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REMARKS OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA)

at the

ANNUAL CONVENTION LUNCHEON OF THE AMERICAN PAPER INDUSTRY

GRAND BALLROOM, WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL, NEW YORK CITY

TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 1970, 12:30 p.m.

TOWARDS A BETTER BALANCE

I am very grateful for the opportunity to get away from Washington, even for a day. These are busy times in the Senate. The pace is as though the session were ending rather than just beginning. More votes, for example, have been taken in the first few weeks of 1970 than in all of last year through the month of September. The Senate has been meeting almost every day, sometimes on Saturdays, and the sessions have been long and arduous.

To be sure, this intensity of activity is not necessarily a measure of constructive achievement. I am frank to admit that a high decibel of sound emerging from the Capitol dome is not always indicative of the value of what is transpiring under it. Certainly, there are times when silence is better than talk and when inaction is to be preferred to action.

I do not believe, however, that what is happening in the Senate, today, is sound and fury signifying nothing. The uncharitable may ascribe the Senate's mood merely to pre-campaign jitters among Democrats. It is true that Democrats face a difficult election in November. The President charms the TV audiences; the Vice President bombs the TV commentators. All the while, Democrats are confronted with the sheriff holding, I am told, nine million dollars in mortgages from the last election. As if that were not enough, the Republican National Committee has made clear that it will zero in on the Senate as the citadel of the remaining Democratic influence in the government.

Nevertheless, the Senate's present disquiet goes deeper than politics. In the first place, the sentiment is to be found not only in members of my party but among Republicans as well. It afflicts those who are slated to be candidates in November and those who are not. Its origins, I believe, lie not in partisanship but in an acute sensitivity to what is a growing disquiet in the nation.

The current Senate, in fact, is one of the least partisan I have known. For the past year, most of its members have been inclined to act on the view which President Nixon expressed in his inaugural address. You will recall that the President suggested it was a time for lowered voices.

While restraint in speech was an excellent suggestion, it is not of itself a response to the nation's difficulties. It will not defuse the economic and social time bombs in our midst. Our problems will not grow less dangerous by virtue of being soft-pedaled. Nor will neglect, benign or otherwise, solve them. To manage these problems at all, it seems to me, requires a combination of thought, discussion and action, quiet and restrained, if you will, but nonetheless, purposeful. To achieve that combination throughout the nation, there is a need for the consistent application of Presidential leadership supplemented by the Congress. The past few weeks of intense activity offer evidence that the Senate is willing to supply the supplement.

What it is that produces the uneasiness and, in turn, the predisposition to action in the Senate is not difficult to find. There is a clue to a principal source in the closeness with which the Wall Street Journal is read these days in the Senate Lobby. I venture to say that this interest has more to do with stock-taking than stock-holding. The financial news is followed because there is uncertainty regarding the trends in the nation's economy.

I shall not pre-empt these matters when others here are far more expertly qualified to discuss them. I would only point out that Senators are acutely aware that prices have been rising at an annual rate of six per cent for the past two years. They know, too, that price levels have reached an all time high and that interest rates are at a 100-year pinnacle.

Nor is there any point in mincing words about the housing industry and, perhaps, other major elements in the economy. The word there is not recession, it is depression.

The national unemployment rate is above four per cent for the first time in many years, and the factory work week is shrinking in a number of the nation's key industries.

Economist grasp the significance of these and other indicators in one way. Bankers in another. Business managers in still another. Senators read the mail from home. We are well-informed, for example, on the consequences of unemployment or shrinking incomes in terms of personal hardships. We are well aware of what high prices mean to old people living on Social Security annuities or pensions of \$100 a month or less.

The Senate may acknowledge as inevitable some of the actions which the Administration has taken to combat inflation. By the same token, however, the human impact of these actions are not ignored. In short, Senators do not exclude from their judgment of the nation's economic situation, the human plight of Americans who are caught in the statistics, who are squeezed in the vise of declining or fixed incomes as against still unchecked price-rises.

It is only too apparent that what began a year ago as a laudable effort by the Administration to restrain a serious inflation has not yet succeeded in achieving that goal. At the same time, a large segment of American enterprise and many Americans have been hurt in consequence of those measures. That is the reality and I see no point in whispering or ignoring it.

There is no panic reaction in the nation to this situation. There should not be. There need not be. I do not believe, however, that the way out of the difficulties lies in whistling in the dark. The fact is that there is no assurance of what lies just around the next corner.

The economy as a factor of concern has registered this session on the sensitive litmus of the Senate for the first time in many years. It joins the catalogue of carry-over national ills which have long been a source of anxiety. These other difficulties were there during previous administrations and are pressing in the current administration. Included,

of course, is the still-seething issue of race-relations. In the Senate, this problem is now seen more and more not as peculiar to the South but one that is woven into the social fabric of the entire nation.

The problem of crime in all of its ramifications, including the condition of the courts and criminal proceedings, also continues to stalk the Senate Chamber. There is great concern at the loss of the sense of sheer physical safety especially among the nation's urban dwellers. So, too, is there deep distress over the proliferating use of dangerous drugs, particularly among the young, and the apparent inability to get at the origins of this phenomenon or to grapple effectively with its consequences.

Finally, as you know only too well, the nation has suddenly awakened to the extent of the pollution of the environment. May I say that the Senate has been aware of this gathering cloud for several years. Pioneer legislative work had

already been done in past sessions and effective follow-through in the Executive Branch is now awaited. In this instance, the Congress was able to supply a pre-paid supplement to support the emergence of Presidential leadership on pollution a few months ago.

What these difficulties add up to is a long neglect of the nation's inner structure. Disintegration of the physical environment, especially in the urban areas, is far advanced. Furthermore, the social cement of civility, community responsibility and personal restraint appears to have given way in many places. Resort to violence grows. The whole range of public services--state, local and federal--seems sometimes indifferent to the situation. More often it is inadequate and ineffective. Whatever the case, the pillars of the nation's habitability are tending to weaken--and some at least faster than they can be reinforced.

Solutions to complex problems in a complex society cost a great deal of money. We have spent much and we will, undoubtedly, have to spend more. Whatever is spent, however, will not be enough if we do not also direct to these difficulties a concentration of intelligence and skills and a diligent and determined industry. That kind of effort requires leadership in all parts of the nation, inside and outside of government.

Do we have these resources? Can we afford the effort? We have no choice, it seems to me, but find them and to afford them. The key to the solution, I believe, is to be found in the use of existing resources more effectively and purposefully. In my judgment, a prohibitive taxation is not the sole alternative to decaying cities or insecure streets. Nor is a run-away inflation the inevitable consequence of providing for the needs of the old and the indigent, for adequate health facilities and services and for a decent education of the young.

There is another basic alternative as I see it. It is, as I have indicated, a better use of the resources which are available and, largely, already available to the federal government. To that end, of course, a continuing improvement in the productivity of government is necessary and I am delighted that the President has made a start in that connection. However, while we reach for savings of the millions of dollars which are spent for outdated tea-tasters and the like, it is to be hoped that we will not overlook the billions which are poured out annually in pursuit of outdated foreign policies and military practices.

It is not only a matter of waste and inefficiency in operations. By far, the greater drain lies in the irrelevance and excesses which exist in these main categories of federal expenditures. Some would call for a "reexamination of priorities" in the National Budget of \$200 billion. I think it is more accurate to speak of moving towards a better

balance between expenditures for security against threats from abroad and expenditures for security against erosion by neglect at home.

For many years, this balance has been heavily weighted on the side of defending against foreign dangers--real or presumed, immediate or projected. That is why the cost of the Defense Department towers above all other federal expenditures. At \$72.6 billion it is far and away the greatest single item in the current budget. In my judgment, the balance is lopsided, primarily because, as a nation, we have acted for too long on the basis of lopsided fears. We have concentrated on alien dangers and overlooked or disbelieved the dangers accumulating at home. In the circumstances, the civilian authorities--and that includes the Senate--have not exercised fully their responsibilities to inquire in depth into expenditures for national defense. For years, the checkbook has been open for military expenditures.

Let me cite an example. Cost over-runs on new weapons systems obviously do not contribute to the nation's defense; they contribute to the nation's indebtedness. Yet, on 38 major weapons procurement systems, over \$20 billion above the original cost estimates was permitted to accumulate without serious challenge from anywhere in the government until very recently. This total included such items as a \$3 billion over-run on the Minute Man Missile; \$1.4 billion on the C-5A cargo plane and \$3.0 billion on the M-48 torpedo.

The ABM debate which took place in the Senate last year sounded a bell on this laxity. In my judgment, it was a clear, if belated, notice that loose-thinking and loose-spending of this kind in the Executive Branch will no longer find acceptance in the Senate merely because they are packaged as national defense.

What applies to weapons systems applies also to the nation's numerous overseas commitments. The underlying policies

and practices which sustain these commitments account for a major part of the defense budget. Over the past two decades, we have accumulated, under various treaties and programs, allies by the dozens and military bases abroad by the hundreds. Whatever the initial merit, many of these arrangements are now outdated or downright dangerous.

An example of costly obsolescence is to be found in the size of the U. S. military force which, for two decades under NATO, has been maintained in Western Europe. Even today, the U. S. contingent there still numbers about one half million American military personnel and dependents. The fact is that a quarter of a century after World War II, we have not made significant changes in the magnitude of the U. S. forces under NATO. stationed in Europe/ We have not done so, notwithstanding the inflation and the weakened international financial position of the dollar,^{to} both of which this costly commitment has contributed. We have not done so, notwithstanding the changed

relationships within Europe--in particular, the increasing commercial and other amicable contact between East and West. We have not done so, notwithstanding the consistent disinclination of the Europeans to meet their NATO commitments at anywhere near the agreed on levels.

It is not surprising that a majority of Senators are now urging a contraction in the U. S. troop deployment in Western Europe. What is surprising is that the Executive Branch has resisted, through several administrations, any significant reduction in the commitment.

The cost of this enterprise has been estimated by Senator Percy of Illinois at \$14 billion. It is a severe drain on tax resources, a source of inflation and, of course, a major item of outflow in the balance of payments. I look to the Senate to press for a confrontation on this excess in what is otherwise a desirable and still necessary commitment to NATO. Together with the President, it seems to me, that

we will have to require this confrontation if we are to begin to redress the balance in the use of the nation's resources. Unless there is a readiness to face up to issues of this kind, the prospects of shifting resources to desperate domestic needs are dim indeed.

What is transpiring in Southeast Asia is even more disturbing than the inertia of our policies regarding NATO. To date, the involvement has already exacted an immense cost--easily over \$100 billion for Viet Nam alone and that war continues to command U. S. resources at the rate of about \$1.5 to \$2 billion a month. More tragic, Viet Nam has claimed almost 50,000 U. S. lives and caused about 250,000 other casualties. The toll of human life continues heavy from week to week. There is no definite sign, as yet, that there is an end in sight via "Vietnamization" or any other route.

On top of the continuing drain of Viet Nam, there has now unfolded the possibility of a deepening involvement in Laos. I speak now not of the U. S. bombing of the Ho Chi

Minh Trails which, just inside Laos, lead from North to South Viet Nam. These military operations actually have little to do with the situation inside Laos but are related directly to the conflict in Viet Nam. At this late date, it is probably not to be expected that they will end until there is an end to the war in Viet Nam. In themselves, however, they do not necessarily involve an enlargement of the war in Southeast Asia.

There is another war within Laos--the so-called "hidden war"--which carries the risk of a new U. S. entrapment. It takes a great stretch of the imagination to relate vital U. S. interests to this remote conflict in a primitive land inhabited by scarcely three million people. Nevertheless, we have somehow already managed, by the way of foreign aid or otherwise, to sink billions of dollars in Laos. To that aid has been added U. S. advisors and those who go beyond advice. U. S. transport and helicopter support has been committed. Even a B-52 bombing raid has been undertaken among the ancient burial urns of the so-called Plain of Jars. It is

a familiar
pattern, akin to that which drove us, beginning in 1952, ever
deeper into Viet Nam.

The warning flags are flying in the Senate on Laos. They have been raised by Members of both parties. They have been raised, in my judgment, because the Senate senses that it is vital to the future of this nation--and I use the word advisedly--that what transpired in Viet Nam not be repeated in Laos. Unless this bleeding of men and resources can be halted now, where on the Asian mainland does it end? What lies beyond Laos? Thailand? Cambodia? China? As the drain goes on in Southeast Asia, where will we find the resources and the young initiatives and strength and ideals which are essential elements for meeting the difficulties within the nation? In the face of this war's divisiveness, on what will we rebuild a firm national unity without which the stability of the Republic is jeopardized?

It seems to me that we must not only avoid a new enmeshment in Laos but that we must redouble the effort to

get our heads above water again in Viet Nam. We must do so, moreover, without prolonged delay. I am persuaded that that is the direction in which President Nixon wants to move and is seeking to move. In that respect he has had and he will continue to have my full support. I have upheld the Nixon Doctrine which would reduce our military involvement throughout Southeast Asia. I have supported, too, the President's request to the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom, as co-chairmen, that they reconvene a meeting of the participants in the Geneva Conference of 1962.

Negotiations still offer, in my judgment, the best prospects for preventing an expansion of the conflict in Laos and for ending the war in Viet Nam. The way is still open in Paris; it can be reopened in Geneva. To that end, it might be helpful, I believe, if the President would designate to the present peace talks in Paris a representative of stature and

authority with his full confidence. I would hope, further, that there would be a clarion call for a revival of the Geneva Conference of 1961-1962 on Laos, coupled with the proposal that the Conference be broadened in membership and objective in order to consider the situation of all of Indochina and the Southeast Asian mainland. Moreover, it may well be desirable that the call which goes out should go out for a **foreign** ministers meeting in order to register its urgency.

From the point of view of the interests of this nation, it is time to seek, I believe, the neutralization not only of Laos, but of all of Indochina and the entire Southeast Asian mainland. It is time to join with other outside powers in bona fide multilateral guarantees of the neutrality of the region.

I do not underestimate the difficulties. But what is the alternative? This nation has everything to gain by trying to revitalize without delay the diplomatic machinery which may bring about a termination of this tragic situation on the Southeastern Asian mainland.