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Mike Mansfield 1903-2001
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Senator Mansfield. Only if we return to the Geneva Accords which seem to be a thing of the past.

Mr. Koppl. Senator, one thing concerns me about this expanded notion and that is that we have not been able to parlay this notion into more than a month. Don’t Senator Mankoff that you think in four more years—mean it would amount to at least four delegations—you are just going to make it so cumbersome nothing could possibly come from the table.

Senator Mansfield. Not if you pick the right people and create the right format. All they are talking about is Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia, what about Laos where the war is being lost and lost badly. These are two countries. I think which is the North Vietnamese and the Cambodians in Cambodia and the Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese in Laos could take over almost for the taking.

Mr. Koppl. Do you think the United States has any moral responsibility toward these two countries, toward Laos and Cambodia?

Senator Mansfield. Only in the case of re-
habilitation is it concluded because we have had to do to get what we want, and I do not think it will work to any other country. I have created a refugee crisis in which have disrupted their society and I think we have a moral obligation after the war is over to bring about the rehabilitation of that entire area.

Mr. Clark. Senator, the Congress in this year voted a ceiling of $350 million aid to both Laos and Cambodia, about $350 million in each case, with big loopholes that did not include the American air support, or the American backing for the tracts, and it has been rather ineffective for that reason.

Do you think the Congress in this session should require a lower ceiling or take some other affirmative action to keep the war from spreading further into Cambodia?

Senator Mansfield. Yes, I do. I wish the Congress would require a lower ceiling. As far as I am concerned, I don’t intend to vote for funds for Laos or Cambodia.

Mr. Clark. Would you personally get involved in proposing and supporting a lower ceiling of aid to Laos and Cambodia?

Senator Mansfield. I do not anticipate doing so at this time. I said, I intend to vote against funds for both.

Mr. Koppl. Senator, you have proposed several years, about a six months U.S. troop withdrawal from Vietnam in return for the return of American prisoners. Is that kind of resolution still necessary now when the President is obviously phasing out American troops?

Senator Mansfield. I think it is because the President, while it is obvious that he is rephasing the American troop strength in Vietnam, has indicated, if I have interpreted his recent speeches correctly when he announced the last draw-down, that it was his intention to keep a residual force there. What is happening is as we are withdrawing, we are getting out no prouq. What I want to see is the prisoners of war and the recoverable missing in action people. I am willing to support any plan that is agreed on, and that happen at the same time. If such a proposal is possible and such a proposal has not yet been made in Paris.

Mr. Koppl. Why do you think it would be easier now to get your kind of resolution passed in Congress and to get the President to go along to the extent that it would become harder as more and more troops come back to the United States?

Senator Mansfield. Oh, no, The Senate has expressed itself, I believe, on three occasions, and it appears to me that the feeling in this respect is in both houses of the Congress. Furthermore, it would be in accord with what the President himself has stated, that he has to make sure that the final withdrawals were made. We had better continue to make attempts in that direction. We aren’t doing so at the moment.

Mr. Clark. Senator, in his State of the Union Address this past week said he would ask for an increase in the defense budget. The word from the Pentagon is that that amount of $4 and $5 billion. Will this Congress vote that much money for defense?

Senator Mansfield. I don’t think so. I think we can get along with $82 billion. If we are spending that much, we could almost get away with it. I think we have been spending too much money for defense.

Mr. Clark. Specifically, Senator, the President said he would ask for $800 Billion more to expand and improve our missile-carrying submarine fleet. Will you support that request?

Senator Mansfield. I think that has some merit in it but I think the punch in our defense system lies in the missile-carrying submarines. The I think I would like to see this money used for the improvement of our defense system, and the I think it is time we had a superpower in our defense. We ought to get away from spending money for F-111s, C-5As and other planes of that kind. We ought to go way beyond cost estimates and get back to simplicity in building and in reducing the application of funds.

Mr. Clark. Well, Senator, you just convert all this into a practical prediction, would you say it is likely that Congress will approve a significant increase in defense spending, will you vote this money for an expanded submarine fleet, an increase of perhaps a billion or two dollars but will not give the President all he has asked?

No, he will not get all that he has asked for because I think the punch of our defense system lies in the missile-carrying submarines.

Senator Mansfield. Not as much as the President would like to have us believe because I think at the present time we still have superiority. At the least, we have a strategic and it is more a political superpower. We ought to get away from spending money for F-111s, C-5As and other planes that lead me to believe that we have gone way beyond cost estimates and get back to simplicity in building and in reducing the application of funds.

Senator Mansfield: I don’t think that Congress will vote some increase in the defense budget.

Mr. Clark. Senator, I wouldn’t be surprised, but I will not go in that direction.
In the history of this Republic, in casualties it is second to the Second World War and in cost, it is second to the Second World War.

Mr. CLARK. Senator, there is considerable evidence that the Soviet Union wants to increase its present influence in the area of the Indian Ocean. There is also some evidence that the United States is responding.

Mr. KOPPEL. Yes, yes. We are building a communications station at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, and I suspect that you will not be surprised that we have taken over the lease which the British had on Bahrain in the Persian Gulf. It appears to me we are following the same old policy.

As the British vacate, we step in. We haven't got the resources and we shouldn't have that responsibility.

Mr. KOPPEL. Senator Mansfield, I'd like to get back to your proposal for expanded peace talks. Realistically, how would this begin?

How could you go about expanding the peace talks in South Asia?

Senator MANSFIELD. Well, I think we ought to bring in Laos and Cambodia and we ought to have some representation from those states. After all, you can't settle the Vietnamese War on its own without taking into account Cambodia and Laos.

Mr. KOPPEL. What I am wondering is, whom do you consider to be the representative of, let's say, Cambodia and Laos?

Senator MANSFIELD. I would say that Sihanouk ought to be given consideration as far as Laos is concerned and that it would be that king, Savang Vathana.

Mr. KOPPEL. He is sitting up in Luang Prabang and he has taken no active role thus far in any of this.

Senator MANSFIELD. That is right. He has the benefit of the loyalty of all factions. I think he is the only man who can step in and do something in that pitiful war-ridden country. It is about time for somebody to step forth and take the responsibility which Souvanna Phouma and the others cannot seem to effectuate at the present time.

Mr. KOPPEL. Wouldn't you, for example, from Cambodia have anyone who could represent them who could be called in quotes, "The allied cause"?

Senator MANSFIELD. No, I think Sihanouk represents the people of Cambodia, always has and still does.

Mr. CLARK. Senator, the President noted in his State of the Union Message this week there were 71 recommendations, including some major programs, still awaiting action in Congress. What do you see as the "must" items in this new session of Congress; the areas where you can assure the President that there will be action on his programs?

Senator MANSFIELD. The Welfare bill, Revenue Reform, Higher Education, all the appropriation bills. There are some others which he hasn't recommended such as the voter registration. That is about all I can think of at the moment, but there are others as well.

Mr. CLARK. But you are saying there will be a cut here, there, and handle it as we go along. All the bureaus, all the departments which he wants to either eradicate or consolidate with others have their vested interests, people who are going to get up and, well, agriculture and what-not. They will make it difficult—they will make it impossible to achieve the overall types of reorganization of which the President advocates during a session of the Congress, or during a Congress.

Mr. KOPPEL. The President, in his State of the Union address this year sounded a new theme on revenue-sharing, where he talked about the problem of property tax and how the burden of the property tax, that the taxpayers were in near revolt in some areas of the country, that private property money into schools.

His expected solution to this, White House sources said that he will probably propose a so-called value-added tax and you and other Democrats and almost all the presidential contenders promptly opposed the value-added tax.

Senator MANSFIELD. It is a sales tax and with all sales taxes it is the poor people who pay the most and who keep the kitty full.

Mr. KOPPEL. With this strong Democratic opposition, would you say that a value-added tax is dead before it is even proposed by the President?

Senator MANSFIELD. I don't think it is going to get very far, no.

Mr. CLARK. Will there be a Democratic alternative to value-added tax?

Senator MANSFIELD. I don't know, but I, for example, would have no objection to increasing gasoline, liquor and tobacco taxes.

Mr. KOPPEL. Senator, this seems to be one of the problems. You have a gaggle of Democratic candidates for President, each of them with his own pet plans. Is there anything that could be construed as a Democratic unity? Is there anything that the President is talking about?

Senator MANSFIELD. Not now. Maybe later in the year.

Mr. KOPPEL. How is that ever going to come about? Do you mean after people have run.

Senator MANSFIELD. In the Policy Committee and an appropriate Democratic caucus—well, that is probably the next ones we will see what we can come up with.

Mr. CLARK. Senator, if you don't come up with some unified alternatives—

Senator MANSFIELD. I think most impartial observers of Congress would say that the Democrats did not do a very good job of reorganization last year.

Senator MANSFIELD. Oh, we didn't do too bad a job.

Mr. KOPPEL. I am talking about coming up with constructive Democratic alternatives and financial proposals.

Senator MANSFIELD. We did, we came up with those bills and everybody, I think believe that just and large we did a respectable job in the first session and we will do as well in the second, if not better.

Mr. CLARK. If you don't do more this year aren't you going to invite the President to run against a do-nothing 92nd Congress just as Senator Muskie ran against a do-nothing 91st Congress just as Harry Truman ran against a do-nothing Republican Congress?

Senator MANSFIELD. Well, I had a better study that picture very carefully because his people on the Finance Committee are the bane of all these alternative proposals to bring out a welfare program which he advocated and about which, incidentally, I have some questions too.

Mr. KOPPEL. A number of leading Democrats have already criticized the President's State of the Union message on both partisan terms. Do you think that already lays to rest the rhetorical question that President Nixon raised about whether or not it is possible in a political environment like this, to handle things in nonpartisan terms?

Senator MANSFIELD. It isn't possible, but I hope that those who accustomed to the address was temperate—it didn't say much, it made practically nothing in the way of new proposals, but held out promises which might be said to include the value-added tax and a few other matters. Unfortunately, we have so many candidates running for President, the Senate would have to become involved. I would hope that as far as the Senate is concerned, that there would be a lot of looking at the whole fabric of politics—this applies to Republicans as well as the Democrats—and that the politicking be done outside the Senate chamber, not in it.

Mr. KOPPEL. If it is going to make your job much more difficult for those candidates?

Senator MANSFIELD. It is tough anyway.

Mr. CLARK. Senator, isn't one of your problems to be the Democratic candidates running for President, each one has their own platform that are evolving in the campaign and we have a Muskie anti-poverty plan and a Kennedy health plan and a McGovern plan to cut the defense budget and a Wilbur Mills revenue sharing plan. Now how are you going to blend all of these together into something voters can recognize as a Democratic plan?

Senator MANSFIELD. Oh, I am not looking that far ahead because all these proposals have to get out of committees and once they have been out of committees, you will be down to the nub of your question.

Mr. CLARK. Is it really a matter of looking that far ahead?

Senator MANSFIELD. We have a lot of these Democratic primaries now. The political season is already under way. Where does any of these platform of constructive alternatives come from?

Senator MANSFIELD. That has happened to the 92nd Congress just as Senator Muskie was by far the strongest Presidential contender in the Democratic Party. Has anything happened during the past year that you would change your mind?

Senator MANSFIELD. No, we will change our mind, but not until we have a really regular procedure in time. Just as the Republicans will, because their platform isn't steady by any means at this moment.

Mr. KOPPEL. Senator Mansfield, approximately a year ago on this program you said that your candidate was by far the strongest Presidential contender in the Democratic Party. Has anything happened during the past year that you would change your mind?

Senator MANSFIELD. No, no. More candidates have come in. I think the field is filled by now. Some of those candidates will drop out. The others will remain, and I think that it will develop into a horse race and that the lead which Senator Muskie has, whether it will be maintained or not, is considerable at the moment—might be beaten into depending on events as they develop.

Mr. KOPPEL. There is a new Gallup Poll, as you may know, that just came out taken among Democratic voters, showing for the first time Senator Muskie leading the field. He is now ahead of Senator Kennedy.

Senator MANSFIELD. That is right.

Mr. KOPPEL. You don't think he has got it wrapped up yet, though?

Senator MANSFIELD. No, I don't think so because, there will be lots of people who are in the meantime, some of them will be tough and it will be up to the delegates, the people in their party conventions, to determine their minds. But at the moment, Senator Muskie is considerably ahead.

Mr. KOPPEL. Senator, are there any of the Democratic contenders for President which you could not support?

Senator MANSFIELD. Well, wait until the Convention decides.

Mr. KOPPEL. We will ask you about one of them now. Would you support George Wallace?

Senator MANSFIELD. No, I wouldn't support Governor Wallace. I think Wallace is, in effect, a Democrat in a banner for purposes of his own but if he doesn't get it
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then I imagine he will go back to his American Party or the other parties which got together last time to nominate him. He is a man you can’t ignore because he pulled about 13 million votes three years ago.

Mr. Mansfield. The most emotional issue the Democrats are facing as they campaign around the country now is school busing. Do you think that the Congress will take any action to block or delay court-ordered school busing?

Senator Mansfield. That I can’t say. Efforts will be made, amendments offered to either the pending legislation, the Equal Opportunity Act, or the Higher Education Bill, which will come before us when the EEOC is disposed of. What will happen at that time remains to be seen.

Mr. Koppel. As it stands right now, which party do you see benefitting the most or is it such an explosive issue that neither party is likely to benefit either party because it isn’t just a Southern issue, it is a national issue and I think that what Senator Ribicoff, along with SenatorSenator Mansfield tried to do last year, recognized that fact on a de jure and de facto basis.

Mr. Clark. Senator, how do you as Majority Leader of the Senate, feel personally about the antibussetting amendment that the House attached last year onto the Higher Education Bill—and those would include amendments forbidding the use of federal funds for busing to achieve racial balance and an amendment postponing Federal Court orders for busing until all appeals have been exhausted?

Senator Mansfield. Well, I don’t know what the Senate will do in that respect. I didn’t get the first part of your question.

Senator Mansfield. Well, I don’t know what the Senate will do in that respect. I didn’t get the first part of your question.

Mr. Clark. How do you as Majority Leader of the Senate personally feel about these amendments?

Senator Mansfield. I don’t think they should be on there because I think they are part of the law of the land. They are based on the ’54 Brown vs. Board of Education decision and it isn’t a matter of whether you like it or not, it isn’t a matter as much of racial balance as it is a matter of quality education.

Mr. Clark. Senator, do you agree or disagree with President Nixon in his opposition to busing solely to achieve racial balance in schools? And there is the crux of the problem.

Senator Mansfield. I don’t think anybody believes that the purpose is just to achieve racial balance but it is to achieve equality in education, quality education. As far as our citizens are concerned, may I say that busing is not a new factor. It has been in effect in this country since the turn—well, since the beginning of the automobile, really, and this is a step on the way to quality education, equally applicable to all races.

Mr. Clark. Senator, it has been eighteen years now since that 1954 Supreme Court school desegregation decision that you mentioned, and still in the great ghettos of the north there are hundreds and hundreds of schools that are all black. Would you go into a massive busing—and I know some people regard that as a trigger word, but would you go into a massive busing program to achieve school integration in the north?

Senator Mansfield. I don’t think massive busing is necessary. Equality of education, quality education, is why I voted for the Ribicoff-Sennets Amendment, which would apply the same standards to all the states, the north and the south and east and west—and, after all, education is a state responsibility and a state function.

Mr. Koppel. Well, how do you get quality education, Senator?

Senator Mansfield. By busing if need be, or by the local school boards raising up the standards and the school boards themselves can bring about busing if they desire to do so. That was allowed under the ’54 decision.

Mr. Clark. Well, Senator, one of the Democratic presidential candidates, Senator Jackson, interprets this move to quality education as meaning that he would—in essence, you would bus black children into white schools but not white children into black schools if they were inferior. Is that what you are talking about, one-way busing?

Senator Mansfield. No, not one-way busing, because I think busing, if it is going to be applicable, has to work both ways, but then you get back to the nub of the question and that is quality education. That is the thing which should be done. If you do that you won’t have any busing. Busing is a passing phase.

Mr. Koppel. Realistically, Senator, can you think of any circumstances under which the black school would be better than the local white school a few miles away?

Senator Mansfield. No, except through an intermingling of the pupils of all races. Don’t talk of black schools only because remember the Chinese situation in San Francisco, think of the chicanos, the Puerto Ricans and the others as well.

Mr. Koppel. While you are on the west coast, the President has asked Congress for immediate legislation to end the west coast dock strikes, legislation that would provide for compulsory arbitration. You have always been considered a friend of labor. Could you support such a move?

Senator Mansfield. I don’t know. The President sent his proposal up. We will see what comes out of the Committee on Labor, I am ordinarily opposed to enforced arbitration. Something has to be done, so I will endeavor to keep an open mind and if the committee reports out a bill it will be given expeditious consideration.

Mr. Clark. The President says he wants action this week because of what he regards as a...