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### Fluorspar - An Important Montana Industry

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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RELATIONS BETWEEN UNITED STATES AND PANAMA

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, on January 15 I directed certain remarks to the issues dividing the United States and the Republic of Panama over the canal. Irritants in our relations with that country have existed for many years. And easy solutions can hardly be expected. But the recent efforts to relieve even the pressure of these issues have not been very successful. The Inter-American Peace Committee of the Organization of American States has not been able to break through the impasse.

At present diplomatic relations between Panama and the United States remain suspended. It is to be hoped that Panamanians will consider the implications of continued suspension, to themselves as well as to us. It is to be hoped that they will come to understand that any eventual solution must be at least reasonably palatable to both sides.

The United States has expressed willingness to consider all matters at issue with Panama. But we can hardly be expected to agree to make prior commitment on what may result from a confrontation yet to be held. Our position finds a legal basis in the accepted practices of international law. And it also finds, I believe, a sound basis in equity and good sense. We do not ask the Panamanians to agree in advance to this outcome or that. We do not ask them to humiliate themselves as a precondition of the confrontation. It is wrong for large nations to make tyrannical demands of this nature on small nations. And it is equally wrong for the small to tyrannize the large in the same fashion.

It is proper that any nation—large or small—decline to negotiate under pressure. That is not to say that it is proper to fail to recognize that a real pressure for discussions does exist in the canal situation. It is compounded of such factors as the conspicuous privilege of zone residents in the midst of a largely poverty stricken but intensely nationalistic people. And somehow, Mr. President, the privilege of the alien seems always to be more conspicuous than that which is found among one's own countrymen—and it does exist among Panamanians themselves.

The pressure is compounded, too, Mr. President, of the fact that the rental fees, the toll fees, personnel, and other management practices of the Canal Company have not changed very much in the half century of operations. Such has been the case although vast changes have occurred in the world's commerce, in the utility of the canal and in the nation which the canal bisects. All of these matters and others are, appropriately, subject to discussion, consideration, or whatever. Most important, they are subject to new understanding and mutual agreement on adjustments of relationships, as between the two countries.

But the Panamanian Government surely recognizes that the reestablish-

ment of diplomatic relations must precede such understanding and adjustment. Surely it must recognize that unfounded charges of aggression lead, not toward but away from understanding and agreement. Surely it must recognize, as do we, that those who counsel violence, ill will, and disorder have nothing to offer to the solution of the difficulty.

There are those who play all sorts of variations on the theme of a hysterical self-righteousness, who in a situation such as this always seek to exacerbate differences and prevent solutions by stirring mud in the waters of volatile nationalism.

There are also those who seek solution by reason and reasonable adjustment, who realize that extreme statements and calls to violence can only undermine efforts for a just and equitable agreement.

We—and I believe I speak now of the great preponderance of Americans—have no desire other than to accord descent treatment to Panama in specific arrangements involving the canal. And I am sure the great preponderance of Panamanians would have no desire other than to accord the United States an equally decent treatment. The difficulties arise in inflamed passions induced by extraneous considerations or by long-standing and unnecessary irritants.

From our point of view, it seems to me essential that we get clear in our own minds and make clear to Panama that the basic U.S. interests which is involved is trouble-free and effective usage of the canal for our own and for international commerce and for the defense of this hemisphere. And I cannot believe that the Panamanians, upon dispassionate reflection, would want anything else for the canal.

The time has come when both sides must bend their efforts toward reaching a satisfactory accommodation of those differences and misunderstandings—those secondary matters which threaten that usage.

There is a much greater basis for friendship and amity than for hate and enmity as between the people of the United States and the people of Panama. There is the compelling need to get on with the struggle to achieve economic and social development in Panama under the Alliance for Progress. There is a whole range of other hemispheric and international problems upon which the two countries have seen and can continue to see eye to eye. Insofar as the difficulties over the canal and the zone persist, they jeopardize this close relationship and introduce a note of uncertainty into the whole of hemispheric relations.

As for the Panama Canal itself, it is clear that its growing obsolescence requires additional water passage somewhere through the Americas between the Atlantic and Pacific and I am delighted to see that the distinguished chairman of the Commerce Committee [Mr. Magnuson] has made it clear that the search for an appropriate second route—a route in addition to the Panama Canal—should begin now in earnest. The Panamanian Government has asked that we

consider building a new canal within its borders. But I cannot see that another U.S.-built canal through Panama will do anything but double the existing problem. Certainly it would be unthinkable, in the absence of a solution of the present difficulty, a solution which is clearly acceptable to the people of both sides, a solution with built-in mechanisms for adjustments to meet changing needs in the years ahead. But as circumstances are now, I have no hesitancy in saying that Panama decidedly is not the place and that one headache of this kind is enough for this or any nation.

Another possibility, as I have suggested, is a canal across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec to be constructed and operated by the Government of Mexico. If it is feasible, financial and technical aid might be forthcoming from international lending agencies and from other potential heavy users, including the United States. But I want to stress that any such project should be carried out under Mexican control and the resultant canal should be operated by Mexico. What the rest of the world has a right to expect in return for such aid that it may provide is a mutually acceptable juridical system which will guarantee fair rates for the canal and open and equal access to its facilities to all nations.

The technical feasibility of such an undertaking in Tehuantepec was established several years ago by a series of studies commissioned by Pemex, the Mexican oil company. Mexico is a stable, democratic nation whose creditworthiness and well-developed sense of international responsibility are in themselves important guarantors of effective management of a canal of this kind.

While a new canal in Mexico or elsewhere may offer a long-range alleviation of the problem, it is not a substitute for facing the immediate and urgent difficulties of the present canal. The construction of a new canal, necessary and desirable as it is, is not an alternative, if for no other reason than that it would take several years to build.

For the present, either under the aegis of the OAS or in direct confrontation, the United States and Panama must be prepared to set aside charge and countercharge, to resume diplomatic relations, and to get on with discussion, conference, or whatever, with a view to mutually acceptable agreement on the specific questions and irritants involving the zone and the canal. Once the passions and the irritants have been put aside, on both sides, it is not at all impossible that both sides will see that there is an overriding common interest in the trouble-free operation of the waterway and will make those sensible adjustments in the existing situation which are necessary to insure it.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.