Russia and the United States are already in a position in which each can obliterates at least half the population of the other in a very short time. That is a sobering reality for all those with a share of the responsibility for the many decisions which, in the end, may involve an ultimate decision as to whether or not these instruments are used.
The very magnitude of the nuclear threat which hangs over the earth has had, oddly, a kind of constructive influence on world affairs. It is one of the realities which underlay the Russian withdrawal of missiles from Cuba a couple of years ago. And it was a major factor in the achievement of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. That treaty, in turn, was a precipitant in bringing about an improvement in the general relations—at least until recently—between the two principal nuclear powers. In that respect, the treaty was a most significant achievement in the drive for a more peaceful world. It stands as an enduring and appropriate monument to John Fitzgerald Kennedy who refused, with great courage, to be deflected by political considerations, from his determination to achieve it.

stalemate

The nuclear stocks between Russia and the United States, then, is, indeed, one of the most significant changes of the past decade and a half. It has produced an international situation with which the principal nations have managed to live in reasonable stability for several years. In its context, the prospect of a Soviet military invasion of Western Europe which, for example, was once regarded as acute, appears to have receded. And by the same token, the military liberation of Eastern Europe which once was loudly trumpeted is no longer pressed from any responsible source as the basis of a sound policy for the nation.
In short, the over-all position of the two great nuclear powers in today's world appears to have become, increasingly, one of live and let live. This trend has emerged largely because the point has sunk home that the alternative is the opposite on such a scale as to drain either the triumph of freedom or the victory of communism of rational meaning. But the picture of a gradual casement in Soviet-United States relations is not complete unless we also take into consideration the effect of recent developments in Viet Nam. These developments have not helped the trend which was inaugurated under President Eisenhower, pursued most effectively by President Kennedy, and vastly encouraged and continued by President Johnson.

The changed situation in Russian-United States relations in turn has been paralleled by changes throughout the Soviet bloc. It is obvious that the greater stability in Russian-United States relations has not set well with China but it has generally been welcomed by such Eastern European nations as Poland, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria.

Comunism did not spring full-blown in those Eastern European nations at the close of World War II. Communism was in fact grafted by Soviet power onto several countries with different traditions, even as Stalin sm othered on them an iron lid of ideological uniformity. The clothes of communist conformity, however, were uncomfortable in Eastern Europe and beneath them, the individual national traditions continued to stir. In recent years, this force for diversity has begun to find fuller expression.
The growing independence in Eastern Europe has been encouraged cautiously by recent policies of the United States. This was a cardinal principle of the foreign policy of President Kennedy, who recognized its value with respect to Poland even when he was a Senator. The conclusion of trade agreements and travel arrangements with Eastern European countries which pose no threat to us, as, for example, with Poland and Yugoslavia, has tended to increase their independence from the Soviet Union and provided some inducement for other satellite countries to follow in their footsteps—and, that they have been, in fact, doing.

In this atmosphere of reduced tension in Europe, a difficult and intricate problem remains as the central roadblock to further progress towards a stable peace in that region. That is the problem of a divided Germany. In East Germany, the Soviet Union has continued to maintain a harsh and rigid control over a people who dislike the communist system intensely. For our part, policy with respect to Germany is, apparently, based on an officialassessment of immediate Soviet intentions in Europe which differs considerably from that of our allies in Western Europe. It appears to me that these nations—West Germany, Britain, France, Italy and others—see the Soviet situation in quite a different perspective—at least insofar as this perspective is reflected in policies. The Europeans, for example, carry on a trade with the Soviet Union which over recent years has run in the billions. What we have done in a most limited way in trade with Poland and Yugoslavia, they have done many, many times over with all of Eastern Europe and, of course, with the Soviet Union itself. Travel within Europe—
East and West—is now very extensive and the lines of communication by sea, rail, road and air between the two parts of the continent have expanded very markedly. In short, the Europeans generally have been acting with respect to the Soviet bloc as though peace had arrived in Europe. We have not, in policy, shared that optimism.

If there were a fusion of views as to precisely what the situation is, it is conceivable that, with it, there might also come a parallel recognition that proposals aimed at ending the armed confrontation in Germany and moving toward reunification are worth pursuing most intensely. A number of ideas have been advanced over the years which could serve as a beginning, but they have not as yet led to significant changes in policy.

The shift in Europe over the past few years is not unique. It is paralleled, for example, by significant changes which involve the underdeveloped countries. The political face of Africa has changed and over most of that continent, control is now exercised by African leaders rather than by Europeans. Many new nations have been added to the ranks of the intensely independent and underdeveloped states. But from the point of view of the nuclear powers, almost all such states are, now, of less importance as strategic prizes, to be wooed for their value as bases in the event of a total war. We ourselves have recognized this change to a considerable degree. We have, for example, abandoned a number of advanced air bases in these areas in the light of the development of the intercontinental ballistic missile and Polaris-carrying nuclear submarines. Similarly, the
control of alien territory to insure access to strategic military raw materials which was once an absolutely vital consideration for all great powers may no longer carry quite so much weight.

This change in attitudes involving the underdeveloped nations applies even in Southeast Asia. President Johnson has said that there is no need for a forward base in that part of the world. Our fundamental power in the Pacific is air and sea power. This power, supreme throughout the Pacific, is sufficient to protect American security from any direct military threat from that part of the world for some years to come.

We also have in Viet Nam, as elsewhere in Southeast Asia, a shared interest with all free nations in resisting aggression. We can and will remain prepared to assist in stopping overt attempts to overrun peoples by force. But beyond this goal of preventing aggression in order to promote peace and freedom under the rule of law in the world, our direct national interests in Southeast Asia are not nearly as great, for example, as those which we have with respect to Latin America.

For these reasons, as well as a basic aversion to war itself, the President has made it clear that we are willing to enter into unconditional discussions in an effort to find an honorable settlement in Viet Nam and a more stable situation throughout Southeast Asia. But if there is ever to be an honorable settlement, there has to be a beginning. There has to be a confrontation across the tables of peace. If such a meeting is to have any prospect of a successful outcome, there is also a parallel and simultaneous
need for an interim cease-fire and stand fast—both north and south. Unless the sounds of conflict are, first, stilled on all sides, the words of peace will not be heard on any side.

I am at a loss to understand how those elsewhere—in Peking, for example—expect to be taken seriously in professing to hold paramount the interests of the people of Viet Nam and a restoration of peace when, at the same time, they insist upon interpreting the President's words as meaning something other than unconditional discussion. It would be in our own best interests no less than in the best interests of the underdeveloped countries of Southeast Asia were the latter able to concentrate on their own inner national needs and growth. That was clearly the President's hope when he offered to join with the Soviet Union and other nations in a common effort for the development of Southeast Asia.

A common effort of this kind is clearly, too, the best way to help most of the underdeveloped nations, wherever they may be in the world, to remain free of outside domination and influence and to give indigenous institutions of freedom an opportunity to take root. Indeed, in the long run, it may be just about the only way to help them.

We are not likely to insure freedom within these nations by taking it upon ourselves either to overwhelm them with unilateral help or by turning our backs on their genuine needs for help. The one is the road to an isolated internationalism for this nation. The other is the road to a national isolation for this nation. And neither road is likely to lead
to the safeguarding of the basic interests of this nation. In short, the great need is for a discreet and discerning cooperation with other nations in dealing with underdeveloped nations.

This principle has relevance for the current crisis in the Dominican Republic which, after decades of a cruel dictatorship, is still a most underdeveloped nation. The President faced a critical situation—an emergency—there some weeks ago. He acted to meet it on humanitarian grounds and he met it well. And he is acting now to bring fully into play, the concept of cooperation with others in that situation. As a member of the Organization of American States, our military and diplomatic resources in the Dominican Republic are being used more and more in support of the organization. For the problem in the island is not one of unique responsibility for the United States. It is one which must engage primarily the Dominican people and their leaders and, to the extent that it is necessary, the entire Western Hemisphere.

With the development of an inter-American military force, the heavy initial commitment of American forces on the island has already been reduced. And it is to be hoped, moreover, that this reduction will be rapidly accelerated if stability can be restored under the guidance of the O.A.S. I would hope, too, that the inter-American force which would remain could play two roles—that is, to support the efforts of the O.A.S. and also to help in the reconstruction of Santo Domingo which has been seriously damaged in the struggle. It would also be desirable if other American states
could develop a peace corps and send contingents to join the young men and women of this nation who are already undertaking in the Dominican Republic many works of useful and peaceful construction.

To Americans, even to college students like you, the affairs of nations outside our borders may seem remote and unimportant at times, especially on a day like today. But I need not remind you that events whose origins lay thousands of miles from our shores have reached into this nation in the past and called us to sacrifice. As Americans, as inhabitants of the only world we have, I ask you to exercise the increasing responsibility which will be yours in the years ahead to see that no stone lies unturned, that no outdated myth or ancient hatred lies unexamined, and that no opportunity is neglected in the slow painstaking search for a lasting peace.

And I ask you, too, to give your prayers to the President of the United States. His is the enormous burden in these matters. His is the paramount responsibility. For him, there is no rest from the incessant pressure of the problems of the nation. For him, there is a plethora of advice and criticism which is easily enough extended. But upon him, in the end, falls the weight of grave decision as he seeks to follow the slender path to that stable peace which is the world's great need.