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### A Time of Violence

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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FOR RELEASE FRIDAY A.M.'s

REMARKS OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA)  
at the annual dinner of the  
AMERICAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE,  
EUROPEAN INSTITUTE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION  
U. N. Delegates' Dining Room, New York, New York  
Thursday, June 27, 1968, 7:00 p.m., EDST

A TIME OF VIOLENCE

Just a few days ago, the Senate passed legislation involving the Export-Import Bank to try to stimulate exports. That would be a pertinent matter to discuss with you tonight. There are other subjects which are of immediate interest to those who are immersed in the business of international business. There is the balance of payments. There is two-price gold. There is the future of GATT. These questions and others in a similar vein are most relevant to your professional and commercial pursuits.

Instead of indulging these immediate concerns, however I ask you to depart from the customary and turn to a matter which while somewhat remote from your business is of overwhelming importance to the nation and to the world.

A short time ago, a political leader of this State, a young man of sensitivity, capability, and achievement, was the victim of a shocking tragedy. Obviously, the assassination in Los Angeles does not typify the state of the nation. Nevertheless, we cannot--as a nation--take refuge in the fact that only a few of our inhabitants are political assassins. This recent murder, coming as it did in a train of such murders, has underlined another dimension of our inner national difficulties--the dimension of violence.

Something is wrong--very wrong--when, time and again, political and social leaders who are attempting to cope with grave problems on the basis of reason are silenced by the bullets of irrationality and hatred. There is a danger to the nation in this orgy of assassinations. There is a danger, too, when the meaning of freedom is distorted into the burning and looting of cities. We will either get to the causes of the many-sided epidemic of violence which strikes at the very heart of the American

political structure--we will either put an end to it or it may well put an end to us.

In a moment of panic, it is all very well to define the problem of violence as one of the uncontrolled gun. I daresay however, that on more tranquil reflection, it will be seen that far more significant than the gun is the complex of factors which moves the hand that holds the gun, the Molotov cocktail, the knife, the rock, or whatever.

The whole subject of violence--of which the gun is but an element--the subject of violence as a foreboding aspect of our national life needs a frank confrontation by the government and the people of the United States. I am delighted, therefore, that the President, with the concurrence of the joint leadership of the Senate, has appointed the Eisenhower Commission on Violence to begin this examination. However unpleasant, there should be no flinching from the facts of violence as they have had manifold expression in this nation in recent years.

That the climate of our times predisposes to violence is readily apparent. We live, today, in a world torn apart by old tensions and strained by new. There are difficulties abroad, serious difficulties. There are, clearly, serious difficulties and tensions at home.

During two decades, we have accumulated an array of commitments abroad which stretches around the world. These are involved and costly commitments and many of them infer, in the end, the prospect of violence. Viet Nam is the consequence of one such commitment. At home, we are confronted with an accumulation of neglected needs which is interwoven with the violence that plagues the nation's cities.

The violence of Viet Nam is still there. The urban focals of violence are still there. Indeed, violence abroad and violence at home seem to have joined together under the common symbol of the bullet and the gutted city.

It seems to me that if the tragedies which we have witnessed in recent years under this symbol are to have some constructive meaning, we will redouble the effort to convert the basic difficulties which confront this nation, today, into the solutions of tomorrow. In this process of conversion, the contribution of young people is indispensable. I say that because I believe the attitudes of young people reflect a perspective of our times which is much sharper and yet more flexible than that exhibited by those of us who have borne close witness to the events of the past two decades. In this connection, I would commend to your attention the vigorous participation of young people in the current political campaign. They have brought to the nation's political life a new energy, intelligence, and conviction. In doing so, they have highlighted flaws in our politics as well as our policies and, in so doing, ~~may~~<sup>MAY</sup> light the way to the reform of both.

That some young people have shown a disdain for traditional ways is not surprising. Young people have been doing

that for a long time. That these manifestations are sometimes callous and hostile, however, is disturbing. I am frank to state that I have not been happy, for example, with the way some students have asserted their point on campus. Indeed, the point is often lost in the very vehemence of its assertion.

Be that as it may, it does not alter the importance, indeed, the necessity of trying to understand the questions which young people are raising throughout the nation. What they ask with respect to our international predicament sometimes strikes at premises on which policies have been based for many years. What they question are, largely, policies which were designed two decades ago for situations which existed two decades ago. Those questions should be raised. Situations have changed over the years but the adjustments of policy, in my judgment, have not kept pace with the change.

You who function in international business may have developed a modus vivendi for this situation. We who are older tend to become attuned by habit to the antiquated. That is not

likely to be the case with young people. If young people look at the world scene and foreign policies with a degree of healthy pragmatism, it may be because they are not bound by past furies, fixations, and fears. It may be, for example, that they perceive an obvious need for basic adjustments in policies in the light of the way Albania, Romania, not to mention China, and most recently Czechoslovakia, have undercut the once universally accepted gospel of a Soviet totalitarian monolith.

Whatever the reasons, it seems to me that young people know enough to insist upon more than patent-medicine responses to the problems of international life and civilized survival in these closing decades of the 20th century. They know enough to insist that government has a responsibility for coping with divisive difficulties at home--a responsibility as great as any which may confront us abroad.

We would do well to listen to the questions of young people and try to answer them. What young people are



asking, it seems to me, adds up to a call for a hard-headed reappraisal of our foreign relations in the light of changes in the international situation and urgent needs at home.

That is all to the good even though what has been done cannot always be undone or redone quickly. Take, for example, the war in Viet Nam. The problem cannot be wished away by a belated discovery that it should never have been allowed to arise. Viet Nam has been years in developing into a quagmire. It is not going to be drained overnight of its horror.

At this point, the Vietnamese problem, I believe, can be dealt with most effectively by the negotiators in Paris. It may be useful, nevertheless, in the examination of our position in these negotiations to recall that this nation's direct involvement in Viet Nam began a decade and a half ago. It was not realized, then, when there were scarcely two hundred Americans in Indo-China, what would come from what <sup>an</sup> was/essentially limited and minor undertaking in "foreign aid." We know now. The toll of American dead has gone beyond 25,000 and continues to rise.

There are, presently, 533,000 U. S. military personnel in Viet Nam not to speak of tens of thousands of others in Thailand and in the forces of the 7th Fleet off the Vietnamese coast or those in the back-up forces in Okinawa, the Philippines, and Guam.

That this nation is deeply involved ought not to obscure the limited purposes which took us into Viet Nam in the first place. Our commitment has been to support, not to supplant. The future of Viet Nam depends not on us but on the Vietnamese. It is their country; they live in it. They will be living in it long after we are gone from it.

There is a profound obligation to the people of the United States to constrain the military involvement in Viet Nam into the dimensions of valid purpose. In that way, there may be some hope of curbing the casualties that are being suffered by our forces and the enormous cost of the conflict. This obligation to ourselves, moreover, dovetails with another which we have to the people of Viet Nam. To them, there is an obligation to avoid the destruction of their lives, land, and society even in the name of their salvation.

These obligations require that we go to great lengths in an effort to bring about a termination of the hostilities by the negotiation of a just peace. Once peace has been restored, they require that we move out our military forces promptly, not only from Viet Nam but, as the President has stated, from all the other places on the Southeast Asian mainland where the exigencies of the war have compelled them to go. They require, finally, our full cooperation in the economic reconstruction of the war-torn and shattered nation of Viet Nam.

It is not at all certain that the negotiations at Paris will end the Vietnamese conflict in the near future. Indeed, the pace at which those negotiations have proceeded provides no basis for sanguine expectations. Nevertheless, Paris remains the hope for a peaceful settlement and our negotiators should receive both forbearance and support from the rest of us in their effort to fulfill that hope.

Until a negotiated solution of the issue of Viet Nam is achieved, progress in building understanding and stability in

other international relationships is likely to be slow or non-existent. I regret to say that the effort at East-West rapprochement, for example, takes on something of an air of unreality while American and Soviet-made explosives vie in the deadly military competition which continues to devastate Viet Nam.

The prompt solution of the Vietnamese issue is not only of great international importance to this nation, it is also of significance in terms of critical domestic issues. The grim financial fact is that the war in Viet Nam has been devouring the fiscal resources of the federal government at a rate in excess of \$25 billion a year in an over-all military budget of about \$80 billion. By contrast, for example, federal spending earmarked specifically for the problems of the cities is scheduled to amount to no more than \$3 billion in the coming fiscal year.

In the violence of the past few years, we have had an indication of the ultimate costs of the neglect of the metropolitan environments. Nevertheless, we have yet to direct to this dangerously volatile situation sufficient resources to check

the disintegration. The tendency is to go on fiddling. Part of the inadequacy of our response is traceable, in my judgment, to the problems which draw an excess of our resources abroad. Part of it also involves what seems to me to be distortions in the national sense of values. How else can it be described except as a distortion when, for example, such esoteric pursuits as space exploration tend to demand greater concern than air pollution or water pollution.

The problem is one of priorities and emphasis in the competition for the available supply of money, brains, and energy. Choices of that kind have never been easy. They are not easy now and they will not get any easier. But I reiterate that there have been, to date, disturbing distortions in the concept of what is urgently needed by this nation and what is not so urgent. These distortions, as they are expressed in the national budget and eventually in appropriations, need soul-searching examination.

As for my view, I happen to regard the critical situation which exists in the urban complexes as of the most profound significance to the nation's survival in freedom.

Those of us who do not live in cities, no less than those who do, have a stake in the health, safety, and progress--the future of the cities. The time is past, if it ever existed, when one part of the American community could ignore with impunity serious problems in the others. The fact is that distinctions of rural and urban are fast losing significance. Americans are moving in increasing numbers into and around the cities of the nation. By the year 2000, 150 million Americans will have been added to the population of the United States and it is anticipated that most of the increase will be housed in the great metropolitan complexes.

That is but one relevant statistic. There is no end to other statistics which will tell us what we already know about the urban problem. They will tell of the disintegration

of the physical environment by pollution of air and water. They will tell of the trek of the impoverished into the central cities. They will tell of the discontent that stalks the streets of the slums, of the lack of employment opportunities therein and of the accumulation of the permanently unemployable. They will tell of the massive breakdown of family life, inadequate schools, and poor recreational facilities. They will tell of miserable housing, hunger, and rats. They will tell of severe and rising crime rates and disrespect for law. Statistics will tell, in sum, in modern mathematical idiom, an ancient story of human poverty, neglect, degradation and brutality.

Government must care about the safety and health of the entire nation. It must care about the youth of the nation and the old. It must care about the jobless, the ill-housed, the poverty-stricken--all those too powerless to help themselves. And it must concern itself, too, may I say, with those too powerful. In the final analysis, government must care about

the content and caliber of the total environment--including the urban environment--in which the life of the nation is lived.

There is still much to do--a long way to go to bring that environment up to a level worthy of the Constitution and its promise. Therein lies the question of capacity--financial and otherwise. There is no blinking the fact that the nation is strained to meet the obligations of Viet Nam and other worldwide demands, even as the pressures of domestic difficulty rise.

For a long time, the economic barometers have been trying to tell us that we are attempting too much with too little in the way of national sacrifice. For too long, we have tended to ignore the warnings. Piled high, now, is an accumulation of huge budgetary deficits. Piled high are great annual deficits in the balance of international payments.

Our resources are vast but there are limits. It seems to me that we have arrived at a time of reckoning. Even though we may devoutly wish it, we cannot count on being spared that reckoning by a prompt settlement in Paris.



Congress has tried to deal with the problem by weaving into the surcharge on income tax a requirement for a reduction of six billion dollars in federal expenditures.

However, Congress has tended to leave the uncomfortable job of allocating the reduction in expenditures to the President. I think Congress should face up to its own responsibility to indicate where these cuts should be made.

I have my view on the question. In my judgment, to make wholesale cuts in those parts of the budget which affect the difficulties of the nation's cities and the needs of the poor is to invite the most serious internal repercussions. Such cuts would not only feed the fires of instability, they would reduce to hypocrisy much of the idealism which is the bedrock of this nation's constitutional structure.

What is possible in the way of budget reductions, in my view, is to single out for curtailment less pressing fields of government activity. As an illustration, there is the multi-billion dollar space program to which I have already

made reference. It seems to me that that program could be reduced. It seems to me, too, that many so-called pork-barrel public works projects could readily be held in abeyance.

Insofar as military expenditures are concerned, there cannot be stinting on what is necessary for the safety of the forces in Viet Nam. Those costs, however, are about a third of the total expenses of the Department of Defense. The Department's over-all costs of \$80 billion, in turn, add up to about half of the present outlays of the federal government. It is about time to recognize that we are not going to get very far in governmental economy unless we are prepared to look for the hitches of extraneous and extravagant expenditure--and there are many--which are to be found in the labyrinth of the immense allocation to the Department of Defense.

I would point out, as an example, that for 17 years approximately six divisions of United States troops, together with their dependents, have been stationed in Europe in pursuance of our self-imposed commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty

Organization. The accumulated cost of this deployment has run into federal expenditures of many billions of dollars. The extravagance is little effected by the snail-paced recall of one division plus dependents which, presumably, began last April. Nor is it tempered by the recent gesture of the German government in agreeing to buy U. S. government bonds at about six per cent interest in order to offset the foreign exchange drain of maintaining American forces in Germany. On the contrary, the extravagance is actually exacerbated by the additional interest charges. And yet it is suggested in some quarters that the agreement confers some sort of benefit on the United States.

For many years, it has seemed to me desirable to return to the United States four divisions of the U. S. forces in Europe, together with their dependents. Quite apart from budgetary and foreign-exchange questions, that step has long appeared to be a sensible adjustment in the European policies of this nation. It has seemed sensible in view of the stability

and confidence which prevails in Western Europe, almost a quarter of a century away from World War II. It has seemed sensible in the light of the rapprochement and the great expansion of trade and other ties between Eastern and Western Europe.

Today, there is no gainsaying the fact that an adjustment downward in our troop levels in Europe would also accord with the fiscal needs of the nation. More than \$2 billion in costs is involved and many hundreds of millions in foreign exchange drain. Financial considerations, however, are not now nor should they ever be the critical factor. If it is essential that these forces remain in Europe to safeguard the North Atlantic community, then the resources to maintain them there can be and will be found. But the case for essentiality is weak, very weak. In my judgment, we cannot afford to, and we must not, fritter away our available material strength in the pursuit of policies and practices which have been left behind by events in Europe.

A substantial reduction of our forces in Europe at this time would also reverse what has been a tendency to vest

our NATO military commitments with an almost catatonic rigidity. For many years, we alone of all the principal NATO allies have been insistent upon maintaining maximum military commitments to NATO. We have continued to insist long after most of the European nations have scaled down or ignored their pledges of military forces to NATO and, I presume, used the resources saved thereby in more productive ways.

The approach which we have followed on this point has been dangerously unilateral. It can lead this nation, first, to a position of isolated internationalism in Europe. From thence, it is but a short distance to national isolation and, instead of rational adjustments, a precipitous withdrawal from Europe.

In my judgment, neither the course of isolated internationalism nor national isolation serves the fundamental interests of this nation or Europe. To avoid that prospect, I reiterate, therefore, that I think it is eminently desirable to reduce substantially and without further delay the great number

of American soldiers and dependents who have been stationed for so many years in Western Europe.

In closing these remarks, let me state that we are entering upon a time when we must face the questions which underlie the tides of violence that flow within the nation. Our capacity to deal with this difficulty and others which plague us at home and abroad involves material resources. Even more, what is required is the resolve and the ingenuity, the wit and the integrity to look anew at our national and international situation. We need to draw from the bitter experiences of these past few years--out of the experience of Viet Nam, out of the assassinations, out of the burnt-out and battered cities and the brutalities of a brutal era--clearer definitions of the evolving problems of our people and our times.

In that pursuit the participation of the people--of all the people--is essential. That is one of the great functions of the political campaign. Before the frost of

November arrives, therefore, I would hope that the divisive differences will have been faced and debated and the choices made which will inspire a unifying trust. Perhaps, then, it will be possible to begin to repair the weakness in the nation's social structure and to mend the fences which have broken down. Perhaps, then, it will be possible to cut out the dry-rot in old policies, both foreign and domestic. Perhaps, then, it will be possible to build anew the inner structure and the external peace of this nation. Perhaps, then, it will be possible to begin to shape a new society for a new world.