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Statement of Senator Mansfield

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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September 17, 1971

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA)

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Mr. President:

I have been told that a number of Senators and their staffs were contacted on yesterday with a report that on Wednesday or some day last week at a Democratic Caucus or meeting of Democratic Senators, I, as the Majority Leader, and as a Senator from Montana, made a statement with reference to a date for Viet Nam withdrawal to the following effect:

"This is a party matter affecting the 1972 elections.

Any Democrat who votes to approve the Conference Report will be denied money and political support from the Democratic Campaign Committee."

May I say that I am not only somewhat amazed by the report but also at the source to which the report is attributed. I met the gentleman in question just a short time ago and was impressed by his intelligence and integrity which is to be expected, of course, in staff personnel at the White House. In the circumstances, I am at a loss to find his name linked with this matter and can only conclude that there must be some mistake in the attribution for the story as it appears in the press.

I hesitate to refer to such a matter, but no doubt many Senators and others read references to it. In the circumstances, it should be said that no such statement was made by me or to my knowledge, for that matter, by any one else--at any time or any place.

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I would say further that having been now in public life for 25 years or more, perhaps, I should not be surprised at all by a report of this kind. For what purpose it was advanced in this situation--I can only speculate. Nonetheless, I have every confidence that there is not a member of this body on either side of the aisle who would take such a report seriously, much less believe it. Every member of this body knows my attitude with regard to the integrity of the Senate and the independence of every Senator's vote as determined solely by the dictates of his judgment and conscience free of any and all outside influence and pressures. I have stood on that all of my life. I stand on it today. I shall continue to do so.

Insofar as I am concerned, there is no "price" on this vote, today, and there has never been on any other. No one owes me a thing and the Senate knows it.