

University of Montana

ScholarWorks at University of Montana

Mike Mansfield Speeches, Statements and Interviews

Mike Mansfield Papers

7-11-1967

Congressional Record S. 9353 - Vietnam

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mansfield_speeches

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Mansfield, Mike 1903-2001, "Congressional Record S. 9353 - Vietnam" (1967). *Mike Mansfield Speeches, Statements and Interviews*. 657.

https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mansfield_speeches/657

This Speech is brought to you for free and open access by the Mike Mansfield Papers at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Mike Mansfield Speeches, Statements and Interviews by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.

VIETNAM

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, yesterday a thoughtful, considered speech was made by our colleague, the distinguished Senator from New Jersey [Mr. CASE]. The subject was Vietnam. One does not have to agree with every thought contained in that speech to recognize it as constructive and helpful. It showed a facing up to the realities in the situation in that unhappy country. It was the work of a concerned, responsible American carrying out his responsibilities as an elected Member of the Senate. It was an expression of an effort to be helpful to our country by advancing ways and means which might provide a way around the impasse in which we find ourselves in Vietnam.

Our distinguished colleague from New Jersey [Mr. CASE] is to be commended for the sense of sober responsibility which he has shown. I would hope that what I have to say will be useful in the same sense.

The most difficult subject to talk on today is the question of Vietnam. Regardless of how one feels about it, it is an issue which is in the mind of everyone. It is an issue which overshadows all else.

For several weeks, events in the Middle East have held the attention of this Nation and the United Nations. It is not surprising that interest in the situation there is high. What transpires at the crossroads of Asia, Europe, and Africa has long been of many-sided concern to the world.

It is time to note, however, that for the most part the guns are silent in Sinai and along the other frontiers of Israel. All the while, though, they continue to shatter the stillness at the 17th parallel in Vietnam. Even as the last of the fallen from the recent desert war are counted, the dead continue to pile up in Vietnam. If the plight of the refugees from less than a week of conflict in the Middle East weighs heavily on the human conscience, what is to be said of the immense accumulation of the uprooted and homeless after years of war in Vietnam?

It does not minimize the recent clash in the Middle East to point out that a reasonably effective cease-fire has been achieved and the central concern is now the design of a peace which will inhibit another outbreak of war. That is a far cry from the situation in Vietnam. In that tortured nation, the beginnings of the beginning of peace are not yet in sight. There is not even a glimmer of the end.

To be sure there is a continuing danger of a third world war emerging from the local war in the Middle East. The birth of a conflict among the great powers will remain a possibility in the absence of a durable settlement among the small powers of that region. Who will say, however, that a third world war is not already incubating in the ever-deepening and expanding struggle in Southeast Asia?

It seems to me that whatever the angle from which these two situations are viewed, Vietnam remains the most serious disruption in the well-being of this Nation and it constitutes for the United

Nations, the most urgent threat of a third world war. That appears to me to be the reality and it would be well to keep in touch with it.

The need is especially acute at this time when, once again, we are apparently approaching a fork in the road in Vietnam. The harbingers of significant decision have emerged in the form of obscure "official" rumblings, rumors, and revelations concerning Vietnam. The search, it is said, is being renewed for a "more effective and extensive" use of airpower against North Vietnam which, may I say, is probably another way of asking why Hanoi and Haiphong are not bombed into extinction. There is talk of again lifting the American manpower commitment in Vietnam—not much, it is said, just another 100,000 or 2 in the next few months—to add to the more than half million or more men presently engaged in and around Southeast Asia. Ironically, this talk of the need for more men comes at a time when it is revealed that only one-sixth or one-seventh of the U.S. troops already in Vietnam are actually involved in combat.

The inference of these rumblings, rumors, and revelations is that one further step in military escalation will carry us over the top. The implication is that one additional reach of American military power deeper into Southeast Asia will bring the sun of final victory out from behind the restraining clouds.

And once again, Mr. President, the Secretary of Defense has gone to Saigon to make a firsthand evaluation of the situation. According to the press he has heard and accepted the most encouraging reports of "progress" toward our "objectives" in Vietnam. While I do not in any sense question the accuracy or the objectivity of the evaluations which he has received, it must be asked in all frankness what is meant by "progress" toward our "objectives" in the context of the present situation in Vietnam? In all frankness, it must be said that these generalizations of progress would be more reassuring if they had not been heard from American leaders in Vietnam at many other times, stretching years into the past. Indeed, I know of no American leader, military or civilian, in Vietnam during the past decade or more who has contended that we were doing anything else except making "progress" toward our "objectives."

The fact is that reports of progress are strewn, like burned out tanks, all along the road which has led this Nation ever more deeply into Vietnam and southeast Asia during the past decade and a half.

They were present when the sole function of American military personnel in Vietnam was that of aid suppliers to the French-commanded Vietnamese loyalist forces. They were present when our military functions in Vietnam evolved into that of trainers and advisers of the South Vietnamese forces, to that of air transporters and supporters, to that of combat bulwarks and, finally, to that of combat substitutes for the South Vietnamese forces.

The generalization on progress, in short, is the ever-present beat which is to be heard throughout the transition of the American military role from the most

remote and invisible rear to the most forward and conspicuous front of the Vietnamese war. It has been present, this promise of progress, as the casualties in our forces in dead and wounded have increased from less than 10 a year, to 10 a month, to 10 a week, to 10 a day, to 10 an hour of every hour of every day. It has been present as the estimated expenditures of the Federal Government for Vietnam have increased from a few hundred million a year, to \$2 billion, to \$12 billion, to the current level of probably not less than \$25 billion a year.

May I say that I have remarked on these overlooked and negative aspects of the Vietnamese situation, not in criticism of our leaders in Vietnam or of the Secretary of Defense, or the President. These men have carried the immense responsibilities of the war with integrity and personal dedication. I have raised them, rather, in the hope of introducing a measure of historic perspective into the consideration of the question of Vietnam as we approach, apparently, another point of significant decision. And may I add that there are other aspects of the question which should be raised in order that the problem of Vietnam may be also seen in the full scope of its worldwide ramifications.

Yes, Mr. President, we can put another 100,000 men into Vietnam or, I suppose, 200,000 or even more; there are a lot of young Americans, even though the supply is not unlimited. Yes, we can mine the harbor of Haiphong as we have already mined the rivers of North Vietnam; we have most effective mines and the best sowing techniques. Yes, we can level the city of Hanoi as we have leveled its power plants; we have the ordnance, as the circumlocution for bombs now puts it.

It is to be hoped, however, that before we embark on this course of expansion toward total war in Vietnam, we will pause for a long and sober think. Before we take another significant step deeper into Vietnam, it is to be hoped that we will have asked ourselves at what point we intend to increase taxes, apply the wage and price controls, tighten the draft exemptions, call up the Reserves, and make the countless other adjustments in our national life which are implicit in further extensions of the American involvement.

It is to be hoped that we will have asked ourselves, too, Mr. President, at what point in this ever-increasing infusion of American men and power into South Vietnam we reduce the present Vietnamese politico-military structure which is based on Saigon to a final irrelevancy.

It is to be hoped that we will have asked ourselves what indiscriminate bombing in North Vietnam may have in common with any objectives of the United States anywhere in Vietnam or Southeast Asia. It is to be hoped that we will have asked ourselves what interests of the Vietnamese people—in whose interests we were prompted to go into Vietnam in the first place—will be served by the bombing of combatant and non-combatant, in Hanoi and Haiphong?

And it is to be hoped that we will have asked ourselves about the next step

beyond the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong if that, too, should fail, as every other escalation to date has failed to bring this conflict to a conclusion.

We have the power, Mr. President, to bomb the Vietnamese back into the Stone Age. And if that power is unsheathed once in error, we had better be prepared to move back into the caves, along with the Vietnamese, and the rest of the world.

It is to be hoped that before plunging deeper we will have asked ourselves at what point that which began as limited U.S. aid to the South Vietnamese military becomes wholly an American war against all Vietnam, becomes a war in Korea, becomes a war in the Formosan Straits, becomes a war with China. And while we are asking we had better ask ourselves, finally, at what point in this ever-widening compass of conflict—at what point along the road to World War III—the Sino-Soviet breach is finally healed? And, thereafter, at what point a new eruption occurs at Berlin or some other pressure point of potential universal conflict?

These are questions, Mr. President, which General Westmoreland and Ambassador Bunker are not equipped and ought not to be required to answer from Vietnam. They are questions which Secretary McNamara ought not to be expected to answer on the basis of a visit to Saigon. Yet, they are questions of great relevance, along with reports of "progress" toward our "objectives," in any decisions involving Vietnam. They are questions for all of us.

Quite apart from the answers, may I say, the very pertinence of the questions suggests to me the need for the greatest restraint in any further increases in the American involvement in South Vietnam or in any expansion of that conflict beyond its present geographic dimensions. Indeed, the very pertinence of these questions urges a renewed effort to reduce the present level of American involvement. In this connection, I would refer once again to the recent proposal of the Senator from Kentucky [Mr. COOPER] to limit bombing in the north to areas of immediate relevance to the infiltration of supplies and men across the 17th parallel into the south. I would refer once again to the proposal to concentrate a military effort on the construction of a defensive barrier just south of the demilitarized zone at the 17th parallel across Laos to the border of Thailand which can be held by South Vietnamese forces. And I would refer once again to the suggestion that this Nation move to have the U.N. Security Council regard the situation in Vietnam at least with the equivalent concern which it shows for the Middle East. We owe it to the Americans whom we have sent to Vietnam, to ourselves, to the Vietnamese, and to the world, to try to bring about a face-to-face confrontation of all involved in Vietnam at the U.N. Security Council.

We need to continue this initiative, based on the U.S. resolution before the U.N. Security Council since January 1966, so that the world may know what kind of peace is sought and by whom. We need to continue this initiative in order

that no stone may be left unturned in the effort to bring about a cease-fire and honorable settlement of this ugly war.

We cannot and should not withdraw. We should not and, I hope, will not enlarge the war in Vietnam against the north. The most important question which confronts this Nation at this point is not the Middle East. It is not domestic policies. It is the situation in Vietnam. That will continue to be the case and all else will be subordinate until this conflict can be ended in a fashion which preserves the integrity of political choice of the people of South Vietnam.

Mr. AIKEN. Mr. President, will the Senator yield?

Mr. MANSFIELD. I yield.

Mr. AIKEN. Mr. President, I have listened very carefully, but without any great degree of optimism, to the remarks of the majority leader of the Senate.

It is unfortunate, Mr. President, that the advice of the majority leader has not been accepted by the administration to the same degree as the advice of certain military leaders who have far more knowledge of weapons than they have of people.

I have no particular use for Monday morning quarterbacking, although I recognize there is a great opportunity for their talents in consideration of the situation in Vietnam. I am getting letters now from people who once thought that a short foray into North Vietnam by our planes would bring the war to an early close. Their excuse for not winning the war is that it has not been wide enough, it has not been intense enough, and now they go so far as to say we should, if necessary, destroy all of North Vietnam's resources. What they apparently mean is that we should use the atom bomb.

I do not know whether they have thought through well enough the effect of such action; whether they have considered that our position in history, if we used the atom bomb in North Vietnam, would be more glorious or not, assuming that history is permitted to continue—and it can be destroyed. But I do hope that they are considering the cost. When you talk of dollars and cents, they really understand that.

I suppose Secretary McNamara will be back very shortly from his trip to South Vietnam. I expect that he will recommend intensification and probably some increase in armed services personnel in that part of the world. But before expanding—whether he recommends expansion or not—we should consider whether we are willing to pay the cost.

Senator MANSFIELD and I were told by the highest military authorities what we have in Vietnam, that it takes 10 regulars to cope with one guerrilla. I do not know how much of the opposition over there is in organized units and how much is in the form of guerrillas. I think it is safe to say there are 50,000 or 100,000 who would qualify as guerrillas still operating in Vietnam. Multiply that by 10 and you find that no insignificant number of our forces can cope with them. Even half a million cannot cope with them. Probably a million might be able to control the situation and restore a semblance of order in South Vietnam itself.

We hear that the administration now

says we must have a tax increase to meet these additional costs. They have already moved around figures relating to the financial condition of our Government until they really cannot move any further without a tax increase. They talk about a 6-percent increase. More recently we heard it might go to 10 percent. People who know Government financing say it will require an 18- to 20-percent surtax on the income taxes of this country to meet the additional costs which have been incurred over in Southeastern Asia.

I would like to ask these people who are so free with their advice as to what we should do over there, and who suggest exterminating North Vietnam, whether they would be willing to impose the additional taxes needed, whether they would be willing to remove their own tax benefits, particularly those who are making untold millions of dollars out of furnishing supplies and operations for our wars. Are they willing to have wage and price controls imposed, which, if we are to have an increase in the war effort, must come?

They talk about inflation, about only a 2- to 3-percent inflation over the past year or so, or maybe 3 or 4 percent. The inflation has come in the things which the people have to have, and the only reason why the percentage is held down is that included in that estimate of the inflationary gain—or loss, I would call it—are all the things they do not have to have. But if you are sick today, if you have a child needing an education, if you need a home, you will find the cost has gone up 20 percent, rather than 2 percent, the last year or so.

I have no advice to give the administration. They would not take it if I gave it. So what is the use of wasting my breath?

I do not think it was a smart move that we made in Africa. I was very much interested that on this floor statements were made in which they got good advice from people far better advised in military tactics than I am. I hope they will use reason.

I would like to see someone in our Government admit making a mistake. It would make him a big person. I have often thought that anyone in a high position in Government ought to make one mistake so he can admit it and gain or regain the respect of the people.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator from Vermont for his frankness as well as his kind remarks.

May I express the hope that we will continue to ask ourselves questions, be aware of the potentials and the possibilities involved in that area of the world, and compare them with our own vital interests.

Mr. SYMINGTON. Mr. President, will the Senator yield?

Mr. MANSFIELD. I am delighted to yield to the distinguished Senator from Missouri.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we may proceed for an additional 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SYMINGTON. Mr. President, I respectfully commend the able senior

Senator from Montana, our majority leader, for his thought-provoking talk this morning. With most of it I agree; with some I do not.

It is unfortunate to hear the casual way people often discuss indiscriminate bombing. The concept of air power, as recommended, is against meaningful military targets only, and does not involve destruction of towns. The basic idea behind those who believe in Air Force and naval air is that the more artillery and guns destroyed by the Air Force and the Navy in North Vietnam, the fewer Americans will be killed in South Vietnam.

I was saddened to hear the Senator from Vermont, in discussing this matter a few moments ago, talk about the fact people who do not believe in turning this entire war over to ground forces could be people who want to drop the atom bomb in Vietnam. I have heard no military man, at any time, recommend the dropping of the atom bomb in this Vietnamese war.

What we are becoming steadily more involved in today is a major ground war in Asia. If we would utilize—on military targets only—our airpower and seapower, we would have far better results than we are having, or would have if we turned the entire war over to ground forces.

Nobody has greater respect for the Army and Marine Corps than I. On the other hand, it has been proved by the history of past wars that have been successful—far more successful than any results we have achieved to date in Vietnam—that a team of land, sea, and air is far more effective in modern engagement than employing ground forces alone.

Let those who apparently have no faith in airpower, used only on military targets, bear with me in the telling of just one story.

In December 1965, at a U.S. base, a bird colonel said to me, "I am a Regular, proud to fight for my country. But I don't see why I do it under all these restrictions. Several times a week I fly in a multimillion-dollar airplane, in order to bomb an empty barracks or an empty bus."

One year later, I was back at that same base, and asked, "How is my friend Colonel Nelson? Has he gone home, or is he still here?"

The reply was, "No, he got his on his 77th mission, attacking one truck."

It is unfortunate that some people do not realize, if you attack, say, a powerplant in North Vietnam, the casualties to the North Vietnamese would be very few—probably not more than a half dozen people.

Anyone who understands a powerplant operation knows that to be true. But the attack might save many American lives in South Vietnam.

On the other hand, for a great many months, pilots of the Navy and Air Force have been allowed to conduct armed reconnaissance. They can go up a road where a bus is moving and destroy it. They have no idea, of course, whether in that bus are soldiers or schoolchildren.

Rules and regulations governing the action of a single pilot in a single-engine

airplane have run as long as seven pages listing what he cannot do. The whole concept of the proper utilization of airpower and seapower, at times, I am sure, inadvertently, is being misstated and becoming misty. We are getting away from any team concept of land, sea, and air, and asking the ground forces to do it all. Mr. President, as stated before, no one has greater respect for the Army and Marine Corps than I, but even if we had a million men in South Vietnam, instead of the half million we approximate today, we would get no further than we have pursuing these unfortunate policies. The trouble is not in North Vietnam; the trouble is primarily with the people in South Vietnam.

Therefore, Mr. President, I hope we do not make this war from here out only a major ground war on the mainland of Asia, which the great military—such as Marshall and MacArthur—have warned against during all this century. It would be far more logical with that premise, to turn it all over to the South Vietnamese Army, not the U.S. Army. But what I do not understand is why anybody would think the poor South Vietnamese would fight any better behind this proposed Maginot line below the demilitarized zone than they have in the rest of their country.

Why not face it? From here out it is the American forces that must do a steadily increasing amount of the fighting if the present South Vietnam Government is to survive.

I thank my beloved friend, the majority leader, for yielding.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator from Missouri for his frank remarks, to which I have listened with interest. It is evident that there are some matters upon which we disagree, but that is one of the strengths of a democracy, and one of the strengths of the Senate, as I see it, as an institution.

I may some day go into further detail about this barrier below the 17th parallel, because I certainly am in disagreement, to put it mildly, with the thesis advanced by the Senator from Missouri this morning. But it gives us something to think about.

Mr. SYMINGTON. Mr. President, I would only say that perhaps there are things about this proposed barrier which the Senator from Montana knows that I do not know.

For 15 years I have been a member of the Committee on Armed Services; and for many years a member of the Committee on Foreign Relations. There has been no testimony before either committee with respect to any such "barrier." All I know about it is what I read in the newspapers. One gets a bit tired of obtaining military information from the newspapers instead of even in executive sessions with the proper persons from the Department of Defense and State as witnesses.

I know the able majority leader agrees with me on that, and am glad that on many other subjects, such as reduction of our troops in Europe, we are together. It is always a privilege to be together with him in any matter.

Mr. MANSFIELD. I may say to the

Senator from Missouri that my information comes only from the public prints; I have no inside "dope."

ONE MAN, ONE VOTE NEEDED FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS

Mr. BAKER. Mr. President, especially since the Senate began to consider legislation affecting congressional redistricting, there has been an outpouring of popular sentiment in support of the principle that each man's vote should count as much as the next man's in elections of U.S. Representatives.

The Federal Constitution, good judgment and equity require that any Federal legislation affecting congressional redistricting should strengthen rather than impede the enforcement of this important principle.

Two recent editorials, one published in the New York Times, the other in the Knoxville News-Sentinel, have been particularly timely and thoughtful.

The Times editorial, published today, makes the important point that the Senate's strict prohibition against the discredited practice of gerrymandering is an essential part of the Senate version of the bill and should be retained in the conference report. I thoroughly agree.

The editorial in the News-Sentinel develops in more detail how malapportionment and gerrymandering have in the past denied many American citizens fair representation in the U.S. Congress.

I ask unanimous consent that both of these excellent editorials be printed in the Record.

There being no objection, the editorials were ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

[From the New York Times, July 11, 1967]

BAN THE GERRYMANDER

Any compromise on the Congressional redistricting bill reached by the House-Senate conference committee should retain the provision against gerrymandering contained in the original measure passed by the upper house. Senator Ervin's reported desire to knock it out and leave this aspect of the problem to the discretion of the states is in effect an invitation to continue an old and dishonored practice.

The bill will be bad enough if it permits a 20 to 30 per cent variation between the smallest and largest districts in a state until the election of 1972, but it will be far worse if it omits the Senate requirement that districts be compact. Gerrymandering is a notorious, discredited device to perpetuate the party in power; and it will be a disgrace if Congress now sanctions it by silence.

[From the Knoxville (News-Sentinel), June 11, 1967]

CORRECTION BY THE SENATE

Under a principle established by the Supreme Court in recent years, the voters are entitled to representation in both houses of their legislatures on a "one-man-one-vote" basis.

There is good ground for dissent from this ruling, especially on the question of the state voters having a right to choose their own system.

But there is no ground for deviation from this rule when it comes to electing members of the United States House of Representatives. Under the Constitution, the House is to be chosen on a population basis.

In the past gerrymandering and neglect consistently have violated this principle. In Oklahoma, for instance, the population of