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Congressional Record S. 7381, Military Selective Service Act, Troop Withdrawal

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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That is the Armed Services Committee, which is in control of the bill now before us—believes there could be room for some further reduction. The detailed material in this area is highly classified, but it should be noted that the United States cannot be expected to maintain a large supply and logistics base in Europe to support hostilities for a long period of time when our allies are showing, by their stores of supplies and ammunition, that they are prepared to maintain the logistics base necessary for such lengthy hostilities.

That is the end of the quotation from the report accompanying the bill now before the Senate for its consideration.

Mr. President, the Senate confronts an issue of immense importance. The outcome may well affect this Nation's posture not only with regard to Europe but also, to a great extent, to its role around the globe. In a very real sense, the Senate is today looking to the years ahead and to the policies and positions that will be relevant and productive. To be sure, what was done in the past was relevant and productive. But the time has passed, in my judgment, to strike a course that will free us from those shackles forged originally to bind us to policies and positions that have lost their meaning.

In cutting by one-half the level of U.S. forces in Europe, the amendment is designed to put U.S. troop levels there into a contemporary perspective. Needless to say, I have been impressed by the intensity of comment which this proposal has prompted. It is a healthy sign of interest in our European policies—policies which have indeed suffered great neglect during these past several years of turbulence in Southeast Asia.

At the outset, I would like to note my respect for the array of statesmen who have spoken out on this matter. Many of them, in my opinion, will be judged exceedingly well by history. It was 20 years ago, in a time of ominous cold war tension, that many of them foretold the Iron Curtain has not yet been softened; it is in danger. We no longer perceive a monolithic Communist bloc arrayed solidly against us.

China and Russia now present the greatest threat to each other's security. The Iron Curtain has parted in many places, and relations between East and West Europe are rapidly improving. The Iron Curtain has parted in many places, and relations between East and West Europe are rapidly improving.

I cite these as a few examples of change. In spite of the changes, however, our NATO commitment of force today is not substantially less than when the Alliance was entered 20 years ago. Indeed, considering the awesome might of our armed forces, it is not far greater. One final thought on this, Mr.

THE MILITARY SELECTIVE SERVICE ACT

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill (H.R. 6031) to amend the Military Selective Service Act of 1967; to increase military pay; to authorize military active duty strengths for fiscal year 1972; and for other purposes.

Mr. MANSFIELD, Mr. President, first let me thank all my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for the very kind words they have had to say about me.

Mr. BYRD of West Virginia. Mr. President, may we have order?

The VICE PRESIDENT. The Senate will be in order.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Especially at the beginning of their speeches, sometimes before, and sometimes toward the end, they told me they were going to vote against the pending amendment. I appreciate the good will and the good wishes.

Mr. President, sometimes it takes a sledge hammer to make an imprint and place an issue on the table. I did raise this issue. I have been raising it for 11 years. I did not make the issue this time. But the issue has been made, and regardless of the outcome of the vote tonight, it will not disappear. It will not return to the cowbells where it has rested so peacefully for the past two decades and 1 year.

I shall try not to go back over what I have already said, because, while the debate has been considerate in part and emotional in part, in my opinion it has not been as practical as it might have been. There has been no hint of an understanding from downtown or from overseas. It was take it or leave it; and there has been no hint of an understanding from downtown or from overseas.

It is time to face up to this country. If my memory serves me correctly, our debt is equal to the combined debts of all the other countries in the world. We have an unemployment rate of 6.1 percent, and an inflation rate of 5.7 percent. That is today. And I do not want to look over my shoulder and think that something that was good 20 or 25 years ago cannot necessarily undergo a change today.

I am not a member of the old guard. There is a chronological gap between me and the great majority of the people of this Nation who are under 30 years of age, but there never will be a credibility gap if I can help it, because I want to join them in facing up to the world of reality today, and I do not want to live in the past. I do not want to return to the "gold old days." I want to face up to the responsibilities which are ours, individually and collectively, today.

Does the Senate want to do something about this situation in NATO? I think it does. I know it does. But the question is, will the Senate do something about this situation, which we all know calls for correction and which we all know will not be hidden under a shroud forever? Not from this week on.

It was interesting to read the report of the Committee on Armed Services now on Senators' desks, and on page 35 to find this item, under the heading: "Army."

Second, there is some reason to believe that there may be an excessive need for supplies and logistics personnel in the U.S. Army forces in Europe. The Department has itself recently conducted a review of these units and has reduced authorized strength in them by several thousand. But the Committee—
President, I would just say that nostalgia for great achievements in the past cannot be a substitute for a foreign policy designed for the future.

It should be clearly explained, first of all, that it is not suggested by this amendment that we let down our guard in Western Europe. It is only suggested that we not remain frozen in an unrealistic and outdated posture; one that serves only to weaken us as a Nation. It is suggested that at long last, we face up to the matter of reducing to realistic proportions our garrison in Europe along the lines recommended 10 years ago by Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Oh, but the same voices are heard expressing the same reasons. First, they claim that the possibility of detente will be jeopardized. But what has improving East-West relations to do with the present bloated level of U.S. forces in Europe? What is to prevent us from relaxing tensions if the fat is squeezed out of the military garrison there? What has the present 300,000 U.S. military personnel along with their 225,000 dependents to do with easing tensions? Why not more? Why not less? Indeed, have we not by very own harbingers in the press been heralding the situation in Germany as having fewer than it pledged. The United Kingdom has cut to the bone, and Canada is well on her way out.

It all adds up to this Nation carrying a very one-sided financial burden for NATO long past the time when the burden of financial exchange shifted against us. In reply, it is said that the Europeans are making an effort. They are attempting to defray these balance-of-payments losses. It was stated that through agreements the Germans were purchasing quantities of U.S. equipment which, to a large degree, "offset" our expenditure in Germany. But the so-called "offset" program just does not withstand close scrutiny.

That policy, Mr. President, began in the early 1960's. Formal offset agreements have been in effect only between ourselves and West Germany, the recipient of the bulk of our NATO related expenditures. The term "offset" has no connotation. It is used to suggest that a substantial portion of the purchases are offset to NATO? France has none. Germany has fewer than it pledged. The United Kingdom has cut to the bone, and Canada is well on her way out.

NATO expenditures in Europe. I suggest that when such an expenditure is summarized in terms of payments outflow from NATO may well have reached $2 billion. In this regard, the news on Monday about the first quarter balance-of-payments deficit is most alarming.

If one were really serious about insisting upon an equitable burden sharing within NATO, one would demand that some portion of these defense expenditures, not a token 10 percent as is now mentioned. As has been pointed out, to reduce our real NATO budget, we need direct payments. Much more basic to the argument is the idea that the idea of genuine burden sharing is but a pious hope. It was mentioned 20 years ago and has been talked about ever since. If burden sharing were the only issue here, then why not take congressional action with teeth in it; why not enact legislation that would require a full contribution from our allies? Let the European nations do what they have said repeatedly the Europeans view the presence of these 300,000 American servicemen with their 225,000 dependents.

Though exceedingly important in the context of our defense posture, it is not the only issue at stake. There has been the modified Mathias proposal; the Norton proposal, the Dominick proposal, the Brabham proposal, the Percy proposal, and others; some emerged, some emerging and perhaps some yet to emerge. Though to varying degrees, most of these alternatives recognized the necessity for change. None, I say, most respectfully, were willing to make the adjustment in clear and direct fashion. Indeed, most called for less than what 50 or more of my colleagues in the Senate in the past have called upon the Executive to do—that is, to achieve a substantial reduction of U.S. troops in Europe. Most of the alternatives, be they perfecting amendments or substitute amendments, asked for consultations and negotiations. But we have consulted and we have negotiated this question year after year after year. As calls for consultations and negotiations, as changes, none, most respectfully, were willing to make the adjustment in clear and direct fashion. Indeed, most called for less than what 50 or more of my colleagues in the Senate in the past have called upon the Executive to do—that is, to achieve a substantial reduction of U.S. troops in Europe. Most of the alternatives, be they perfecting amendments or substitute amendments, asked for consultations and negotiations. But we have consulted and we have negotiated this question year after year after year after year. As calls for consultations and negotiations, as changes, none, most respectfully, were willing to make the adjustment in clear and direct fashion.

And what have consultations and negotiations with the West Europeans accomplished? What have we accomplished in regard to European support for our forces and our interests? My colleagues in this Chamber representing agricultural States understand the problem only too well. It is simply time to indicate to the Europeans that we will stand firm for our interests; all of our interests. But, no, they say any adjustment downward of our European garrison somehow affects adversely every other part of the world.

Most notable is the warning that the amendment will impair our Middle East situation. I am frankly impressed with the sudden revelation to officials in the Government who for years have had difficulty seeing any serious Soviet threat to Israel. Suddenly they have seen the light and now make the amendment because it allegedly would hinder our ability to aid Israel and would strengthen the Soviet hand in the Middle East.

Mr. President, this claim is just not supported. The key to our air capability in the Mideast, in turn, is not our Army in southern Germany. It is the airbases in Turkey, in Greece, and in Italy, for which we pay no small sums in terms of aid.

But finally, we are told that unilateral reduction of our NATO forces would mean the destruction of the reduction of Warsaw Pact armies. It is said that if the amendment were adopted we could "kiss that possibility goodbye."

Mr. President, that is just not so. President Kennedy said it in one editorial or a hundred. It does not make it so. It is unfounded, first of all, to suggest that U.S. NATO troop reductions provide the exclusive incentive to East European troop reductions by the Soviets. It is no secret for instance, that Russia's need to strengthen its forces in the Far East continues more than ever today. At the same time, Russia continues to follow us in the costly and ever spiraling strategic arms race. And, no less than we, are the Soviets aware of the demands made by their entire defense budget upon the domestic economy.

For all of these reasons—but primarily because of the tensions in the Far East—Moscow has a very great incentive indeed to reduce its Warsaw Pact forces and replace them elsewhere.

What makes the Russians hesitate? Clearly the dominant reason is the political control in Eastern Europe. As Czechoslovakia revealed all too clearly, such controls ultimately depend upon military might. If Soviet planners find their Far East concerns sufficiently pressing, some reduction in Eastern Europe no doubt would be risked. Otherwise such a reduction is unlikely under any circumstances.

So how does the size of NATO's army fit into this picture? I suggest, Mr. President, that cutting our Seventh Army forces is an equally reasonable way to induce the Soviets to reduce their manpower in the satellites. I suggest such a cut on our part would act as effectively as any this end as well, and as forces reductions reached mutually through long drawn-out negotiations. It is clear, too, that with a substantial reduction of our troops, the prospect of a genuine and lasting reduction of Soviet presence would be sharply reduced. Russia would be hard put to explain why it was necessary to retain such large forces to protect the satellites against a pruned-back NATO.
Indeed, it would not even be improbable to suggest that if one were a Soviet leader this past weekend, worried about the prospect of such satellite pressure, one might well have sought to defer any action on United States-European troop strength by calling for long, drawn-out negotiations.

Another factor in Soviet reluctance to reduce its forces may actually be its assessment of the NATO threat. Many Soviet experts argue persuasively that Russia's foreign policy remains a mixture of aggressive and genuinely defensive attitudes. To the extent that this, too, is a factor in Soviet reluctance to reduce its Warsaw forces, a unilateral reduction by the United States could be a positive factor in a Soviet willingness to make a suitable response.

But, it will be said by some, what of the deep fear of Western Germany? The argument goes that with a reduced restraints presence of American forces, Germany may seek to expand its own military power. It is this fear that would harden Russia's present position in Europe. This is pure speculation. Not only does it ignore the fact that Bonn has no financial stomach for substantial military enlargement, but it also denies the growing pre-eminence of West Germany in the Common Market and its desire to retain its strong ties to the West and its eagerness for trade ties with the East.

But even if I am wrong, that is no argument for hoping that simultaneous force reductions would result from negotiations. If in fact Soviet reluctance to reduce its forces is dominated by fear of a nuclear West Germany, unrestrained by our presence, then it will be no more anxious to reduce its position in Central Europe through mutual force reduction talks. If the real problem is fear of a nuclear West Germany, let us address that problem, and not talk about peripheral issues. In Southeast Asia we have learned too well the painful consequences of failing to face up to and correct bad policy. We have busied ourselves debating the more superficial issues. On this matter, we need to clear the air with constructive action.

Paring the issue down to its simplest terms, no case has been made that a reduction in half of our NATO forces would endanger the physical security of Western Europe. Why, it is asked in turn, should a unilateral effort to desensitize this European garrison be rejected? I do not oppose good faith talks with the Soviets or with anyone else. But if the Nelson amendment would have paved their way. But since the Soviets do have considerable independent incentive to achieve force reductions on their own, what is so necessary about moving simultaneously? Our initiative would be a reduction, not an escalation of forces. Our initiative would ease tensions, not aggravate them. Our initiative would enhance, rather than diminish, the prospects for eventual mutual troop reductions in NATO.

In summary, I would only stress again that this troop reduction amendment does not seek the end of NATO. It seeks only to bring this Nation's financial contribution to the NATO cause somewhat closer into line with that of other members.

It will not compel the complete withdrawal of the United States from Europe. Indeed, it may help to prevent it. As I see it, the current financial crisis is only the handwriting on the wall on that score. It warns that our political and military role abroad which was established in another time and circumstances is not properly adjusted to current needs.

The adjustment is long past due in Europe. Unless it is made, I fear that all of our overseas commitments—the essential, indeed, the vital—along with the superfluous, the antiquated, the irrelevant and the redundant, will be endangered.

This Government—the President and the Congress together—would be well advised in my judgment to update these commitments in judgment and content. We need to look at Europe as it is, today, not as it was a quarter of a century ago, nor as it was at the time of Korea when the present size of the U.S. garrison in Western Europe was first established, at which time, incidentally, we first developed an interest in Southeast Asia—specifically in Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia.

As the Senate commences to vote on this issue, I would only ask that each Senator consider the effect of the outcome not in terms of what was right for yesterday, but rather in the context of what is needed for today and tomorrow.

Mr. President, may I say in conclusion that I have asked no Senator, nor do I intend to do so now.

The Senate is made up of mature individuals who represent sovereign States. Each Senator is capable of making up his own mind on the basis of the issue which confronts us at this time. As I said, I have no regrets and will have none, regardless of the outcome. I will have no alibis. I will admit no mistakes in this case. If the amendment is defeated, so be it. If otherwise, there will be no sense of personal triumph, may I emphasize. The issue has been raised, and the raising of this issue is a matter of moment for this body, for this Government, for our people, and for those of us who belong to the NATO organization.

May I say that, as far as the Senate is concerned, in my opinion, nobody is going to take us to the cleaners. If we are taken in, we will be taken in by ourselves. We will have nobody to blame but ourselves. And, if we are, it will be too bad.

Mr. President, may I ask for a few moments of your time?
Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I yield to the distinguished Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. McCLELLAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the Record, immediately following my remarks, an article in yesterday's Evening Star by Tom Wicker, entitled "Mike Mansfield's Welcome Heresy."

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

Mike Mansfield's Welcome Heresy

(By Tom Wicker)

Sen. Mike Mansfield of Montana has done us all a service. His proposal to force a 50 percent reduction in American forces in Europe has made it clear how difficult it is in this country to change a policy that has achieved institutional status, no matter how little sense the policy may have come to make.

Mansfield's welcome Heresy also has exposed the extent to which American foreign policy-making is dependent, not just upon the standards and concerns but even upon the personalities of the past. For not since the Grand Army of the Republic held its last encampment has there been such an ingathering of elders and bygones as President Nixon has mobilized in support of the proposition that NATO must never—no, never—be reconsidered like any other question of priorities.

Never mind the crumbling and festering American city; never mind the mounting demands for tax dollars for education, health, transportation, welfare, job training; never mind the cost of maintaining a half-million persons, including dependents and 130 generals, as well as 7,000 tactical nuclear weapons, in Europe; never mind the international payments deficit to which this endless commitment annually contributes $1.6 billion.

Never mind all that; the wisdom of the ages says NATO must go on essentially untouched.

One primary argument against Mansfield's proposal is that since NATO is an alliance, the United States must not proceed unilaterally but only in concert with the other parties.

The record shows, unfortunately, that the French have pulled out, the Portuguese have their forces on duty maintaining their African empire, Britain has eliminated conscription, Canada has cut its European contingent, etc., ad infinitum. Who's unilateral? And who has borne the bulk of the load for two decades, with precious little help in sight?

The other argument is that Mansfield's proposal would sabotage any effort to follow up Brezhnev's suggestion that a reduction of forces and armaments in Europe might be negotiated by the NATO and Warsaw Pact countries.

Of course, when Brezhnev said something about like that last year, nothing came of it. And the major reason Washington seems more interested this time around is because the Brezhnev proposal provides a handy argument against Mansfield's amendment.

In fact, Nixon has made such a concerted effort—one of the most vigorous of his administration—to defeat the Mansfield amendment because of the inherent power of a policy long established, particularly when those who established it are still around to defend their handiwork.

There is nothing to suggest that, before Mansfield acted, the administration had any great plans for negotiating troop reduction, either with the allies or the Soviets; and many of the patriots who were rushed into the breach have also opposed other movements in the glider of East-West relations—say, Chancellor Erhardt’s efforts to begin Soviet-German reconciliation.

So the truth is that, far from being the disaster pictured at the White House, Mike Mansfield’s amendment (which, curiously, 20 years after World War II ended and only after he failed to stir three administrations with milder proposals) not only shows us something about the visceral sense of priority and reality in government, it may also force some action at least, even if it is defeated this week.

Having insisted that the Mansfield amendment would kill any chance to negotiate reductions with the Soviets, the administration can hardly fail now to make a serious effort to
I have given a great deal of thought to the understandable concerns of Senators. I have considered and reconsidered both the perfecting amendment and the substitute amendment. It seems to me that the perfecting amendment, the Nelson amendment modified on yesterday, deals very effectively with the concerns. Clearly, however, it will not produce the U.S. troop reductions as promptly as the original amendment.

It is my personal judgment now as it has been for some years that the U.S. contingent in Europe ought to be reduced, that if it is to be reduced with or without negotiations and quite apart from considerations of the international financial situation. It is a matter of principle, in my personal judgment, these troop reductions have been desirable and are desirable now in the interests of this Nation. In my personal judgment, moreover, the cuts can be made now without doing violence in any way to our commitment to the Atlantic Treaty or the opportunities for a negotiated detente. Excess, waste or obsolescence in troop commitments under the North Atlantic Treaty, as I see it, are not bargaining chips in negotiations; they are as albatross around the neck of the Nation's policies. That is a personal judgment and the original amendment was a legislative expression of that judgment. Other Members see it differently, a situation not uncommon in the processes of the Senate.

The authors of the pending perfecting amendment clearly see it differently and, therefore, they would put off a legislated cut a while longer. For the present, they would entreat the President most earnestly by this amendment to enter into negotiations with a view to mutual East-West troop reductions—a step, in any event, which there is every indication that the executive branch is now prepared to take after years of reticence. May I say that is all to the good. The advice of the Senate or the Congress in a matter of this kind is most proper in a constitutional sense; it has been offered many times to many Presidents.

What impresses me even more in the pending amendment is the suggestion that I believe to be a most desirable adjustment in our military deployment in Europe. It does, however, go beyond the exact terms of the amendment which is the substance of the substitute amendment coming later and by means of which many of us thought, fruitlessly, to bring about a troop reduction in past years. The pending amendment has teeth in that it does put a legislative deadline on further Executive delays in this matter, even if the deadline is distant. I should think that its passage would not inhibit the Congress from subsequently moving up that deadline if future circumstances should so indicate.

Mr. STENNIS. Mr. President, I yield 3 minutes to the Senator from Alabama.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama is recognized.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. President, I oppose the Mansfield amendment, but I do believe that the distinguished majority leader should be given the right to have his amendment voted up or down by the Senate.

I believe that unless any amendment to the Mansfield amendment is an improvement over the Mansfield amendment, it, too, should be rejected.

Therefore, feeling that the Nelson amendment is not an improvement on the Mansfield amendment, I will oppose the Nelson amendment, as well.

The Mansfield amendment demobilizes no one; it all does is to seek the transfer of 150,000 of our soldiers. Already the number of men in the armed services is decreasing sensationally from around 3,500,000, which was the number on July 1, 1968, to around 2,700,000 now. Under the terms of the draft extension bill, the