

6-18-1973

## Congressional Record S. 11395 - Statement of Senator Mansfield - Watergate re: Suspension of Hearings During Brezhnev's Visit

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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### Recommended Citation

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Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, will the Senator yield?

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I yield to the Senator from Montana.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts for the remarks he has just made.

Mr. President, just to put the record straight, I ask unanimous consent that the letter which the distinguished Republican leader, the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SCOTT) and I sent to the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. ERVIN), chairman of the Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities, and also to the distinguished Senator from Tennessee (Mr. BAKER), the vice chairman of that select committee, be printed at this point in the Record.

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

U.S. SENATE,  
June 18, 1973.

HON. SAMUEL J. ERVIN, JR.  
Chairman, Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: We have been discussing the fact that the hearings of the Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities and the official visit of Secretary General Leonid I. Brezhnev are both occurring during the same week.

After giving consideration to this duality of events, recognizing the importance of each, we have come to the conclusion that it is a part of our responsibility as the Joint Leaders of the United States Senate to request, most respectfully, that the Select Committee postpone its hearings until the conclusion of the State visit to this country by Secretary General Leonid Brezhnev.

It is not an easy decision for us to make because both the hearings and the visit are being conducted with the best interests of the country in mind, but it is our considered judgment that a delay of one week would not jeopardize the hearings, and that one week might give President Nixon and Mr. Brezhnev the opportunity to reconcile differences, arrive at mutual agreements, and, in the field of Foreign Policy, be able to achieve results which would be beneficial not only to our two countries but, hopefully, to all mankind.

We would appreciate your consideration of this request and as early a response as possible.

Sincerely yours,

MIKE MANSFIELD,  
Majority Leader.  
HUGH SCOTT,  
Republican Leader.

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, as the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts has suggested, this was not an easy decision to make. But it was my

feeling—and I must take personally the responsibility for initiating this request—if was my sincere feeling that the committee give it their most serious consideration. I am personally responsible for asking the Republican leader to come to my office to discuss the convergence of events that led to a situation which had begun to disturb me very much.

This is a momentous week in the history of this Republic. On one hand we have a guest visiting our Nation in response to an invitation extended by the President of the United States 13 months ago. On the other hand we have a most important Senate committee hearing being conducted on the Watergate matter. As I considered these matters together, I came to the conclusion that it would be in the best interests of the Republic to request of the select committee that it consider a brief postponement of 6 days in the Watergate hearings, to the end that this summit meeting could be carried on in the most favorable atmosphere possible under all conditions extant, so that if this was agreed to by the select committee, it would give President Nixon and Mr. Brezhnev, to quote from the joint letter:

The opportunity to reconcile differences, arrive at mutual agreements, and, in the field of Foreign Policy, be able to achieve results which would be beneficial not only to our two countries but, hopefully, to all mankind.

Frankly, while this judgment may be open to question, I think that it was the best judgment which could be made at this time, and I am not interested in any individual. I am interested in the welfare, the well being, and the future of this Republic.

Therefore, it was my considered judgment, in which the distinguished Republican leader concurred, that this request should be made, to the end that the best possible beneficial effects might be achieved as a result of the meeting now underway between the Secretary-General, Mr. Brezhnev, and the President of the United States, Mr. Nixon.

I hope that history will prove that I was correct, but in the meantime, I just want the RECORD to show that I was the one responsible for initiating this request, and that before doing so I had no contact whatsoever with anyone anywhere, within this city or without.

I thank the Senator for yielding.