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February 7, 1972

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA)

I am not interested in what North Viet Nam may agree to^{or} what South Viet Nam may want. The Senate resolution on Viet Nam was not based on either consideration. It was derived, introduced and passed on the basis of a careful legislative judgment of what serves the vital interests of the people of the United States. The resolution states that those interests will be served by defining United States policy in terms of the withdrawal of all U. S. forces at a date certain conditioned solely on the release of the prisoners of war and the recoverable missing in action. That is all. Period. That is not yet the policy of this government. It is the policy set forth by the Senate. To a degree, it is the policy set forth by the House. It is included among many other considerations in the statement of policy set forth by the Administration. But the resolution is not yet the policy of the United States. Yet there be no mistake on that score. In the end, only the President can state that policy. Peace is not yet being pursued on the basis of the position of the Senate. If and when, it is, the Senate resolution will cease to be pressed. So long as it is not, it will be pressed. Indeed, the resolution must be pressed because what is at stake is more than words, more than a political campaign, more than who wins or who loses. What is at stake, in the end, is the vital--the vital--interests of this nation. The word means what it says: the survival of this nation in freedom.