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## Congressional Leadership Luncheon

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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COPY February 26, 1970

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA) TO THE CONGRESSIONAL  
LEADERSHIP LUNCHEON, NATIONAL GOVERNORS CONFERENCE

12:30 p.m., Room S-207, U. S. Capitol

You are welcome to the last stand of Democratic majorities. I say that not in a partisan spirit. It is just that the House and Senate Democrats are beginning to get that hemmed-in feeling. We are pressed between a Republican President who charms the TV audiences and a Republican Vice President who bombs the TV commentators. Furthermore, the political ratio of your conference does nothing to alleviate our uneasiness.

Nevertheless, we are glad to see you here--Republicans and Democrats alike. Just as the great issues which confront the nation, more and more, transcend state boundaries, so do they lend themselves less and less to partisan solution. To meet these issues, demands the best that is in both parties and in every state.

Viet Nam, for example, is not a partisan matter, anymore than it is a state-matter. Its casualties are young men of every state and its immense costs--tens upon tens of billions of dollars--are borne by taxes paid by all. The conflict began in a Democratic administration; it continues in a Republican administration. But both parties are united now in the conviction that this bloodbath must end as soon as possible. Republicans and Democrats alike, I am confident, will support any efforts of the President to negotiate an end to this tragedy. Still, a solution eludes

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the best efforts of the President. And so the country as a whole--not one party or the other--suffers the consequences, in the continuing casualties and in the accumulating costs.

I believe we are united, too, Democrats and Republicans, in our awareness of the domestic problems which confront the nation. There are differences between us, to be sure, but they are largely differences of approach to a solution. At least neither party needs any longer to be persuaded of the national dimensions of these problems. We have only to look around us to sense the devastating impact on the entire nation of the disgraceful neglect of our environment over many decades, of rampant crime--organized and unorganized--, of the continuing schism between races and between wealthy and poor. Nor can either party any longer slough off the questions of inadequate education and health care, and similar neglected social needs as of no interest to the federal government. To come to grips with these problems will take not partisanship but the combined resources of leadership in the parties, the combined energies of the states and the united determination of the nation.

As I see it, the urgent need is to shed what has long since become an obsessive and excessive foreign involvement. In the name of national security, this excess threatens to jeopardize our national security. It has led us into Viet Nam. It could lead us to reenact that tragedy elsewhere. It has prompted a defense budget of over \$75 billion this year.

There are, to be sure, essential expenditures which must be made to meet the situation beyond our borders--for our own benefit and for the building of a durable peace. There are essential expenditures for defense

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which must be made at home. By all means, let us continue to make these outlays, but let us, at least, stress the word "essential" in the consideration of these matters because somehow, we must bring about a better balance in the use of our resources. It will avail us little to pursue our national security zealously all over Southeast Asia and all over the world and multiply our missiles if, at the same time, we permit neglect of domestic needs to bring down our national house from within.

I would suggest, most respectfully, that this conference--you who are governors--can do much to help rectify the balance. You know the urgent needs of the people in your states. You know them--whether you are Republicans or Democrats. You know them close-up, day-in and day-out. You can bring an intensified awareness of these needs into federal policy and in so doing, you can help greatly to adjust our national perspective.

Yours, in short, is indeed a great responsibility.