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University of Arkansas International Responsibilities Reappraisal and Reapportionment

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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It is with deep respect that I refer to the contribution to the nation which is derived from the Senators of this State. May I say that the honorary law doctorate from Arkansas University which is held by John McClellan is most appropriate in view of his outstanding work in the Senate. Under his direction the Committee on Government Operations has achieved national renown by bringing a corrective legal light into certain more or less obscure corners of American life and practice.

As for J. William Fulbright, the contribution of the former President of this University is one which I have experienced directly in the Committee on Foreign Relations. Senator Fulbright possesses one of the finest intellects in the Senate.
He keeps it honed, moreover, to a razor's edge by a fierce integ-
grity. His importance to this nation and its foreign relations
predates the problem of Viet Nam and, long after that problem is
resolved, his influence for international order will continue to
be felt.

If I were to speak on the public issue which is
most on my mind (and I expect that it is also most on yours) I
would focus on Viet Nam. Yet, this problem has dominated our
attention for so long that there is danger in the excess. Under-
standably but regrettably, the anxieties to which Viet Nam gives
rise tend to invite neglect of other grave international
questions.

Viet Nam is a part of our worldwide commitments;
it is not the whole. The over-all pattern of these commitments
was in need of deep reappraisal even before the tragedy of Viet
Nam assumed its present dimensions. The war has not obviated the
need; if anything, it has made it more compelling. If our own
perceptions do not soon bring us to this reappraisal, we may well
be led to it, helter-skelter, by circumstances which lie beyond our control.

For many years, there has been a continuous flow abroad of human and material resources in support of the defense and other policies of this nation. Today, the flow is a flood to Viet Nam, even as it remains heavy elsewhere in Asia and in Europe and other parts of the world. There is ample indication that the worldwide load which we are carrying may be greater than necessary. Certainly it is already greater than can be sustained at the current level of national sacrifice.

The effect of the outward drain is felt in many ways. At home, it bears a relationship to our apparent inability to come to grips with the situation in the urban areas. As a case in point, it should be noted that a special Presidential Commission has just completed a monumental report on this problem. The Commission emphasizes that the crisis in the cities cries out for a great concentration of constructive effort. Yet, I am frank to say that in the light of our national engagements abroad, the
prospects for finding the national will and the resources for this concentration are not encouraging.

The costly overseas commitment also bears relationship to the huge budgetary deficits and to the pressures of inflation which are generated therein. Its effect is felt, too, in the nation's balance of international payments; for some years now, this gauge has flashed the warnings of financial over-extension.

It is now clear that we have been trying to do too much with too little in the way of national sacrifice. Adjustments are going to be necessary. In fact, they have already begun. That is the significance of a recent Presidential order which called for a ten percent cut in governmental personnel overseas. That is the significance of the sharply reduced allocation for foreign aid in this year's budget. These are, in my judgment, wise actions; however limited, they do compel more care in evaluating current foreign undertakings.
The Administration has also called for complementary actions which will require increased sacrifices from the people of the nation. That is the meaning of the recent call-up of more reservists, the ending of certain draft deferments, and other manpower changes. That, too, is the meaning of proposals to discourage travel and investment overseas by Americans and the request for a surtax on top of the income tax. Whatever their individual merit, all of these measures are clear calls for a greater contribution to the nation. They are, moreover, only the first note's sounding. There will be more to come, far more, if there is no curtailment in the present pattern of our overseas engagement.

That we face an urgent situation is largely the consequence of the heavy demands of the conflict in Viet Nam. The war, however, has only underscored what has long been, in fact, the need for a thorough reassessment of our worldwide responsibilities. These responsibilities still derive from international circumstances as they were many years ago. Yet, we have not had
occasion to think long and deeply about their present validity. We have not had occasion to ask whether a kind of obsolescence or inertia of policy is not exacting an excessive tribute.

May I say that while a thorough reassessment of our overseas commitments might be carried out by a new Administration, I reject categorically the notion that it can be carried out only by a new Administration. The latter contention is already heard and you may expect to hear it with ever-increasing frequency in the months ahead. In reality, however, we are confronted with a problem which is deeper than election-year politics. It goes to the capacity of both the Executive Branch and the Congress to face up to the facts of the situation in which we find ourselves. It goes to the capacity of elected officials and appointed officials, most of whom serve in administration after administration, to look anew and to think anew. It goes to the national readiness to bring our responses into line with today's international realities.
In any assessment of our situation abroad, it can be said that our present commitment began with the United Nations Charter, almost a quarter of a century ago. People of my generation thought to end once and for all, as the U. N. Charter terms it, "the scourge of war." We sought to replace a hit-or-miss national control of war with a form of international consortium to maintain the peace. We acted to initiate a universal system of mutual security, order and progress in the United Nations.

From the outset, the concepts of the United Nations Charter did not work or, at any rate, worked very inadequately. It was not long before the principal nations of the world fell back once again upon the not unfamiliar rivalries of national power and alliances. Unlike what had transpired after World War I, the United States plunged into the vanguard of these practices. We took the lead in expanding a system of defense alliances which reached into almost every part of the globe. We put our primary trust for national security in this system and in our own unilateral
military capacities—especially in nuclear weapons over which we exercised a brief monopoly.

The Soviet Union was the focus of our concerns. We saw Moscow at the pinnacle of a Communist monolith, with one side extending down into Eastern Europe and the other resting on what was presumed to be a Soviet-enslaved China. We viewed all Communist parties and leaders everywhere in the world as puppets dancing to tunes played by Stalin. We saw Communism as an insatiable bear. We saw it as the tentacles of a giant octopus. We saw it in many other forms and shapes—hideous, inhuman and irreconcilably hostile.

Over-simplified or not, this concept was of great significance after World War II in precipitating the massive expansion of our overseas commitments. It induced this nation, once wary of any involvement beyond the Western Hemisphere, to accept unprecedented international responsibilities. The fear of Soviet expansion was not the only factor in this process. Rather, that fear was interwoven with an intellectual revulsion
against any return to prewar isolation, with a deep-seated American idealism for peace and with a broad sympathy for the countless millions of the less fortunate on earth.

Sometimes with reluctance, sometimes with enthusiasm, but invariably with a new sense of leadership, this nation launched programs of many kinds throughout the world. The magnitude of this effort is suggested by the over-all totals of aid since 1946. To date, the United States has provided in the neighborhood of $130 billion in grants and loans to about 120 nations.

In the pursuit of a fool-proof security, moreover, we entered into defense treaties with so robust an enthusiasm that the term "pactomania" found its way into the language. By 1954, there were formal defense ties with 42 nations, most of whom were embraced by three great regional alliances. The Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance included all of the Latin American nations. The North Atlantic Treaty stretched across the ocean and to the Eastern Mediterranean to take in Greece and
Turkey. The SEATO Treaty brought us into defensive concert with ten nations on behalf of the security of the Asian and Pacific region.

After 1954, additional countries received assurances in the nature of defense commitments from the United States. By this process, Spain, Iran and Liberia were brought under a kind of protective wing of this nation and so, too, were both the Arab states and Israel. Finally, in 1962, this nation felt compelled to advise India and Pakistan--both recipients of U. S. military aid against Communism--that if one, instead, used this assistance against the other, the United States would undertake to act on behalf of the victim.

In short, as of today, by request or otherwise, by formal treaty or otherwise, more than 50 nations have received a chit--a commitment--from the United States which is redeemable for some kind of military assistance in a crisis.
Over the years, we have undergirded these pledges with elaborate bilateral and multilateral military organizations. There has come into existence unified military commands such as NATO in Europe and SEATO in Southeast Asia. Cement for these structures has been supplied by massive inputs of U. S. aid.

Over the years our defense undertakings have grown until, today, we station overseas a million and a half of the three and a half million Americans in uniform. Heading the list, of course, is the contingent of more than 500,000 in Viet Nam. There are 200,000 located elsewhere in the Far East and 350,000 are in installations in Europe and the Mediterranean.

Some concept of the cost is to be found in the military expenditures in Viet Nam and in the over-all expenditures of the Department of Defense. The cost of the war is conservatively estimated at upwards of $25 billion a year. That figure is 31 percent of the budget of the Department of Defense which is $80 billion. The total for the Department of Defense, in turn, is 42.9 percent of all federal expenditures.
As I have already indicated, it was an initial concern with Soviet expansion which did so much to precipitate our vast overseas commitment. This concern began to be felt almost immediately after the guns of World War II were stilled. It was felt in quarrels and disagreements among the victors over the peace treaties. It was felt, too, in propagandistic strutting, often over minor questions which came before the United Nations in its early years. It was felt in the irreconcilable positions which were taken on the fundamental issue of international control of nuclear energy. The concern was intensified as the Soviet blockade of Berlin was followed by the cataclysmic collapse in China and, finally, by the Korean conflict.

The military alliances and the aid which we provided did act to build up armed strength in Europe as a counterpoise to Soviet Communism. Economic assistance did help the nations of Europe to rebuild their economies and, hence, the security of their free societies; and it did open, at least, the possibilities of modern progress in many neglected and newly independent nations of the world.
In the years after World War II, we had ample resources for these undertakings. Our economy had emerged unscathed from the conflict. It had entered on a period of dynamic growth. The accumulation of neglected inner problems was not yet of towering dimensions. In brief, with little strain at home, we were able to engage ourselves widely in these undertakings abroad.

Today, our internal circumstances are not as they were a decade and a half ago. Nor is the world as it was a decade and a half ago. These two factors, which are fundamental in the design of effective foreign policy, have changed very greatly. Can it be said, however, that the policy itself—the fusing of understanding, idea and commitment which should form policy—has been adjusted adequately in the light of these changes? It seems to me most doubtful that it can be so said. On the contrary, a foreign policy grown routine over many years may well be taking too much out of this nation. It may well have become wasteful,
to say the least. Even more serious, it may have become of increasing irrelevance to the situation which now exists in the world.

As a case in point, it seems to me that the situation in Europe bears close examination. In Europe—in the two Europea, East and West—the mutual fears of an earlier time have receded. The level of cordiality among governments is rising as it is among the peoples of Europe. The barriers are coming down. Trade, travel, and other exchange, from the Atlantic to the Urals, is beginning to flourish.

In Western Europe, the once war-devastated democracies have raised their economies to levels of unprecedented productivity and prosperity. From a desperate financial dependency on American assistance two decades ago, some of our allies have become holders and even manipulators of great dollar surpluses. These surpluses are formed in part from usual commercial sources such as American tourist expenditures and investments in Europe. They are also created in large part, however, from heavy
U. S. government spending abroad in pursuit of various commitments, especially the military commitment to NATO. This commitment involves the maintenance of six U. S. divisions in Europe which, together with dependents, numbers 600,000 Americans.

It should be noted that these Americans are in Europe in accord with a Senate recommendation which was made 17 years ago. In 1951, the Senate urged that the U. S. troop commitment in Europe be raised from the two understrength divisions remaining after World War II to a pledge of six divisions for NATO. This recommendation was put promptly into effect.

By way of contrast, last year, a resolution was sponsored by 44 Senators which recommended a return of a substantial part of these six divisions to the United States. I have felt for many years that our commitment to NATO could be cut back to two divisions at a great savings of resources and without in any way lessening the significance of our pledge of mutual defense under the North Atlantic Treaty.
Unlike 17 years ago, however, there has been no prompt response to these suggestions from the Senate. There has been, on the contrary, a determined resistance to any adjustments downward in the U. S. force-levels in Europe. Ignored is the fact that we alone of all the participants have met our pledges to NATO. Unheeded have been the pleas from the Senate for a reduction. Unnoticed, or at any rate ignored, have been the obvious changes in the European situation—the relaxation between Eastern and Western Europe. Overlooked has been the growing European indifference to NATO.

Last year, it was announced that there would be a token redeployment to the United States of 35,000 men and their dependents out of the 350,000 American forces stationed in Europe. The redeployment was scheduled to begin on January 1, 1968. On January 25, 1968, however, it was announced that the redeployment has been postponed for "administrative reasons."

In short, six American divisions, with dependents, remain assigned to Europe, today, as they were a decade and a
half ago. The response to the financial drain which they represent so far has been largely confined to the discouragement of private American travel and investment abroad.

Elsewhere, there are also changes to which our policies have been slow to adjust, if, in fact, they have adjusted at all. The concept of a Communist monolith which did so much to shape our basic policies has long since toppled. Many years ago Yugoslavia chose a path of national Communism, independent of Soviet domination. Over the years, the Yugoslavian experience has proved to be not an isolated phenomenon but an accurate foreshadowing of reassertions of national independence throughout Eastern Europe. Far from being cogs in a Russian war machine, the nations of that region are emphasizing their own national needs. To satisfy them--they are heavily economic--they are turning with frequency and ever-increasing self-assurance to ties with the Western European nations and other non-Communist countries.
In Asia, a China which once was seen as an obsequious handmaiden of Moscow has chosen so fiercely an independent position that it has skirted open hostility with the Soviet Union. At least, such was the case prior to the intensification of the war in Viet Nam. For sometime, China, too, has been exploring contacts with the rest of the world. Despite the setback of the recent ideological upheavals and the counter-pressures of Viet Nam, this process is likely to be resumed now that a measure of internal order has returned.

There have been other significant developments which relate to the continuing validity of our costly overseas commitments. About 50 nations, for example, have become independent and members of the U. N. since 1954; yet that organization has been allowed to lose significance as a factor in the resolution of the world's difficulties. France and China have joined the United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom as possessors of nuclear weapons; and it is said that just one
explosive in the bulging nuclear arsenals has as much explosive power as has been used in all wars since the invention of gunpowder. Yet, the approach to serious disputes, whether in the Middle East or Southeast Asia or wherever, suggests little awareness of the ticking of the doomsday clock.

In sum, it is apparent that the environment in which the United States must seek its security, today, is vastly different from what it was a few years ago. It is also apparent, today, that there are flaws in the instruments of policy by which we have pursued our security over the years. The concept of mutual defense, for example, has been and remains, in practice, overwhelmingly weighted on the side of the American contribution of resources even though other nations are quite capable of increasing their contributions.

Foreign aid, too, has been seen not always to yield the intended result. I have mentioned how assistance to both India and Pakistan to counter Communist pressures compelled
us, in the end, to give an additional commitment of support to each of these nations as against the possible aggression of the other. Similar ironic developments are discernible in Latin America and elsewhere. In short, while we may point the blade of military aid in one direction, once the sword is in other hands, it is not always possible to say where or when it will fall.

It is now apparent, too, that economic aid does not act in non-industrialized nations as it did in helping the industrialized nations of Europe and Japan to reconstruct war-damaged economies. Thus, the great effectiveness of the Marshall Plan has had only the faintest of echoes elsewhere in the world. Aid in Asia and Africa does not necessarily spur progress or strengthen freedom. Indeed, on occasion it may offer a means for evading the one and for stunting the growth of the other.

Finally, it is now apparent that our resources for the uses of international security are not unlimited. Despite great wealth, we cannot continue to spend on overseas commitments
at the present rate and still meet the growing internal needs of this nation. Certainly, we cannot do so without large increases in taxes, much more regimentation, and other sacrifices on the part of all Americans. To put it bluntly, we have learned that we cannot allocate $25 billion a year or more on war in Viet Nam, billions more for defense elsewhere in Asia, in Europe, and other parts of the globe, and still invest at home in education, health, housing, transportation, control of air and water pollution, police protection, or whatever, at a rate which is vital to the inner stability of this nation.

Most important, we are learning in Viet Nam, at a tragic cost that an immensity of military power is not enough to safeguard peace or to yield a relevant freedom. It is not enough in a situation where the issues in conflict are not black and white but many shades of grays. We are learning, too, in Viet Nam that what may begin as a modest effort to assist others can become a nightmare of destruction and a major military involvement
for this nation. Uncurbed, it can grow as an open-ended war
until there is no exit for any nation—except in the final idiocy
of the nuclear devastation of the earth.

These are the considerations which strongly urge,
it seems to me, a continuing and intensive appraisal of our
commitments abroad. It is an appraisal which should take place
throughout the nation no less than in the Executive Branch of the
government and in the Senate. There is a great need for national
soul-searching at this critical moment in the history of the
Republic.

It seems to me already evident that the time is
past due for reducing the one-sided emphasis on the American con-
tribution in safeguarding the security of freedom and peace in
the world. I would urge, in this connection, as I have urged
many times before, and as the Senate urged only a few months ago
by unanimous resolution, that the potentialities of the United
Nations be openly engaged with a view to searching out the path
to an honorable ending of the war in Viet Nam. In this connection, too, I would urge once again—as I have urged many times before and as many Members of the Senate have urged—that a substantial reduction of U. S. forces in Western Europe begin without further delay.

In my judgment, these adjustments are urgent. They need not wait for reappraisals. They have been appraised time and again. They are needed, now, in an effort to bring our commitments into better rapport with the current international situation and with the inner needs of this nation. They are needed, now, to check the drift of this nation towards an isolated and, hence, irrelevant internationalism.