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Negotiation of Mutual Troop Reductions between Warsaw Pact and NATO Countries

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May 14, 1971

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA)

Mr. President:

It is interesting to note the enthusiasm which has suddenly been kindled for the negotiation of mutual troop reductions between the Warsaw Pact and the NATO countries. On January 2, 1961,--1961--I made a similar proposal which was cold-shouldered by the preceding Democratic Administration. If the Senate will permit, I will read that brief statement in full at this point.

* * * * *

It is ten years later. I may be forgiven, I hope, if I am less than sanguine about this sudden enthusiasm/ for negotiations. A time lag of a decade seems to me a somewhat prolonged delay. in getting to them.

Nevertheless, I was interested in Brezhnev's proposal today. He suggested that negotiations get underway between the United States and the Soviet Union. I am delighted, too, that the response of the President has been in the affirmative. He is to be commended for whatever part he may have played in bringing about this stirring of diplomacy. Indeed, if the proposed amendment acted even as a partial precipitant, that is all to the good.

May I say, however, that the Brezhnev proposal does not in any way affect the rationale of the issue which is now before the Senate. In my judgment, a reduction in U. S. forces in Western Europe by 50 percent is in the interest of this nation with or without negotiations. What is involved in this proposal is a cut where a cut can be made. It is a cut in the excess and a discard of the obsolescent in the U. S. deployment in Europe. It is a

long-past-due adjustment, not in the Western alliance, not in the NATO Treaty, but in its ^{one-sided} ~~bloated~~ machinery. The prolonged put-off of this adjustment has resulted in a debilitating drain on the resources of this nation and this nation alone. The run has not been on the mark; it has been on the dollar. Lest we lose sight of that reality in an enthusiasm for negotiated mutual reductions with the Soviet Union, I would also remind the Senate that the run has not been on the ruble. It has been on the dollar.

Copies for your information

 Opinion of Senator Mike Mansfield (D., Montana)

For Release Monday a. m., January 2, 1961

At the present time we have five divisions in Western Europe. Arrayed against these limited forces are over 25 Russian divisions, deployed largely in East Germany, but also in Poland and Hungary. While it is true that the Western European nations, particularly West Germany, have available additional men under arms in Western Europe, their numbers are probably offset by the forces in the Eastern European satellites. The numerical imbalance as between the Russian forces and our own committed in Europe is overwhelmingly weighted on the side of the Soviet Union. From this it is clear that the U. S. divisions in Europe, as such, have lost real meaning in terms of the shield concept of NATO.

Protestations to the contrary, their significant meaning is a symbol of our commitment to join in the defense of Western Europe with all our strength and all our weapons if that area is invaded. A symbol of this kind would be no less a symbol if the U. S. commitment were to consist of two or three divisions rather than five. One would hope, therefore, that it would be possible to offer to reduce our total commitments of forces in Europe by two or three divisions in turn for a Russian willingness to cut their forces in Hungary, Poland and Germany by a roughly proportionate number -- say somewhere in excess of ten.

That would be an important step towards easing tensions in Europe. It also would permit the Russians to reduce their armaments expenditures - which they are apparently anxious to do. It would permit us to save a substantial amount of dollars in gold, which we are now draining out of the country, in no small part because of the numbers of troops with dependents and supporting structure which we maintain in Europe. At the same time the removal of two or three divisions with all of its dependents might make it possible to ease up on the financial pressure and, hence, to permit the dependents of those men who would remain in Europe to stay with them.

Finally, if the Europeans felt their security weakened by a withdrawal of the American forces, they are in a financial position now to strengthen their own military forces, and could do so.

In short, an initiative in this situation seeking to bring about a concurrent reduction of both Russian and U. S. forces in Europe would be a rational step towards normalcy in Europe and peace. It would be a step benefiting all the nations involved and reflecting the improved stability, financially and otherwise of Western Europe. These possibilities should be explored diplomatically on their own merit as a part of - but a distinct part of the over-all major questions of security in all Europe and disarmament.