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Address by MM - Sheraton Park Hotel - Centennial Dinner - Washington D.C.

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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My Fellow Montanans:

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This is the week that the C.H.--Chet Huntley--brand was put on certain nature-fed cattle in New Jersey and now I understand it has been taken off. His feeding lot operation, however, continues and still furnishes a dire threat to the well-being of Montana cattlemen. His beef is of a very superior quality. But it was not his special nature-feed that made the difference. The truth is that it was simply the bulls which he has been importing from Cardwell and Reed Point.

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And now to turn from the week that was to the moment that is, I want to say that
Railroad trains fascinate all youngsters. The Centennial Train, I am sure, will make children out of people of all ages.

This extraordinary pilgrimage is a kind of Lewis and Clark expedition in reverse. Montanans, in effect, are bringing civilization back to the East. May I suggest that you lock up your silver dollars while you are in this part of the country. A veritable passion for cartwheels has developed here in the East, and we would like very much to avoid a too realistic re-enactment of one of the great train robberies of the past.

I should also like to suggest that you be sure to remind the Easterners you meet of the high quality of Montana beef. Imports from Australia and New Zealand are not the only disturbing influence in the market these days. Even more serious is the competition of steers from Chet Huntley's ranch in New Jersey. His beef, I understand, is of a very superior quality. He used to say that this was due to a special Huntley developed nature-feed. But the truth is now out. He has simply been importing bulls from Cardwell and Reed Point.
In any case, I do know that this train with its wonderful cargo of Montanans and its treasures is fully in keeping with the traditions of the Big Sky Country. I am delighted to see it and you here in Washington.

The train tells a great deal of us and of our part in the building of a nation. It unfolds a dramatic history on a continental scale. The characters in this drama provide the cast of a thousand movies. The settings are familiar to hundreds of millions of TV viewers not only in our own country but throughout the world. It is all here either in replica or by suggestion: The towering mountains, the plains, the desert; the wigwam, the covered wagon, the lonely trading post or the settler's cabin, the gold camps and ghost towns, the territorial legislature and the offices of the giant corporations. Even the saloons are here, although the liquor, no doubt, is not as hard as it used to be—well, not quite as hard. And here, too, are the Indians, cowpokes, trappers, lumbermen, ranchers, miners, copper kings, politicians, statesmen, outlaws and vigilantes.

All of these are parts of the saga of our State. After Lewis and Clark brought back the first reports, many made the trek westward to become a part of the drama. They came from all of the Eastern states and the Mississippi valley. They came from Europe and from Asia. They came to trap, to log, to mine, to railroad, to trade,
to preach, to teach, to farm and to work at whatever needed doing. And some came to rob and to kill and others to stop the robbings and killings.

All left their mark. Some moved further west and others went back East. But many stayed and worked and built.

They confronted a land and an Indian way of life unchanged for millenia and they changed both. And Montana, in turn, changed the pioneers and their descendents. Out of the infusion of ideas and energy, in an incredibly short time--remember that the Lewis and Clark expedition was scarcely a century and a half ago--out of this infusion emerged the Treasure State as we know it today.

It is a state big enough to remember the past without bitterness. It is a state warm enough to accommodate, with a mutual tolerance, all the human strains of its present diversity. It is a state which, today, is great enough for its people to live together in peace and to share fully in all the hopes for a peaceful nation in a peaceful world.

But it was not always so. Change is rarely easy. More often than not, change is conflict, the conflict of man against man, man against nature and man against himself. Change is hope and the dashing of hope but always the rebirth of hope.
From the very beginning that has been the pattern of Montana life. We have had our times of disappointment and disaster. Repeated Indian wars, in our state, as elsewhere, for example, left scars which were a long time in healing on both sides. Trappers and prospectors died lonely and senseless deaths in the early search for wealth in furs and gold and silver. Miners, sheep and cattlemen, wheat ranchers, railroadmen and businessmen and their families ate the bread of bitterness in the Great Depression and problems of unemployment, even if less extreme, still affect us today. Natural calamities of weather and range and the unnatural calamities of the market have from time to time plagued our ranchers and farmers.

Yet in spite of these recurrent difficulties, perhaps, in part because of them, Montana is the vigorous state that it is. We have learned many things from our turbulent history. And most important I think, we have learned how to roll with the process of change itself while holding on to what is enduring in our heritage and tradition.

This ability to recognize and to seize the opportunities presented by changing circumstances, to be guided by but not bound by the past, is a quality which in these times has great significance for the nation as a whole in its relations with the rest of the world.
For today, the United States functions in a world of change. Western Europe is changing rapidly and parts of the Communist world, apparently, are shaking loose from the hothouses of rigid dogma. That world, too, is undergoing change from Berlin to the Urals and beyond. Recent statements of Mr. Khrushchev suggest to his credit that he is convinced that there is dignity in responding to man's needs in peace and that it is to be preferred to mass death in ideological war. This awareness has not yet, apparently, penetrated the consciousness of the Chinese leaders. But the Chinese people, I am confident, understand that there is much to be said for a full life over nuclear death. The day may not be too distant when Chinese leadership will also have to accept what the Chinese people understand.

Among the Western nations there is also change from a heavy dependency on the United States to a greater independence. It is true that this independence sometimes seems to border on the fragmentation of Western unity. Yet it is a much healthier state of affairs than an apparent unity which would be held together only by an old cement patched up with a lavish use of American resources. In Africa, there is the transition to national independence on a continental scale. It is not an easy transition but it has begun and it will not be reversed.

And in the deadly nuclear confrontation between Russia and the United States there is the reality and the hope of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. No single achievement, may I say, meant more to our
late President than this Treaty and one of the most satisfying experiences of my years in public life was to help in securing its ratification by the Senate. The Agreement stopped what had threatened to become a callous disregard for the health of all people and their descendents in the name of science and security. And the potential of that first step in terms of further progress towards stability remains a principal resource for peace.

In this era of worldwide change there are both new dangers and new opportunities for the United States. We shall reduce the dangers and enhance the opportunities as we perceive the realities of the change. It is a wonderful thing to recreate the world of a century ago on a train bound for the New York World’s Fair. But it would be unfortunate if we mistook the re-creation for the current reality, if we let ourselves believe that this is really how we live today. It is just as unfortunate, in the affairs of the nation, to cling to the belief that the world of today remains the same as the world of fifteen or twenty years ago. It would be tragic, too, to assume that the policies of 1945, 1950 and even 1955 or 1960 suffice for the present era of international relations.

We have no difficulty in distinguishing between territorial Montana a century ago and Montana today. But sometimes there is difficulty in distinguishing between the world of 20 or 10 years ago
and what was adequate for our needs then and the world today and what is necessary if we are to live in it. It seems to me that the late President with his deep and sensitive human perception was fully aware of the worldwide changes which were taking place. He sought to bring the rest of the nation to a similar state of awareness. And in his first statement to the Congress, President Johnson called upon us "to continue" what President Kennedy had begun.

That, it seems to me, is the great task ahead. We must continue to examine and to re-examine and examine again every premise of policy on which we have operated for so many years. Some of these premises, I am sure, will remain as sound as they were on the day that they were conceived. Others will be found to have lost some of their significance or to have been bypassed by subsequent developments.

We will have to think hard, for example, about the possibility of increased commerce in peaceful goods, along the lines of the great wheat trades of this year. The legislation which made possible these trades was the last matter of policy on which President Kennedy communicated with me before his death. The trades, in effect, were made possible by the Congress after his death at the continued urging of President Johnson.

These trades have cut into our surpluses. They have brought a tangible return to us. And they have helped to take our great bounty of food out of the realm of international animosities and put it
where it should be—in the realm of international peace. Additional mutually advantageous trade along these lines may well serve as a modest instrument for advancing friendship among all peoples.

We will have to recognize now and in the years ahead that peace does not require all nations to goose-step to identical policies in order to live together in and to work together for peace. The nationalism and self-interest of many countries, no less than our own, sometimes requires them to take positions in world affairs which do not necessarily coincide with ours. And, in this connection, it is important to recognize that the effort to maintain or to achieve a position of independent neutrality by certain countries is not necessarily inconsistent with the long-range interests of the United States. After all, we have lived very well for decades with a neutral Sweden and a neutral Switzerland and, more recently, with a neutral Austria and an essentially neutral Finland. These nations are free and friendly even though their policies are not always aligned with ours. Our relations with them are excellent and mutually advantageous even though they are not allied, let alone subservient to our policies.

We will have to continue to revise our concepts of foreign aid. We have seen this program backfire in many places, notwithstanding its achievements in others. It may be that we will come to understand that aid however unavoidable it may be in our current policies, is still limited in its potential. It is not a cure-all for the ills and
inequities of the contemporary world. We may come to understand that the principal factor in the progress, peace and freedom of other nations is neither what we or the Russians do but what these nations do for themselves. It is not necessary to retreat into isolation in order to recognize that there are rational limits at any given time to the efficacy of international involvement. In the same pattern, it is also becoming clearer that international responsibility does not require us to be in the vanguard of every issue and crises which may arise. On the contrary, it is most desirable to share the burdens of international peace and progress through the United Nations and in other ways with as many nations possible.

Finally, I think there is hope for a continued slowdown in arms competition, largely as a result of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. The defense budget may not require, in the future, quite the enormous percentage—it is now upwards of 50 percent—of our federal expenditures. If this hope is realized, we may be able to act with greater determination and without a crippling burden of taxation, on the many problems which confront us at home. What is involved here is not only a war on poverty, as it has been called. There are immense and growing needs which are not being satisfactorily met in education, in recreation, in health, in the prevention of crime, in the whole range of public services. In short, as peace is reinforced, we should be in a better position to engage ourselves with vigor in a general effort to improve
the opportunity for a full and satisfying life for all the people of the nation.

The affairs of people halfway around the world may seem remote and unimportant to those who are lucky enough to live in the quiet and peace of our State. They may not appear to have much relevance on a happy train ride to New York. But they are of the utmost relevance. The international situation affects our opportunity to work, to plan and, in the end, even to live our lives in decency and in peace. We know, some of us with great personal sorrow, that events whose origins lay thousands of miles from our shores have reached repeatedly into Montana and called us forth to great international conflicts. As Montanans, as Americans, we have a duty and a responsibility to make sure that no opportunity is left unexamined in the search for a just and lasting peace.
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