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STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA) TO THE ANNUAL DEMOCRATIC
CONGRESSIONAL DINNER, Washington Hilton, June 26, 1969

A decade is drawing to a close. It began in a Republican Administration. It ends in a Republican Administration. In between, the Democratic Party has aimed at raising the nation's standard of living and at putting into practice, the Constitution's promise of equal treatment for all citizens.

In this decade, there has emerged from a Democratic Congress an expanded housing program and legislation to provide for the better education of the nation's young people.

A Democratic Congress has opened the door to adequate medical and hospital care for the long-neglected and made a commitment to end a persistent poverty amid affluence in this nation.

A Democratic Congress brought to fruition the 100-year effort to strike down legal and other barriers to equal treatment of all Americans.

These and other legislative achievements carry the hallmark of President Kennedy and President Johnson. They are written into the journals of the Democratic 87th, 88th,^{89th,} and 90th Congresses.

Yet, these beacons of progress--let us face it frankly--were overshadowed last November. A decade of social advance was buried in the avalanche of public bitterness, revulsion and frustration which is Viet Nam. Years of national achievement sank out of sight in the tide of violence, unrest and anxiety which engulfed the nation.

The grim war continues in Viet Nam. Fear still stalks the streets of the nation's towns and cities. The uncertainties over the future are undiminished.

To be sure, the primary responsibility in this situation no longer adheres to the Democratic Party. To be sure, national leadership has passed to the Republican Party. But there can be no comfort for us in this changeover. If Democrats mean to retain a significance for this nation, there is no refuge in the shift of responsibility along with the Presidency to the Republican Party. On the contrary, we will acknowledge our own responsibility for the past and we will accept our share of responsibility for the present.

We will face frankly the twin tragedies of these times--the tragic conflict abroad and the tragic clashes at home and we will look for the means of their resolution. As the party of opposition, we will question the priorities and policies, the attitudes and the approaches of the Republican Administration in dealing with these and other national issues. We will do so responsibly, offering with our criticisms, constructive alternatives.

In the Congress--in the Senate--we will join with the President in an effort to end the war in Viet Nam. As far as conscience permits, we will uphold the President's hand in that situation; he is the President of all Americans--Democrats no less than Republicans. But we cannot and we will not acquiesce in the indefinite absence of peace.

We will sustain the President in a foreign policy of discerning internationalism; that is what the realities of the world demand, as the 20th century moves into a final quarter. But we cannot and we will not endorse a costly and indiscriminate involvement abroad merely because it is put forth under the label of internationalism.

We will vote necessary expenditures for the military defense of the nation. But we will not sign blank checks for billions at the sound of the bugle of fear. Rather, we will seek a balance, to the end that the nation may meet the urgent needs for stability within, no less than the demands for security from without.

As a political party, we will face the fact that the great and automatic national majority which was enjoyed for many decades is no more. It is not only that we have made our share of mistakes and suffered the consequences. It is also because issues have changed and attitudes have changed. The great constituency upon which the Democratic Party rested for four decades is now less clearly defined for us. In my judgment, it is there nonetheless. It is waiting to respond to new perceptions and to a rededicated political leadership which addresses itself not only to those who are satisfied with things as they are but which reaches out to those who are not.

It is no longer enough to extoll our contribution to the building of the nation as it is. The Democratic Party must look to what it can contribute in the building of the greater nation which we can become. In short, it is for us to rekindle the people's faith in the Democratic Party by searching out and pursuing the direction to a new unity at home and, in the world, to the building of a more durable peace. That is the quest on which we set forth tonight.

INTRODUCTION OF CONGRESSMAN JOHN MELCHER OF MONTANA

at the

Democratic Congressional Dinner

Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington, D. C.

Thursday, June 26, 1969

I am delighted to announce to you that a step has been taken on the road back by the Democratic Party. On Tuesday, the people of the Eastern District of Montana went to the polls in a special Congressional election. They chose a Democrat for a seat which had been held by the Republican Party for a decade.

As a result, Montana now joins Rhode Island as the only State north of the Maxon-Dixon line with a Democratic governor and a solid Democratic delegation in the House and Senate.

I present at this time one of the first candidates to be elected to national office this year. He is a war veteran--a combat infantryman--and a young vigorous and determined democratic political leader who is destined to make an outstanding contribution to his State and to the nation--
Congressman John Melcher of Montana.

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