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REMARKS OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA)

at the

National Conference of Christians and Jews

Hotel Robert Treat, Newark, New Jersey

Thursday, February 16, 1967

6:30 p.m.

BROTHERHOOD AND WORLD PEACE

We meet at a time when glimmers of peace in Viet Nam have appeared and, then, disappeared. The prospects for a prompt termination of the war have dissolved once again.

The effort to bring this conflict to an end, however, has not been futile. The words of peace are now sharper; their meanings are now clearer. The very fact that serious efforts to bring about peace do recur is evidence of the strength of the will for peace. It is evidence of a response to the prayers for peace which rise up from every religious faith and from all parts of the world.

The urge to peace in Viet Nam is as one with the purposes of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. This organization has stood for decades for civility and understanding among peoples of differing beliefs. It has also been, in a broader sense, a symbol of the search for universal brotherhood. That which is highest in man has long harbored the hope for a regathering of the fragmented human family. That which is

closest in man to what is fundamental in all faiths urges him to establish bonds of understanding among races, creeds, cultures and nations.

What blocks that understanding, in its simplest statement, is the reluctance to acknowledge for others the rights and respect which one demands for oneself. By the same token, at the bottom of the international instability of the past two decades, very often has been the same short-coming. The late President, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, observed that peace is "in the last analysis basically a matter of human rights." In October 1965, Pope Paul VI gave stress to this point when he visited the United Nations. He linked, as inseparable, respect for the dignity of the human person, brotherhood and world peace. A similar awareness of this trinity has led men of religion, whether leaders or laymen, to become involved in problems of the social condition of man--of the adequacy of the relationships among men and nations.

The search for equity and unity is also seen, on occasion, in the contemporary relations among nations. The same spirit which brought about the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty of 1963, for example, led representatives of sixty nations to gather at the White House on January 28 to sign a treaty barring military weapons from outer space. Earlier in the month, President Johnson reaffirmed the goal of building bridges between East and West. He had previously referred to this goal in these words: "Our task is to achieve a reconciliation with the East--a shift from the narrow concept of coexistence to the broader vision of peaceful engagement." Most recently, the President has urged the Congress to pass an East-West Trade bill during this session and to approve a consular convention with the Soviet Union.

Constructive indications of this kind, however, are still the exception in the over-all state of world affairs. The fact remains that no significant area of the world is yet free of the high walls of hostility built by prejudice, greed, fear, hatred and human indifference. No area is free of the instability which comes with the widespread existence of these and other ills of the social order.

The continent of Africa, for example, is in the grip of an epidemic of toppling regimes which is symptomatic of this instability. Regrettably, the symptoms come to light at a time of great social and economic upheaval. Africa is confronted with the simultaneous need for an adjustment of outdated colonial mentalities, for the wholesale transfer of human loyalties from the tribal all the way to the nation-state and for a reordering of a great range of ancient economic rigidities.

These constitute enormous challenges to African leadership and to the African people. They are challenges, moreover, which have to be met, even as the continent is plummeting into a rapidly unfolding future from an arrested and unchanged past. Regrettably, for Africans, there is little in the way of a definable present in which men and nations may work out at leisure a rationale for these new relationships. In consequence, years if not decades of instability loom ahead for Africa and ramifications of it will be felt throughout the rest of the world.

In the Middle East, there is not only an absence of a stable peace, as there long has been, but there is also a sharp rise in the level of instability. The most serious Arab-Israeli military clash of

recent years erupted just a few months ago. The lid of peace which was restored by the United Nations is, in my judgment, a most unreliable one. In no sense does it lessen the sources of unrest and provocation along the borders of Israel. Nor does it deal with the problem of the division of waters of the Jordan River and other major Arab-Israeli issues.

The tensions which plague the Middle East are not confined to the relations of Israel and the Arab states. In the Yemen, for example, a little known but atrocious war goes on grimly year after year. And, in Aden, tens of thousands of British forces are still required to maintain a curfewed order in what has long been a city of terror.

Of increasing concern, too, is the arms race among Middle Eastern nations. The concern is now intensified by the prospect of nuclear armaments gaining a foothold in the region. There is an obvious need to curb the competition from outside, particularly in the trade of sophisticated arms in the Middle East. I regret to say, however, that the area remains a fruitful one for the international arms peddlers. I regret to say, too, that along with the Soviet Union and other nations, we have been unable or unwilling to come to serious grips with this question.

The continent of Europe is, today, one of the more reassuring areas of the world. It is prosperous and free of imminent threats of conflict. Nevertheless the Europeans, too, have to face up to long overdue adjustments in their relationships. The concepts which are imbedded in both the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Warsaw Pact are in need of major modifications. The time is long past due, for example, for a reduction of military forces stationed beyond home borders in countries in both Eastern and Western Europe.

I should note in this connection that a joint group of the Senate Committees on Armed Services and Foreign Relations will consider a Resolution which calls for a substantial reduction of U.S. forces in Europe. This resolution which was introduced by me on behalf of 44 members of the Senate embodies, in my judgment, a most needed adjustment in our policies with respect to Europe.

There is one overriding reason for this resolution. Times have changed in Europe. Our policies on military deployment which have kept a million American defense personnel and dependents in Western Europe twenty years after World War II are out of date. The obvious fact is that economic and other friendly contact has steadily replaced the fear and hostility which previously characterized the relationship between Western and Eastern Europe. The likelihood, moreover, is for a continuance and speeding up of the thaw in the continental climate.

Looking to the south, Latin America remains in the throes of great change. Old social systems are crumbling. Profound political upheavals are taking place. Economic modernization is proceeding at an uneven but, in some instances, frenetic pace. The structures of many of the nations of this Hemisphere are evolving rapidly towards new but as yet undetermined forms.

In the end, it is to be hoped that this change will give substance to the ideals of intra-hemispheric cooperation as they are expressed in the Alliance for Progress. In the meantime, the people of Latin America remain divided by countless religious, ethnic, and other barriers, which block the development of an integrated stability.

However, the beginnings of significant improvement in the situation are to be found in many countries. In some, (as in Mexico from which I have just returned), it is more than just a beginning. Mexico is well on the way, in terms of broad and rapid national progress. It is in the vanguard in Latin America and is able even now to make a major contribution of inspiration and technology beyond its borders to the advance of other Latin American nations.

In Southern Asia, there remains the hostility between India and Pakistan. It is based in part on conflicting territorial claims over Kashmir, but perhaps more fundamentally it stems from old wounds and ancient communal fears. Throughout the world, the hope had been that the Tashkent Declaration which was negotiated by India and Pakistan, with Soviet intercession would lead to genuine reconciliation. Yet the first anniversary of that declaration passed, only weeks ago, not with an assured peace but with a new exchange of bitter recriminations. It is apparent that there has been no basic easing of tensions. The Soviet Union, having, so to speak, taken over the Kashmir question from the United Nations by its initiative at Tashkent last year has a continuing responsibility to try to resolve the difficulty before it flares, once again, into open conflict.

I suppose it is a good deal less painful to consider the problems which confront other nations than to examine those which face this nation. Nevertheless, we owe it to ourselves to look honestly at our own situation. I must say, in all frankness, that the situation at home gives cause for sober concern and at the core of the concern is Viet Nam.

Viet Nam is a symbol of man's failure to deal with war itself-- which, in these times, is the fundamental challenge to civilized survival. President Johnson, at a recent press conference, expressed this thought in a most poignant and personal way when he said: "I go to bed every night feeling that I failed that day because I could not end the conflict in Viet Nam."

Viet Nam is not, of course, the President's personal failure. Rather, it is the failure of all of us. It is the failure of this government and of the others that are locked in the struggle in Viet Nam. It is the failure of the Soviet Union and of China. In the end, Viet Nam is the failure of the United Nations because all governments and all people have a vital stake in the restoration of peace in Viet Nam.

The failure in Viet Nam, of which the President speaks, is a tragic failure. Hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese men, women and children, who are the homeless refugees or accidental casualties of this war, bear testimony to that failure. The Americans who have been maimed in Viet Nam, the families and friends of those who have died in Viet Nam know the price of that failure.

In a stark fashion, Viet Nam dramatizes the gap between the reality and the ideal of world brotherhood. It is not only in Viet Nam that this gap persists. Within this nation it also has existed between the ideal of American life and the great accumulation of neglected problems of social order. This gap threatened and still threatens the stability of American society, particularly in its great urban centers.

During 1966, the nation was pockmarked by outbursts of severe and violent riots in Chicago, in Cleveland, in San Francisco, in Atlanta, in Oakland. Indeed, few major cities have been spared these hideous convulsions.

In Congressional action during the past few years we have made a beginning in trying to deal with long neglected social problems. Efforts have been made and will be made to strengthen the quality as well as the quantity of available police power; to make more just, as well as to make more certain, the enforcement of law.

And many measures have also been passed in an effort to build greater stability into the nation by helping the poor, the bewildered and the alienated of the land. There comes readily to mind the National Teachers Corps to serve in poverty-stricken areas, the voting rights and other laws to bring greater equity of treatment to all races, the city demonstration program, aid to Appalachia, the Manpower Development and Training Act, and the Medicare program.

These and many other social laws enacted by the recent Congresses have been the acts of sensible political leadership and alert government. But they are also something more. They are acts out of America's conscience. They are long-postponed essential services to the well-being of all Americans and to the future of this nation. Whatever shortcomings or excesses are revealed by experience--and I know there will be some--they can and will be corrected. The legislative basis of the nation's social structure will be improved; it will be strengthened.

In the end, ~~however~~-I am confident that this great body of legislation will help to make the United States a place in which all people regardless of individual differences can find a dignified and livable setting for their lives. That is a goal which expresses the ideal of American life but it is also a goal which will strike a responsive cord in every other enlightened nation. Indeed, it is a goal which can be pursued in common with them for the benefit of all the world's people.

However broad this concept, the beginnings lie with each of us. By what we do and by what we leave undone, each human being has an effect on history. Each human being makes a difference, and each is responsible for the difference that he makes. In that vein the many individuals who over the years have joined their efforts in the Conference of Christians and Jews have made a difference in this nation--a constructive difference. In so doing, they have made a difference--a constructive difference--in this nation's relations with other nations. I salute you for what you have done and for what you will yet do, for brotherhood, for this nation and for peace.