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Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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SENIOR MANFIELD INTERVIEWED ON "ISSUES AND ANSWERS"

Mr. MANSFIELD, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed at this point in the Record the transcript of a televised program on which Senator Mansfield appeared last Sunday, "Issue and Answers."

There being no objection, the transcript was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

ISSUES AND ANSWERS, SEPTEMBER 14, 1969

Guest: Senator Mike Mansfield (D., Mont.)

Interviewed by: Bob Clark, ABC News Washington Correspondent; John Scali, ABC News Diplomatic Correspondent.

Mr. Scali, Senator, welcome to "Issues and Answers."

Do you share the feeling of some critics that the Nixon Administration in this past week has botched up, either through indecision or confusion, an opportunity to take a new initiative toward ending the war in Vietnam?

Senator MANFIELD. No one can tell until the President gives us an explanation of the zig and zags which have occurred over the past several days. So far as I am concerned, I am curious and confused. I thought there was an opportunity to do something to speed withdrawals of American troops, but I am sure that the President has his reasons and I would anticipate that he would explain them to the American people shortly.

Mr. Scali. Do you feel the "on again-off again" halt in the B-52 bombings perhaps reflects conflicting advice the President is receiving from his top advisors?

Senator MANSFIELD. Yes.

Mr. CLARK. There is a widespread impression that Mr. Nixon is going to announce within the next few days a new troop withdrawal. Would you like to see any such withdrawal announcement coupled with a new cease fire offer, or an offer to halt B-52 bombings?

Senator MANFIELD. If that was the only way in which a coalition government could be arrived at and peace brought to Vietnam and the evacuations stopped and the attention to the difficulties which we find ourselves there, that ought to be given every consideration.

Mr. CLARK. Do you think the tail is wagging the dog?

Senator MANSFIELD. Not to say that it will.

Mr. CLARK. Do you think the tail is wagging the dog? The administration's determination to see that President Thieu is being influenced too much by the Thieu Government?

Senator MANSFIELD. I say that pressure has been applied by the Saigon Government on us which places us in a very embarrassing position from that point of view.

Mr. Scali. Well, do you think that Mr. Nixon is being influenced unduly by the views of President Thieu and Vice President Ky?

Senator MANSFIELD. No, I wouldn't say so. I think that President Nixon is very desirous of doing things right and in a way which will bring a tightening try to solve a situation which he inherited. He is trying to do what he thinks is right and in a way which will bring about a responsible solution. So far his efforts have been thwarted because the checks don't seem to line up.

Mr. Scali. Vice President Ky goes on to say in this same New York Times interview that "President Thieu cannot afford any more concessions with the Communists. It is a matter of his survival."

Senator MANSFIELD. Well, we can't afford any more casualties or deaths either. I think we ought to look after our own interests for a change and give them primary consideration.

Mr. CLARK. Senator, if we can move on to a thought for a moment about South Korea, do you have any views about the constitutional amendment that the supporters of President Park in South Korea published last week to which President Nixon said he would permit him to run for a third term?

Senator MANSFIELD. Oh, that is a Korean internal question. I would have no comment on it.

Mr. CLARK. You wouldn't be disturbed about the charges that this is going to extend what his opponents regard as a dictatorship?

Senator MANSFIELD. Here the Administration has tied to the South Korean question so far, it has evidently been a willing one because President Park has had the votes two terms. Now he wants to serve a third term, but that is something for the Koreans to decide and not for me to comment on.

Mr. Scali. Senator, to get some of the domestic questions out of the way here, you made a promise to Senate liberals that there would be speedy action this year on a meaningful tax reform bill.

Senator MANSFIELD. I did not make a promise to the Senate liberals. I made a promise to the Senate that there would be a tax reform bill reported out of the Finance Committee by October 31. That promise was made in the open. I expect that promise to be kept.

Mr. Scali. Well, I was going to ask whether in view of the fact that some critics are saying that you will be unable to keep that promise, whether he could expect a tax reform bill this year.

Senator MANSFIELD. As far as I am concerned, we will have a tax reform bill this year.

Mr. CLARK. Well, Senator, as you know there is a great deal of talk in town and among some of the lobbyists who are working on various parts of that tax bill that there is not going to be a tax reform bill until spring. Can you really promise action by the end of this year?

Senator MANSFIELD. No, I can't promise definitive action. I can only give you my view and reiterate the promise made to the Senate when this matter was referred to the Finance Committee. I would point out that I think that Senator Muskie and the Chairman of the Finance Committee, who was in on the meetings with the Policy Council and with Vice President on the Floor, is a man of his word and I would expect Senator Long to keep his word. That is a very important factor in the affairs of the Senate.

Mr. Scali. Do you feel the Nixon Administration has been backtracking on the whole principle of tax reform by suggesting that the House-passed bill be amended to reduce tax relief for middle income groups and give some of this to corporations instead?
September 17, 1969

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — SENATE

S10669

Senator Mansfield. No, I do not. They are presenting their views to the Finance Committee. It will not be up to the Administration but the Finance Committee in the Senate to decide whether or not the tax cut will be considered in our body and the Administration has the right to present its views whether or not they are taken into consideration.

Mr. Clark. Well, Senator, on this question of timing, do you feel that your pledge was a conditional one? The Treasury Department, the Administration, and the Senate are all agreed that the tax cut should be in the tax reform bill by the end of this year.

Senator Mansfield. No. To get a tax bill out on the floor by October 31, I cannot foresee what the Senate will do. It will carry on extended debate. There may be filibusters. There will be special interests which various people will be interested in—myself included—but the promise was to get it out by October 31. Hopefully I would like to finish it before the end of the year, but whether or not we can depend on a number of factors. We have, I believe, 13 Appropriations Bills to consider.

Mr. Sall. Senator Mansfield, inflation continues to be quite a national problem. This week the automobile companies jacked up prices on new models, even as William McChesney Martin, Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, was predicting that inflationary pressures were abating. (A), are you satisfied with the Administration's efforts to control inflation, or do you agree with the GM auto raises were announced, but them I would point out while we are singling out the auto industry on this particular occasion, that a good many other industries have likewise raised their prices and nothing is being done about this.

The previous Administration did raise its prices. Sometimes it was successful; sometimes not.

President Nixon is operating on a low key basis. He is hopeful that the economy will even itself out. I have been encouraged by what William Martin of the Federal Reserve Board has said because I have great confidence in his judgment and usually he is a pessimist. Maybe they know what they are doing, but I certainly hope that we will watch this inflationary spiral which hits into the pocketbooks of every American, and take whatever steps are necessary to curb it.

Mr. Clark. But where do we go from here? What would you include the possibility of wage-price controls?

Senator Mansfield. The solution of wage-price controls would be a deliberate one. I have been advocating them for the past three years, and across the board. And also profits would be included in that category.

Mr. Clark. Senator, you had a very close personal relationship with the late Senator Everett Dirksen, and a relationship that was very important in marshalling bipartisan support behind programs in Congress.

What is Senator Dirksen's death going to mean in terms of getting programs through Congress and getting remaining parts of the Nixon program enacted?

Senator Mansfield. Well, my relationship with Everett Dirksen was a dream relationship. He was a master of words and he informed me what I was going to do and he kept me informed of his moves. It is true that he will not succeed him will carry on in the Dirksen tradition. At least I hope he will, and I assume he will. And I think he is quite capable of carrying on the tradition that I think we have been doing fairly well so far because a Congress should not be judged on quantity only of quality and I think we have made some sizable advances in this short session.

The Senate, I would like to call your attention to this point at a comment made today on another panel program by Senator Scott, who is one of the three candidates seeking to succeed Senator Dirksen as Minority Leader, and he said the Democratic Congress is foot-dragging at this time. And I said, "The Senate must disabuse itself of the failure of the Democratic Congress to achieve anything of importance." Senator Mansfield. Well, I would imagine it if I were in Hugh Scott's shoes I would probably say the same thing, but I would suggest to my good friend Senator Scott, that he look at the calendar. It is pretty well clear and he recognizes the fact that it isn't quantitatively but possibly, that the Democratic controlled Congresses over the past five years did pass a tremendous amount of legislation and that it is time to shake it down, make it more effective, see that there is less money spent for administration and more money spent as the Congress intended. And to just look at the record, as Al Smith would say, and I think he would come to a moderate or conservative conclusion.

Mr. Sall. Senator Mansfield, you know the other two contestants for the post of Republican leader, Senator Baker and Senator Dirksen. Does it make any difference to you who wins out?

Senator Mansfield. Oh, no. They are all good men and just as Bob asked me about the situation in Korea and I replied that was a Korean problem, this is a Republican problem.

Mr. Sall. Well, if either Senator Baker or Senator Dirksen were to be regarded by the Senate as victory for the Republican conservatives over the liberals. You have worked very closely with either and it may make a good deal of difference to you who is operating at the time.

Senator Mansfield. And the conservatives?

Mr. Sall. Won't this, however, strengthen the conservative trend in Congress?

Senator Mansfield. I don't think so. Any of these three men would do a good job in that position and I would work very well with any of them.

Mr. Sall. Senator, you on your side of the aisle doesn't it make any difference whether the Democratic leader is a liberal, moderate or conservative, as they all do the same kind of job?

Senator Mansfield. Both parties have their differences. There are getting more and more a party of split personalities as time goes on. We have been that way for decades and I think it will continue.

Mr. Sall. There is also in this struggle already raging the element of a battle between youth and experience. Would you like to see the infusion of more youth in the leadership of the Senate?

Senator Mansfield. Well, speaking for the Democratic only, yes.

Mr. Sall. Senator, there are reports that President Nixon is to announce major draft reform in the near future in an effort to diffuse some of the campus demonstrations against the Vietnam War. Would you favor this as an executive move without referring it to Congress in view of the fact that Congress has been dragging its feet on draft reform for several years?

Senator Mansfield. Yes, on that basis I would.

Mr. Sall. Do you have any reason to believe that Mr. Nixon does plan to move in this direction?

Senator Mansfield. None at all, but I hope he would because he does have some executive authority which I believe he could put to some advantage. The Senate in this situation which has developed around the draft question, which, incidentally, I did not vote to extend the deadline for the Senate, Senator Dirksen was a dream Senator. He probably wouldn't make the deadline and my curbstone opinion at the moment would be that he probably wouldn't make the deadline. Senator Mansfield. Would you be in favor of suspending the draft for the time being?

Senator Mansfield. I don't say at the moment. You caught me off base on that one. I hadn't thought about it.

Mr. Sall. Senator Mansfield, what has been the reason for the foot-dragging on the draft? There have been draft revision bills before Congress and the Senate two or three or four times. Senator Edward M. Kennedy had a rather lengthy one this year.

Senator Mansfield. I would imagine the Armed Services Committee has been so involved in the Military Authorization Bill and other matters that are coming up which probably at the time of the sitting of some of the members, in appropriations and in defense matters, that they feel they cannot give it the serious consideration it demands.

I know that it is the intention of Senator Stevens, who has been on the floor now for four or five months handling this particular bill under consideration, to take it up at the first opportunity and if he could he would do it this year, but he feels it may not be possible. But, if it is possible, he will take it up this year in the Senate.

Mr. Sall. I know he has indicated that it is not possible. Do you think draft reform is a problem that can safely be deferred until next year with all the unrest, the—

Senator Mansfield. No, I have been very disturbed by law. As I said, I did not vote for its extension the last time because I think it is too inequitable and confusing having it as it is. I think it is a facing-up to this situation which becomes more significant each passing day.

Mr. Sall. This bill has been, with President Nixon's for an all-volunteer army. Do you think this is a goal which can be reached or if is it too late for that the President's proposal would be given consideration as soon as possible.

Senator Mansfield. Well, I think we ought to look into it very carefully. Read the fine print. Calculate the cost and I would hope that the President's proposal would be given consideration as soon as possible.

Mr. Sall. Senator Hatfield and others have advanced the same proposal. Senator Mansfield. On Tuesday of this week the Senate Judiciary Committee is going to begin hearings to determine whether Judge Haynsworth should be promoted to the Supreme Court. In your view, have the charges of conflict of interest which have been directed against him placed any cloud on his nomination?

Senator Mansfield. I would think there would be some opposition to his nomination. I am not prepared to render a judgment yet.

I think the Judiciary Committee ought to hold the hearings which, as you say, will give you an indication of the time the questions will be brought out and that the Senate on the basis of these hearings and the report of the Judiciary Committee, I will make up my mind.

Mr. Sall. Senator, do you see the Haynsworth nomination will be before the Senate? Of course, the Supreme Court starts its fall term October 6th. Would you expect to act at that time?

Senator Mansfield. I would. It would all depend on what happens in the Judiciary Committee when the nomination is reported out and what the situation is on the floor.

Mr. Sall. As of now would you think the prospects that it will be before the start of the fall term of the court?

Senator Mansfield. Again I couldn't say, because we see what the Committee and, as you know, in the Judiciary Committee it is my understanding that any motion to accept a bill before the Committee on the floor before the start of the fall term, the Committee.

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Mr. Sall. Senator Mansfield, the Arab-Israeli War escalated another notch or so this week with all of these air battles and raids across the Suez Canal. I think a sign at all that the Soviets are really interested in
agreed with the United States on some formulas for bringing peace to this area?

Senator MANSFIELD. Well, they are still meeting with us from time to time. The matter will be discussed next week when Secretary Rogers meets Gromyko in New York. The United Kingdom and France are trying very hard, but the Israelis seem to think that it is a matter of direct confrontation or negotiations with the Arabs. I think they are right, but they can't seem to get that basis for negotiating so it appears to me that it is up to the Big Four, really, rather than the Big Two, to try and continue to see what they can do to bring this war to a close.

Mr. Scali. But do you see any sign that the Soviets are willing to stop encouraging the Arabs; willing, perhaps, to stop their shipments of vast quantities of arms into this area?

Senator MANSFIELD. No, but in all fairness, it must be pointed out that we are shipping jets to Israel while the Soviet Union is shipping jets, tanks and other armaments to the various Arab states.

Mr. CLARK. Senator, you and your fellow Democrat in the Senate face some rather mean arithmetic in this year's congressional election. I believe there are a total of 28 Democratic seats which are up and only nine Republicans are already claiming very much out loud that they have an excellent chance of winning control of the Senate. Are you worried about all this?

Senator MANSFIELD. Well, the Republicans are saying that I think we would in their situation, with their fingers crossed, say, it is going to be tough, but I think we will be able to maintain control of the Senate and we will do it on the basis of the record made not only in the Senate itself, but by the individual Senators concerned.

Mr. CLARK. Some political observers are saying, as you know, that Senator Kennedy's unfortunate accident has destroyed his chances of becoming the Democratic nominee, not only in 1972, but possibly forever. Would you agree with that?

Senator MANSFIELD. Well, that is hard to say. I said before the tragedy that in my opinion he would not be a candidate in 1972. What happens beyond that is too far into the future for me to conjecture on at this time.

Mr. Scali. Do you think the next Democratic nominee for President will come from the Senate?

Senator MANSFIELD. Yes, I do, and I would say that Senator Muskie is in the lead at the present time. Former Vice President Humphrey is right behind him. There is Senator Fred Harris to consider, and there will be others and that is my belief that the trend which has developed recently will continue and that probably the Democratic nominee will be selected from the Senate.

Mr. CLARK. I believe you just assumed Senator Humphrey will be elected back to the Senate from Minnesota in 1970, is that?

Senator MANSFIELD. No, whether or not he is elected, he will be a contender, and I assume he will be elected.

Mr. Scali. Senator, to go back to foreign affairs for a moment. Senator MANSFIELD. If he runs, he hasn't announced yet.

Mr. CLARK. I believe you have just announced for him.

Mr. Scali. Senator, there are some advance predictions that Foreign Minister Gromyko will finally say when he meets with Mr. Rogers in New York next week that, yes, Russia is interested in meeting with the United States to see whether or not the deployment and perhaps the number of missiles can be controlled.

Do you think that the first order of business in any such talks should be to halt the deployment of the so-called MIRV, the multiple warhead weapon?

Senator MANSFIELD. I most certainly do, and I hope the SALT talks do finally get under way. They are way overdue. Much damage, through delay, has been done in the meantime. It is partly our fault, as well as that of the Soviet Union because we have been playing games back and forth and I don't think it has done either of us any good and certainly as far as the cause of disarmament is concerned, which is both expensive and deadly, it has been retarded.

Mr. Scali. How have we been playing games, Senator?

Senator MANSFIELD. Well, I understand there were feelings by the Soviet Union unofficially during the last months of the previous administration and the first months of this administration and it took us a long time to react to those feelings and when we did it took the Soviet Union a long time to react and we started playing games and nobody benefitted by it.

Mr. CLARK. Senator, on a rather detached subject this is the week that the Congress does honor to the astronauts in a joint session of Congress, but there are strong demands in Congress both among Republicans and Democrats to cut back space spending. Where is future space exploration going to fit in the national priorities?

Senator MANSFIELD. I think it should be cut back. I think that we ought to pay more attention to the difficulties, the ills and the evils on earth rather than the projections which we have towards the moon and other planets. We have spent over $25 billion, I believe, on the Apollo mission so far. We finally got a man on the moon. The moon seems to have nothing of value up to this time, but these problems down on earth have to be faced and we better think of our own people down here rather than what might be up there.

Mr. Scali. Would you favor landing a man on Mars?

Senator MANSFIELD. No.

Mr. CLARK. Senator Mansfield. I am sorry, our time has run out. It has been a great pleasure having you with us on "Issues and Answers."

Senator MANSFIELD. Thank you.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, if the distinguished majority leader will yield, I should like to comment that the majority leader's excellent presentation was applauded, by all of us who saw him, for his fairness, his restraint, and his statesmanship. I know that millions of people like myself must have enjoyed the program.

Mr. MANSFIELD. I thank the minority leader.