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Appearance on 'Face the Nation'

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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

FACE THE NATION
(As broadcast over the CBS Television Network and the CBS Radio Network, Dec. 12, 1971)

Guest: Sen. Mike Mansfield, Democrat of Montana.

Reporters: George Herman, CBS News; James Doyle, Senate Correspondent, Washington Evening Star; Marvin Kalb, CBS News; George Herman, Senator Mansfield, thank you very much for coming. You have personally introduced or supported legislation to change the size of America's military commitment in Europe, to enforce on the President a date certain for ending the Viet Nam war, even to change the foreign aid program he wants. Why have you refrained in the Senate from even discussing the current world crisis between India and Pakistan?

Sen. MANSFIELD. Because, frankly, I don't know enough about it and I think the best thing to do is to remain silent and for this country to remain neutral.

ANNOUNCER. From CBS Washington, Face the Nation, a spontaneous and unhearsed news interview with the Senate Democratic Majority Leader, Senator Mike Mansfield of Montana. Senator Mansfield will be questioned by CBS News Diplomatic Correspondent Marvin Kalb, James Doyle, Senate Correspondent for the Washington Evening Star, and CBS News Correspondent George Herman.

HERMAN. Senator, as you know, some of your Democratic colleagues in the Senate do not agree with you, some of them have already attacked the administration's operation in the India-Pakistan war. Do you think that this has been, as some Republicans charge, a serious action on their part?

Sen. MANSFIELD. Well, I couldn't say. As far as the action is concerned, I'm sure they are serious, but the point is the decision has been made as to what our policy will be. I don't want to Monday morning quarterback. There is a war going on. The best thing we can do is to use our good offices. If there are any left, to try and bring about a solution to it, and in the meantime remain strictly neutral.

DOYLE. Senator, you've used the phrase "our good offices, if there are any left," and one of the controversies has been that we've destroyed our good offices by statements about India being the aggressor and about India's role in this whole thing. Doesn't that make you, as the leader of the loyal opposition—doesn't it give you a responsibility to respond?

Sen. MANSFIELD. Not at all. I'll respond on my own initiative when I think it's in the best interest of the nation, but not as the leader of the loyal opposition, because I'm still a Senator from the State of Montana and that is more important to me.

KALB. Senator, I'm a little puzzled by this. Over the last couple of years there has been a great hue and cry about why the Bill remained quiet when the administration moved in certain areas, in Indochina, for example, and it seems somewhat inconsistent, your desire to remain silent on something where the facts have been quite evident over the last nine months, certainly what's happening in East Pakistan. Why be quiet now? Do you agree with the administration?

Sen. MANSFIELD. I agree with the administration that we should remain neutral, that we should be prepared to offer any humanitarian assistance we can, and, if we can do so, offer our good offices to try and bring about a solution. However, I think that it will be more important if the Chinese and the Russians undertake that initiative because they are indirectly involved and, in a certain sense, directly involved.

KALB. Do you think the administration's rather visible pro-India line—anti-India line, pro-Pakistan, excuse me, is a sign of neutrality?
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Senator Mansfield. Not too much, no.

Senator Mansfield. I think that those statements can be made, but the impression has also been made. What the Congress has done in the policy of the United States is that in the first resolution, and in the policy of the United States government portion of the second resolution, it will have an effect even if the amendment itself is not passed in toto.

Has there not been a legal challenge to the President's saying that he will ignore that part of the bill?

Senator Mansfield. Who would make the legal challenge?

Senator Mansfield. Well, cannot the Congress, since they passed it and the President says he will ignore it?

Senator Mansfield. No, I don't think so; it would take a lot of time and I don't think we have that much time to drag it through the courts.

Senator Mansfield. Well, now, that answer, and one that you gave earlier, when you said there's—

Senator. You know of nothing further that you know that you could do as the Senator from Montana has said. A very good war in Vietnam, you know the impression that you're sort of giving up; you don't plan any new initiatives. Is that because you think the war is ending, or what is in your mind?

Senator Mansfield. Oh, the war is ending. At your command, sir. You've got about 170,000 troops there at the present time. It's hard to get across to some of your people just what a senator can do, because you're not free enough to do it and you're trying to find something in an area which doesn't exist. The responsibilities of the Senate and the House—Congress has pretty well known. It's a matter of legislating; it's a matter of appropriating. As far as the carrying out of foreign policy is concerned, that of course is in the hands of the President, but we should have a cooperative part. Well, I don't think that I am trying to say that because I got the impression that you sounded a little resigned, a little sad, when you said that you knew of nothing else that you could do to end this terrible war.

Senator Mansfield. I am not giving up, but I am placed in a distressed and depressed state.

Doyle. Senator, under your leadership, this year, the Senate rejected the foreign aid bill and the foreign aid concept and said you wanted a restructuring, and then offered such a restructuring, including another end-the-war amendment. The chairman of the Committee, Senator Keating, was refused to bring that to the floor of the House. Now, what has that done to Senator Mansfield. All the conferences on the other side refused to.

Doyle. Well, Senator, you have agreed to bring that to the floor of the Senate, and you say there's a limit to what a senator can do but as leader, it's up to you to schedule bills, and you could in turn say I refuse to bring that to the floor of the House.

Senator Mansfield. Oh, no, you've got to differentiate between the Senate and the President and the Senator from Montana and the Majority Leader. You must remember also that the Majority Leader is the leader of the Senate. And as far as I'm concerned, any legislation reported to the Senate, whether I like it or not, will be brought up so that the Senate can make its own decision.

Doyle. Well Senator, do you think that Lyndon Johnson wouldn't have taken that view when he was Majority Leader?

Senator Mansfield. I'm not Lyndon Johnson.

Kalm. Do you feel that the administration has had no effect, beaten the Hill on all of these matters that you describe and probably are quite critical?

Doyle. Senator, what good are those meetings if, when—when the Mansfield amendment proposes to cut the President's leg down a little, he has a free hand to deal with a resolution approved by the President, and it is part in domestic legislation.

Doyle. Senator, do you think that Lyndon Johnson wouldn't have taken that view when he was Majority Leader?
to, I think, has had its effect because it passed the Senate three times, and the issue is alive. I don't have the fact that this reduced, or brought about a further reduction in U.S. troops from Indochina. The thing that disturbs me most of all is that some of the legislation is taking place—I approve of that—but I want to see a complete, total, lock, stock, and barrel end of the Vietnamese conflagration.

KALB. Well, do you have the impression that the administration policy is aimed at that? Senator MANSFIELD. I do not at this time. There's talk about a residual force, which I am opposed to. Senator DOYLE, who is chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, has been developing, the President's or the Congress', in any event, a kind of a program, a continuing budget program, which most of us have been urging for a long time. We've supplied them; we've supported them; we've been developing, the President's, the Congress', in any event, a kind of a program, a continuing budget program, which most of us have been urging for a long time.

HERMAN. Well, that's what we've heard the President say--the President's point of view, and it's their direction. It's their future. They should decide it, not us.

KALB. Isn't it really Korea all over again?

Sen. MANSFIELD. It looks like it, isn't it. Senator MANSFIELD. I don't know, unless the Saigon government needs continued logistical and air support from us, but they have an army of one million, one hundred thousand men; we've paid them for 17 years; we've supplied them; we've supported them; we've advised them; there's nothing more we can do except give them money. That's their direction. It's their future. They should decide it, not us.

Sen. MANSFIELD. No, I don't think we're still maintaining our equilibrium, if I may use that four-dollar word. I would point out that the Congress is only half through; we still have another year. I would point out also that many of the issues which the Democrats have been expressing, the President has taken over himself.

HERMAN. Well, that's what I was going to ask you about tonight. Senator MANSFIELD. You don't think the Congress come around to working better with the President? Or has the President begun to shift from his point of view?

Sen. MANSFIELD. That's hard to say, but he's taking a lot of the ideas of our candidates and our party.

HERMAN. Senator MANSFIELD. Such as?

Senator MANSFIELD. Well, the question of wage, price and rent controls, which he was opposed to completely.

DOYLE. Senator, a small number of senatorial colleagues and I have been urging the Administration to get the foreign aid bill on the floor and pass it as soon as possible, before Congress comes around to working better with the President? Or has the President begun to shift from his point of view?

Sen. MANSFIELD. That's hard to say, but he's taking a lot of the ideas of our candidates and our party.

HERMAN. Who's the key man in that? Have you heard from Senator Proxmire, who has once before served as key man in such a rebellion?

Senator MANSFIELD. No, I haven't heard from Proxmire, but I understand that some senators have. I don't understand the fact that this rebellion, Proxmire has been with them or not, I don't know, but I believe that Cranston and Fulbright, Church and others—have been meeting to consider what
to do when the continuing resolution comes before us.

HERMAN. Well, now, you have said that you would speak with them. Do you mean extended speaking? Would you take part in extended speaking?

Senator MANSFIELD. No, I'm not—I don't believe in dilly-dally tactics. I have stated publicly that I will go to the Senate at any time, to my colleagues only on yesterday that I would oppose the continuing resolution and speak against it and vote against it.

HERMAN. But you would not join a movement to speak at length against it?

Senator MANSFIELD. I don't think I could stand up on that basis, and I don't believe in that kind of deliberation anyway.

Senator MANSFIELD. Senator MANSFIELD. I am speaking personally. For other senators, that's their business. We may, wouldn't you, or would you stay neutral in an attempt to quash this by a cloture vote?

Senator MANSFIELD. I would help.

HERMAN. You would help a cloture vote?

Senator MANSFIELD. Um-hum.

HERMAN. Senator MANSFIELD. No, wait a minute. You mean to—to kill this?

HERMAN. Is Fulbright and Smith, Symington, and Gore, before he was defeated, made a speech last week and search and forth, and short a long conversation—

Senator MANSFIELD. I would not vote for cloture.

HERMAN. You would not?

Senator MANSFIELD. No, I—wouldn't vote for a cloture vote. Senator MANSFIELD. Um-hum.

HERMAN. Senator MANSFIELD. No, wait a minute. You mean to—to kill this?

HERMAN. Is it 100 per cent opposed?

Senator MANSFIELD. I would oppose the amendment, which we're doing now, but at the same time bringing troops from Saigon.

HERMAN. Well, do you have the impression that the Congressional conference committee is really Korea all over again?

Senator MANSFIELD. Do you think that the Senate could be that important as ten or twenty Americans. People are still being forced down in enemy territory; the number of POWs is increasing. I think the longer the war continues, the more we are keeping those POWs incarcerated.

KALB. Senator MANSFIELD. Senator MANSFIELD. Do you think it's possible that during the President's trip to Peking, and the House leader—has undone some of the work of the Congress in the past year in the last week as we rush toward adjournment and Senate GORE, before he was defeated, made a statement that conference committee records ought to be put in the Congressional Record, and they ought to be changed, that the leaders ought to take back the conference committees. How do you react to that?

Senator MANSFIELD. Senator MANSFIELD. Well, I'd say—I would not be adverse at all making public the records in the conference committees to the fullest extent. I am for giving the leaders the—responsibility to designate the conferences, if the Senate told me that you want me to do that, I would undertake that responsibility, but I wouldn't force that on the Senate because I don't know whether the Senate would agree.

DOYLE. Senator, is it fair to say you take a passive view of your role as leader?

Senator MANSFIELD. That's right.

KALB. Senator, to get into an active area then, the President is seeing many, many world leaders, starting tomorrow in the Azores with President Ford. Do you think that this is going to help him next year during the campaign?

Senator MANSFIELD. I don't think foreign policy will have much effect on next year's campaign, except insofar as Southeast Asia is concerned, because we are in the interest of this nation, but politically their effect will be only temporary, and I include the trip to Peking. It's an important factor, as I see it now, is going to be the economy, and if unemployment is up—it is up to 6.1, down to 8.8, now back up to 6 per cent—and if inflation is not controlled, then I think he's going to have a most difficult time.

KALB. Is that, then, the prime issue as you see it for '72?

Senator MANSFIELD. As I see it, those two are the prime issues.
ter will you have? What issues do you have out of the 1971 Congress?
Senator Mansfield. As long as you mentioned that cartoon, why didn’t you mention what was in the President’s package or what was my position on those matters?
Doyle. Well, you were against most of them. I think you voted for Secretary Connally but not for Supreme Court Justice Rehnquist or Supreme Court Justice to be. You voted for Powell; I think, and you voted against Butz, I believe.
Senator Mansfield. That’s right.
Doyle. But I think the cartoon was making the point that as leader you helped give the President these gifts by not fighting harder.
Senator Mansfield. Well, Mr. Herblock is quite a cartoonist. (Laughter.)
Doyle. Well, Senator, what about the question—what issues come after a year of skirmishing with the White House, especially over foreign policy, what issues do you have?
Senator Mansfield. You still have the Senate resolution on terminating the war, which will not be forgotten. You have the issue of social security, which I suppose the President would agree to. You have the question of H.R. 1, the welfare proposal, which will be brought up next year. You have the question of revenue sharing. You can forget the question of government reorganization, which the President advanced because that was just too much to be expected, too short a while, although I approved of what he advocated but he hasn’t gone through with it. As a matter of fact, before Mr. Butz was confirmed, he announced that the Agriculture Department would be taken out from under the reorganization he had proposed.
Doyle. Senator, you haven’t convinced Senator Russell Long to bring up the welfare revenue package which the President wants and you haven’t got the revenue sharing bill on the docket.
Senator Mansfield. Just a moment, just a moment, Jim. I have had discussions with Long, Talbott, and others, and they have indicated that around the latter part of February or the first part of March they will report out H.R. 1. As far as the revenue sharing is concerned, we can’t do anything in the Senate, as you well know, until the House acts, and the House hasn’t acted. Furthermore, the President has asked for a Phase II and asked for the proposals which have just been passed by the Senate, the tax, wage, and the economic package, he asked at that time that revenue sharing and welfare be postponed. Then he came back and said that it didn’t fit at all next year, he’d like the action this year, but as far as H.R. 1 is concerned, it doesn’t go into effect until some time in 1973.
Kahn. Senator, I’m told the senators like to talk politics—
Senator Mansfield. At times.
Kahn. Do you think that—maybe this is a good time—do you feel that President Nixon is vulnerable next year?
Senator Mansfield. It will depend on the economy and Indochina, in my opinion.
Kahn. Those two issues.
Senator Mansfield. Yes.
Kahn. And which Democratic candidate do you feel would be the strongest one to take on the President?
Senator Mansfield. I don’t know as of now, but as of now, Muskie is the leading candidate and seems to be gathering strength.
Hereman. You said, oh, a little over a year ago, I guess, that the Democratic Party hadn’t produced any star who you thought really could challenge the President. What do you think now?
Senator Mansfield. I think Muskie is coming out. Jackson is coming up, McGovern is coming up. We have three or four in the wings; I would hope that the number would be minimized.