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ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may proceed for not to exceed 7 minutes.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Without objection, it is so ordered.

VIETNAM

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, Memorial Day holiday has become a time of exodus from place and pressure, even though it began as a day of quiet homage to those who paid the cost of war with their lives. It might be well for us to remember, then, at the "getting away," this year, those Americans who cannot join in the general escape. There are those who have already left their lives—in the tens of thousands in Vietnam and those whose lives—in the hundreds of thousands—are still being risked in that distant conflict.

The continuance of our involvement in Vietnam is a responsibility which the Senate shares with the President. Members of this body who are deeply concerned over the course of the war, therefore, have not only the right but the duty to seek out and to propose and to propound alternatives whether they are applicable to the diplomatic tables in Paris or to the battlefields in Vietnam. In my judgment, it is a mark not of disrespect but of the most profound appreciation for the fallen in battle to try to forestall the loss of additional American lives in Vietnam. Areas are won and lost many times on a temporary basis. Lives are lost but once and on a permanent basis.

When any Senator speaks out of his mind and heart on any aspect of this barbaric struggle, his words are not to be dismissed as irrelevant or less by others in this Government. Indeed, it would be the better part of wisdom to heed them carefully. They may be words which are not only in unison with the surge of sentiment throughout the Nation, they may also contain a basis for a more effective policy of peace.

Certainly one cannot say at this late date that the course we have followed in Vietnam—militarily or politically—has been a paragon of wisdom. At this late date, it ought to be obvious that there is no infallibility of ideas anywhere with respect to that course. We have had generals urging the bombing of Vietnam into the stone age—as though it had very far to go—and others urging extension of the war into Cambodia or wherever in Southeast Asia. Still others have asked that U.S. forces be concentrated into coastal areas, if not withdrawn from Vietnam entirely and without further delay.

Insofar as our Vietnamese policies are concerned, if Senators are fallible—and we are—so too is the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the National Security Council, and the Saigon Command.

I should add that while the military have been the recipient of late of much of the criticism for Vietnam, I think it only proper to put this criticism in context. The policy of "keeping the pressure on" so to speak, was ordained not by the

men in the field, but here in Washington in the highest military and civilian circles of the executive branch. It is not even an original policy of the present administration, but rather a carry-over from one administration to the next. It has brought no curb in casualties and given no tangible indication of bringing the war closer to a conclusion.

It may well be that what we need is something of the courage which has been displayed on the battlefields to face up to our responsibilities here in Washington. It is time to consider adjusting these continuing policies—military and diplomatic—to the end that the loss of life and the hideous devastation may be reduced in Vietnam and the ground laid for a new effort of negotiations to terminate the conflict.

Speaking of courage, we might well note the birthday of one who possessed it in full measure, for the purposes of peace no less than for war, the 35th President of the United States, John Fitzgerald Kennedy. He would have been 52 years old, today, had not the shots which echoed out of another conflict—out of the conflict within this Nation—cut him down. Since his death—a death in the service of his country—this iceberg of inner dissension has emerged in its enormity to spread violence on campus and in city and town throughout the Nation. The disquiet deepens and the need to find solutions grows more urgent. As in Vietnam, there is no infallibility in any part of the Government with respect to a course which will lead to solutions. It is in order, however, for the Senate, no less than any other branch of the Government, to probe, to seek, and to urge rational alternatives.

Until a way is found to curb the violence within this Nation and to end it in Vietnam, there may be escape but there will be no surcease for any of us on this weekend or any other.

REPORT ON THE LOCATION, NATURE, AND ESTIMATED COST OF FACILITIES PROJECT PROPOSED TO BE UNDERTAKEN FOR THE AIR NATIONAL GUARD

A letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Properties and Installations), reporting, pursuant to law, the location, nature, and estimated cost of facilities project proposed to be undertaken for the Air National Guard within the uncommitted balance of lump sum authorization provided by the Reserve Forces Facilities Act; to the Committee on Armed Services.

REPORT OF DEFENSE PROCUREMENT FROM SMALL AND OTHER BUSINESS FIRMS

A letter from the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Installations and Logistics), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on Department of Defense procurement from small and other business firms for July 1968-February 1969 (with an accompanying report); to the Committee on Banking and Currency.

REPORTS OF COMPTROLLER GENERAL

A letter from the Comptroller General of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the audit of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation for the year ended June 30, 1968; to the Committee on Government Operations.

A letter from the Comptroller General of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the administration by the Small Business Administration of the disaster loan program in connection with the 1964 Alaska earthquake (with an accompanying report); to the Committee on Government Operations.