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Congressional Record S. 346 - Senator Mansfield on Face the Nation

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001
SENATOR MANSFIELD APPEARS ON FACE THE NATION PROGRAM

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, on last week's edition of Face the Nation, I appeared as a guest of the CBS network in the "Face the Nation" program. The three nimble correspondents who appeared with me, George Herbert Walker Bush, Democrat, The New York Times, and Bruce Morton, posed a great number of questions on current issues and other matters of public interest. I tried to answer as best I could within the brief period of the interview.

During the course of the program, I made the comment that the rate of inflation during 1970 was 7 percent. The figure was in error. It should have been stated at about 5 percent. I regret this error. Otherwise, I will stand on what was said during the half hour and I ask unanimous consent that the transcript of the meeting be printed at this point in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the transcript is ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

FACE THE NATION
(As broadcast over the CBS television network, Face the Nation, January 24, 1971, Washington, D.C.)

Guest: Senator Mike Mansfield (Democrat, Montana) Senate majority leader.

Reporters: George Herbert Walker Bush, CBS News; Samuel Shaffer, NewswEEK; and Bruce Morton, CBS News.

Producers: Sylvia Westerman and Prentiss Childs.

George Herman, Senator Mansfield, President Richard M. Nixon has proposed a package of government changes which he says amount to a new American revolution. Do you think by election day of 1972, this new American revolution will be a fact or politics, or will it be an issue?

Senator Mansfield. It could be both. I anticipate that it may be partially completed by that time, but it's so far-sweeping, so far-reaching, that it's going to take more than one session of Congress to face up to that responsibility.

Announcer, From CBS Washington, Face the Nation....

Senator Mansfield. Yes, that's a question which I tried to answer as best I could within the brief period of the interview. As far as the seniority system is concerned, I can give you no information at this time. I would be brought up by the press in the middle of the news interview, if I'm correct, and the President's proposal which must be answered, hopefully, it may have come down this year, or it may come down this year with some change.

Senator MANSFIELD. Well, there will be all that pressure, but I hope we'll come out with some change, because there is a need for the Congress to do what the Administration has called for, but there has to be a best way found to do it.

Senator MANSFIELD. A need to do what? Which of the things that the President is advocating? Senator MANSFIELD. All of the things which he's advocated, I think, are steps in the right direction, and they should be given the most serious consideration by the Congress, because the times are of such a nature that we are becoming a deficit-spending nation. The conditions in the states and the cities are becoming quite grave, and so something must be done, and the President has at least stepped out of the long proposals which should be given every consideration.

Shaffer. Senator, isn't revenue sharing based upon the idea that local communities are better equipped to handle this money? Do you think that they are?

Senator MANSFIELD. No, I do not. I think the federal government is better equipped. And getting back to the question of funds being distributed to states and localities, it would appear to me that the possibility for greater waste and inefficiency and ineffectiveness would result.

Senator MANSFIELD. Well, just to make sure that there is a consensus for any of these things—reorganization, revenue sharing and so on—that perhaps the kind of debate that we need to reform welfare than anything else?

Senator MANSFIELD. Yes, Senator Shaffer. Yes, that's a fair statement. I thought it was about the President's proposal which must be answered, hopefully, it may have come down this year, or it may come down this year with some change.

Senator MANSFIELD. What sort of difference would you be looking for?

Senator MANSFIELD. Well, just to make sure that there is better administration; for example, fewer personnel, greater application of technology, which is needed, a greater desire on the part of people to contribute towards their own welfare and less dependence on the government, and less assistance to the number of welfare agencies which welfare unfortunately has created in a familiar sense down through the decades.

Shaffer. Senator, you and I have spoken about reform. How about Congress reforming itself? You yourself on the floor of the Senate, toward the end of the last session, express the sentiment about the congressional image, or the senatorial image I think was what you said, but I wonder about this idea of the much-criticized seniority and the filibuster rule?

Senator MANSFIELD. Well, we're in need of reform, no question about that. The filibuster rule will be taken up, and I have better hopes this year than previously that we might be able to do something in bringing about a reduction from two-thirds of the Senate and votes. As far as the seniority system is concerned, I can give you no information at this time. I would be brought up by the press in the middle of the news interview, if I'm correct, and the President's proposal which must be answered, hopefully, it may have come down this year, or it may come down this year with some change.

Senator MANSFIELD. Well, then, how about the filibuster problem? Traditionally when you start out to tackle the filibuster, what you get is a filibuster against a change in the Senate. Is it going to begin with a filibuster this term?

Senator MANSFIELD. Well, a mini-filibuster to start with, then we'll see what happens. I would point out that we use the word filibuster we should not apply it just to the south alone, because the liberals are being pretty effective during the filibuster, especially toward the end of a session.

Morton, Why are you more optimistic this time? Are you going to have the same people talking against change who've been here before?

Senator MANSFIELD. Well, I think the way things went at the end of the last session, which was conducive to a possible change, and I think also that some members who have been adamant on the question of cloture are showing signs of softening at this time; at least that's the results I see on the basis of conversations with various members from different parts of the country.

Senator MANSFIELD. Is that a regional thing? Senator?

Senator MANSFIELD. No, it is from various parts of the country. Senator MANSFIELD. What accounts for it?

Senator MANSFIELD. Maybe a recognition of the fact that times have changed and that we spend too much time on certain subjects, and that the main subjects on which most of the filibuster in the Senate has been spent have now become less significant.

Senator MANSFIELD. Time is not the only thing that's changed. You now have a new Democratic Whip. Does the election of Senator Byrd indicate that the Senate is—the Senate Democrats are moving to the right?

Senator MANSFIELD. No, not at all. I think that the Senate Democrats will operate in the future as they have in the past. And Senator Byrd we have a first-class floor technician, and the business will be continued and furthered.

Senator MANSFIELD. You have not always agreed with him on certain votes. Now, furthering now of specifically authorized programs in health, education, and so forth. Now do you think that is about right, or do you think that these billions to the states without any strings?—because that would mean the ending consideration of the Byrd-Kennedy race. So what was? Why do you think Senator Byrd won?
American prisoners of war and the withdrawal of American troops, and not in the future interests of Vietnam. Therefore...

HERMAN. Do you feel that this violated what the administration—?

Senator MANSFIELD. Yes, at the best I can say, it draws a very fine line. I think it goes contrary to the intent and the spirit of the Cooper-Cheney Resolution, the passage of the Cooper-Cheney Church Resolution, and in that way try to bring about a restoration of the equality that would exist between the executive and the legislative branches in the field of foreign policy.

HERMAN. Would you now vote for language which would restrict or would prohibit the use of American air power to support the Cambodian government or South Vietnamese troops in Cambodia?

Senator MANSFIELD. I would.

HERMAN. Senator, you speak of Congress stopping indefinitely a commitment of American forces as if we thought that something like the McGovern time-certain resolution would pass this time? It was badly based then, and I think I would say that... Senator MANSFIELD. Senator, that's right. But then, if you don't succeed at first, the saying is try, try again and wouldn't rather it be done privately, without the date being specified, because the administration does have a point in saying that if you do this there will be a certain reaction on the part of the enemy. Point is—this can be done both ways, because if we do something then our friends in Saigon can continue to use us as they see fit, so we're caught in the middle. So we'd better fish or cut bait.

HERMAN. On another aspect of foreign policy, you know, there have long proposed that we cut back on our troop commitments in Europe.

Senator MANSFIELD. None at all. I think the effort to cut out the fat which we have in Europe, reduce the 525,000 troops, and military dependents who are over there, that is a valuable cut. In terms of the whole number of generals and admirals, do away with some of these headquarters which are piled on top of each other, you know, in the sense that we could cut our forces in Europe by 50 percent. Cut the fat and the 50 percent could be cut away. Now, you know, I'm not saying that that's effective, perhaps more so, than the total now.

HERMAN. How are you going to do it—by a sense of the Senate or... by you originally proposed, or by the power of the purse?

Senator MANSFIELD. Either by a sense of the Senate resolution or an amendment to an appropriate bill. And the point—the issue, the reason, the need for precipitate reduction, but a substantial reduction on a gradual basis.

HERMAN. How can the Senate stand up on its hind feet, to use the phrase that's been pushed around here a little bit? The President has assured us, the Vice President has assured us, that Mr. Nixon now has a working ideological majority in the Senate.

Senator MANSFIELD. Well, time will tell. This Senate has just gotten underway. We haven't had a chance to draw lines. There will be a desire to cooperate and I'll be my intention, if possible, to keep politics as much as possible out of debate and issues, but only time will tell. My guess would be that the Senate this year would be just about as mixed and has been since it was last Congress.

MORTON. Senator, one of the other dead-lines that we're going to have to look at is the drafting of the draft, which runs out the middle of this year. What do you think ought to be done with this?

Senator MANSFIELD. Well, I think it ought to be abolished. I didn't vote for its extension. I don't intend to vote for its extension. I don't intend to vote for its extension. I don't intend to vote for its extension. I don't intend to vote for its extension. I don't intend to vote for its extension.
MORTON. Well, the administration advocates that, but always says at the same time that it’s impractical as long as they need and as long as it’s needed throughout the world.

Senator MANSFIELD. Yes, but we’re withdrawing that army in Vietnam and we’re returning to the control of the people. The President has not approved the appropriation. 

Senator MANSFIELD. Yes, but the committee is aware of the fact that the President is going to recommend a decrease in the army. 

Senator MANSFIELD. No, the incidents in which you’ve raised do give me pause, great pause, and I’m delighted that Senator Sam Ervin of North Carolina is conducting an investigation into that type of intelligence activity by the government on civilians, checking up on their politics and their activities. Doesn’t that mean that any professional army give you some pause in a democracy?

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