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Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL SHOULD TURN ITS ATTENTION TO VIETNAM

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, it is cause for deep concern that the U.N. Security Council has not turned its attention to the situation in Vietnam. According to the United Nations Charter, the Security Council has "primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security." Yet for many months now, while hostilities in Vietnam have steadily intensified, the Security Council has remained aloof from a conflict that is unquestionably the greatest threat to international peace and security today.

Mr. President, I fully agree with those distinguished Members who believe that Security Council action on Vietnam is long overdue, and that an initiative by the U.S. Government on this urgent matter would be highly desirable. A U.S. resolution on Vietnam has been on the agenda of the Security Council since early 1966. There is nothing to prevent a motion by the United States or any other Security Council member that this resolution be taken up; there is no obstacle to insistence by the United States that such a motion be voted; and there can be no looming veto if there should be a favorable vote, for such a motion would be procedural.

It is of utmost importance that we explore every possible means of bringing about an honorable settlement in Vietnam. It is equally essential that we not cease to make clear our willingness to exploit all available public and private forums to this end. In my judgment, we have not thus far adequately tapped the resources of the United Nations. An initiative by the United States to revive its resolution or by some other Security Council member to offer one of its own would hopefully lead the Security Council to assume its responsibilities in the vital matter of Vietnam.

Mr. President, I have had the privilege of serving as a member of the U.S. delegation to the United Nations. I have no illusions that the United Nations Security Council or any other organ of the United Nations can bring about a rapid settlement of the tangled issues in the tragic Vietnam conflict. I do know, however, that the Security Council with its small but varied membership, provides a good forum for the airing of issues, for the clarification of the positions of the parties, and for the mobilization of world concern. I know also, that there is no procedural obstacle to inviting all the parties to a conflict, whether they be U.N. members or not, whether they be belligerent groups of governments, to participate in Security Council deliberations.

Most important, I know on the basis of experience that only a small part of the deliberations and exchanges of view and searchings for compromise at the United Nations takes place in the glare of the television lights. When the Security Council becomes seized of a vital issue, the diplomatic community of the world is mobilized, not only in the Council chamber but also in the corridors and offices of the United Nations and of member missions to the United Nations.

Mr. President, it is time we took steps to mobilize the diplomatic community of the world on the subject of Vietnam. I am in full accord with the view that the United States should act now to bring a conflict fraught with dangers for all the nations of the world before the Security Council.

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

Mr. MANSFIELD. I yield.

Mr. AIKEN. The United States should insist that the Vietnam war situation be brought before the Security Council of the United Nations.

We should not hold back action because we fear that France or Russia
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Mr. MANSFIELD. I yield to the Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. COOPER. Mr. President, I rise to support the position of the majority leader of the Senate, a position he has taken for many years, and which I have emphasized more recently in recent weeks.

The submission of the issue of the war in Vietnam to the United Nations and its acceptance of jurisdiction would be a blessing, a blessing to the people of Vietnam and to the people of the United States who have borne so long the responsibility of establishing the rule of law in Vietnam.

It is argued by some that the submission of the issue of Vietnam to the Security Council would be of no avail; that jurisdiction would not be accepted by the Security Council; or that its recommendations would be vetoed or that they would not be accepted. This argument of failure is no argument against the duty of our country to submit the issue and the responsibility of the members of the Security Council to work for a peaceful and just settlement of the war.

The war in Vietnam, which our country did not desire and which it has sought to settle by negotiation, has reached, in the terms of the charter, a stage at which the consequences of which endanger international peace and security.

The United States has no interest in Vietnam that is not shared by all other members of the United Nations who genuinely seek peace and the rule of law.

The United States has recourse to the General Assembly under which it has established peacekeeping operations in several critical situations.

The United States, more than any other great power, seeks for the United Nations with its resources and the sacrifice of its men in peacekeeping operations.

We recall in 1956 and 1957, conscious as it was of strong ties with Great Britain and Israel, and at that time with France, the United States stood against them in support of the United Nations and in opposition to the use of force in the settlement of disputes.

The situation on Vietnam is increasingly dangerous. The fragile system of international law and order is increasingly shaken.

It is in the interest of the United States, the United Nations, and the people of our county, to submit this issue to the Security Council of the United Nations.

Mr. MANSFIELD. I thank the Senator.

Mr. SPARKMAN. Mr. President, will the Senator yield?
Mr. MANSFIELD. I yield.

Mr. SPARKMAN. Mr. President, I wish to join in expressing the wish that the Security Council take under consideration the situation in Vietnam, as it has been advanced by the majority leader and my colleagues in the Senate who have spoken to that point. I have expressed my views on this matter before. I have always felt that there should be some kind of international consideration, and that the Security Council is perhaps the best agency for that purpose. The entire framework of the United Nations, including the General Assembly and the Security Council, was set up with the idea of helping to maintain peace throughout the world. Certainly this agency should be called upon to help bring peace to Vietnam.

I agree with the statement of the Senator from Kentucky [Mr. Cooper] that the Vietnam situation is dangerous. Any war is dangerous, and it is for that purpose that the United Nations was organized. In order that there might be quick action, the Security Council was given a particularly definite and strong place in the keeping of the peace.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this matter be brought up.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this matter be permitted to proceed for another 10 minutes.

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

Mr. SPARKMAN. Mr. President, I have supported our policy in South Vietnam, and I still support it. Our objective has been to assist the South Vietnamese in their struggle against aggression. I believe we were to press for a vote on our resolution. Should a veto actually be cast, either by the Soviet Union or by France, then, of course, there is the resolution for these procedures which might take the matter to the General Assembly.

The time of the Senator from Montana has expired.

Mr. CHURCH. Mr. President, if we were to press for a vote on our resolution, there is the possibility for action in the Security Council, if we were to press for a vote on our resolution. Should a veto actually be cast, either by the Soviet Union or by the Vietnamese, there is the resolution for these procedures which might take the matter to the General Assembly.

In any case, I think we must not be foreclosed in discussing this question to the negotiating table. There is the possibility for action in the Security Council, if we were to press for a vote on our resolution. Should a veto actually be cast, either by the Soviet Union or by France, then, of course, there is the resolution for these procedures which might take the matter to the General Assembly.

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The present greatest threat to world peace is the struggle in Vietnam. The United Nations is the sole forum where the entire question may be aired and not utilized in the search for a way out. I refer, of course, to the Security Council of the United Nations.

Mr. ALLOTT. Mr. President, I join the distinguished majority leader and other Members of the Senate this morning who have urged this course of action—and I recommend it strongly to the President of the United States.

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The tragic irony of the situation is that more than a year ago, in late January of 1966, the United States managed
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U.N. authorities, peacekeeping forces and observer groups, some authorized by the Security Council and others by the General Assembly, have successfully performed some of the functions which could have application in Vietnam. These include the separation of opposing forces, facilitating their withdrawal from a border, observing and reporting on border violations, maintaining internal order, and supervising the conduct of elections. The many techniques of peaceful settlement mentioned in chapter VI of the charter include arbitration and mediation, both of which are specifically mentioned in the U.S. draft resolution of January 31, 1966.

If the Security Council should summon a meeting of all relevant parties to discuss the situation in Vietnam, there is of course no absolute assurance that the Council, with all it influence, would succeed in ending hostilities and restoring peace. But at least, Mr. President, a clearer understanding of the respective positions of the interested parties, a reassessment of the purposes of the United Nations with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security would at least have an effort to carry out its grave responsibilities.

On a matter so vital to hopes for a peaceful world, Mr. President, I believe our Government should make a clear statement to the United Nations that we are fully committed to exploring every feasible avenue in the search for peace. As a former U.S. delegate to the U.N., I urge this initiative.

Mr. MANSFIELD. I thank the Senator. I yield now to the Senator from Michigan [Mr. Hart].

Mr. HART. Mr. President, I consider it both a responsibility and a privilege to take part in this significant discussion here today, for I have been and am deeply convinced of the need to utilize the full potential of the United Nations Security Council to obtain honorable and lasting peace in Vietnam. And I am proud to associate myself with the efforts of the distinguished majority leader [Mr. Mansfield] to support the Senate from Vermont [Mr. Morse], and other Senators who have long championed this important initiative.

As the Security Council under the U.N. Charter has more than adequate power and authority to aid in solving the Vietnam problem. There are many approaches which the Council might follow, including direct actions by the Council or indirect approaches calling on other bodies to act. This is not the place to advocate the proper course of action for the Council to take, but it may be useful to suggest some of the many possibilities open to it. As the Security Council Resolution introduced on January 31, 1966, by Ambassador Goldberg states, the Council could call for "immediate discussions of the conditions to arrange a conference looking toward the realization of the Geneva Accords of 1954 and 1962 and the establishment of a durable peace in Southeast Asia." As a first step, it might consider a separation of army units under effective supervision, as the U.S. resolution states.

In my view, the time is ripe for a renewal of this initiative, and the Security Council might place it high on the agenda of the Security Council.

Mr. MOORE, Mr. President, the majority leader honors me by yielding to me the floor to the Senator from Montana [Mr. Mansfield], for his signatures carried a pledge that when there was a threat to the peace anywhere in the world, they would join in a united action to achieve the peace. That is the idea which every signature to the charter has, and each is derelict to its responsibility under its signature in not carrying out multilateral action in trying to stop an end and this threat to the peace of the world.

In my opinion, the United States cannot bring about peace to the world on a bilateral negotiated basis. I think it is hopeless. We can bring about a truce; we can kill and injure enough people to force a surrender. That will not bring peace. It only means that for decades to come we will continue to sacrifice hundreds of thousands of Americans in Vietnam.

I am sure I am not violating any confidence in saying that on May 1 and May 3 the Senator from Oregon and the Senator from Montana had conversations with the President and his foreign policy advisers as we pressed on that group to submit this matter for final determination. I want to make that comment because the President of the United States is being unfairly criticized in many quarters. The President of the United States has tried, and he has continued to try, to find a way to settle this dispute. I do not mean to imply that the President agrees with my
position or the position of the Senator from Texas, but it should be opened up about it. That is why he asked to consult with us. He is openminded about it.

We ourselves need to press before the United Nations another type of resolution than the United States has submitted, for we have yet to send a resolution that deals with the substantive issues that have been prepared legal memorandums with regard to our relations vis-a-vis Asia. In these memorandums I pointed out that we have to submit a resolution in which we propose a means of dealing with Vietnam. I have urged that we pledge to abide by whatever final resolution the U.N. may adopt. That we have not done. The only resolution we have sent to the United Nations is one in which we asked the Security Council to put it on its agenda. That is where it is going to stay until the United States fulfills its complete commitment—namely, asking the Security Council to take jurisdiction and pledging that we will abide by the result. That is what we mean by the substitution of international law for the law of the jungle. It means that if the Security Council takes jurisdiction and says we must cease the bombing, that we cease the bombing; or if it says we must draw lines we can defend, then we must draw lines we can defend; or if it says, “Take your troops home,” then we must take them home.

We are either going to be a party to the substitution of the law of the world as we find it in international law doctrine, or we are going to continue to alienate and isolate ourselves from the world, because we are substituting the jungle law of military might. We are seeking to shift the rule of law with American military domination.

So I think it is highly important that we submit such a resolution. I have said this so many times during the last 4 years, but I say it once again, because it needs to be said, because the people must understand that we are not going to be able to establish peace on any basis of a unilateral policeman’s rule.

More than that, I think we wish to make perfectly clear that if the Security Council does veto such a resolution, then our President will appeal to the world through the General Assembly of the United Nations. Read the charter again, I have pleaded for years that we establish the precedent whereby we ask for a session of the General Assembly to enforce peace in Southeast Asia. I am sorry that precedent was established by Russia in connection with the Middle East. We should have established it 3 years ago in connection with Southeast Asia.

But, Mr. President, that power exists. You know what I think would happen if we went to the General Assembly, and offered to abide by the jurisdiction of the United Nations? I think we would get a minimum of 89 votes in the General Assembly.

One of the reasons we need to follow this course of action is that the nations of the world do not like to counteraccuse the United States. We are the most powerful Nation on earth. In fact, we give foreign aid to more than 90 of them. It is a little difficult to get countries to go against us when they are also recipients of our aid.

But we owe just this to the next generation, and the next, and the next, of American boys and girls. As public officers, we ought to think beyond the next election and in terms of the next century. If we are to lay a foundation for the peace of the world for centuries to come, then we must stop this unilateral course of action we are following in Southeast Asia, which, in my judgment, day by day moves us closer to the danger of the massive war involving Red China, and ultimately involving Russia.

So I plead again for support for the majority leader, and for support for the President, because I think if once it becomes understood by the American people that we no longer have the right, unilaterally, to tell Asia what its course of action shall be, then the American people will make clear that they want our Government to seek to bring a multilateral solution to this problem instead of a unilateral U.S. solution. We will then have some chance of substituting the rule of our law for military might.

Do not forget, Mr. President, the United Nations Charter does not exclude the possibility of bringing in, under either Security Council jurisdiction or General Assembly jurisdiction, an expanded membership for this specific purpose. That is why, more than 3 years ago, in one of the memorandums I prepared, I urged General Assembly jurisdiction, including the Geneva Accords members, with their membership expanded. That would bring in the Vietcong and the North Vietnamese, and provide the answer to the argument that because they are not members of the United Nations, that they are not the United Nations, therefore the United Nations is not the body that this war might be settled by multilateral action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Texas.

Mr. YARBOROUGH. Mr. President, first I wish to compliment our majority leader for the leadership he has taken in—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair informs the Senator from Texas that there is no time available, unless it be obtained by unanimous consent.