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Congressional Record S. 7206, Proposed Declaration of War - Billings Gazette Editorial

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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of what seems to me to be the excessive stretching of the Constitution by two successive administrations.

While I want to make clear my sympathy with the intent of this editorial, I think the way to work effectively toward its objective is to pass the Cooper-Church amendment which is now pending in the Senate. If we take this step in balanced and strict constitutionalism, we will also be taking the first step back out of the morass of Vietnam.

Mr. President, even though I have read the editorial in full, I ask unanimous consent that the editorial previously referred to be printed in the RECORD at this point.

There being no objection, the editorial was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DECLARE IT A WAR—OR GET US OUT

Everybody who wants to declare war, stand up and be counted.

It's come to that in the Southeast Asian mess.

Whatever you call it, that's a war we are getting deeper and deeper into.

So let's make it constitutional.

The Constitution says it is the Congress' prerogative to declare war. A declaration of war thereby should be introduced in the Congress and fully debated by that body.

If it passes, the Congress should immediately institute all the wage, price and rationing controls of any full-scale war. The effects should be felt by every man, woman and child in this nation.

If it does not pass, then the U.S. should pull out of what immediately becomes an unconstitutional action. A vote on a declaration would give the people a voice through their representatives.

The Gazette therefore calls upon Sen. Mike Mansfield, the state's senior representative in the Congress, to introduce a declaration of war upon the Communist forces in Southeast Asia.

And then, Mike, lead Congress in beating it!

THE PROPOSED DECLARATION OF WAR

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, in the Billings, Mont., Gazette of May 4, 1970, there was published an editorial calling for the introduction in the Congress of a declaration of war in Southeast Asia and then the defeat of this measure. The proposition is advanced as a way of bringing the tragic war in Indochina to an end. I have studied the editorial very carefully. It has the merit of blowing away the chaff and going to the constitutional question which is involved. In a sense, it suggests a shortcut to the end which the President and everyone else seeks.

The editorial is entitled "Declare It a War—Or Get Us Out," and reads as follows:

Everybody who wants to declare war, stand up and be counted.

It's come to that in the Southeast Asian mess.

Whatever you call it, that's a war we are getting deeper and deeper into.

So let's make it constitutional.

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I find, however, that I cannot follow this course. The consequences would be a legal chaos which might well jeopardize the hundreds of thousands of Americans who are already in Vietnam and have now been involved in Cambodia through no doing of their own but rather because

FROM
MIKE MANSFIELD
UNITED STATES SENATOR
MONTANA