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COPY
REMARKS OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD

AT THE
CLOSING PLENARY SESSION
OF THE
FOURTEENTH MEXICO-UNITED STATES INTERPARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE
MAY 15, 1974

Senator Olivares, Congressman Rodriguez, Congressman Wright, fellow parliamentarians from Mexico and the United States, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

The statutory authority for participation by Members of the United States Congress in these Interparliamentary Meetings contains a simple, straightforward mandate:

" . . . Members of Congress shall be appointed to meet jointly and at least annually with Representatives of the Chamber of Deputies and Chamber of Senators of the Mexican Congress for discussion of common problems in the interests of relations between the United States and Mexico."

In an atmosphere of marked cordiality, we have fulfilled our legislative mandate--and then some.

We have had our discussions--on no less than twelve major agenda topics. We have exchanged views candidly and honestly. And, yes, we have been reminded of our differences on some issues. We have not negotiated, but we have listened and learned. And we have resolved anew that rather than divide us--our differences shall serve to bring us closer together in understanding as we continue to explore ways and means of solving them.

This, I submit, is the hallmark of our Interparliamentary Meetings, namely, that relations between Mexico and the United States have reached the level of maturity where common problems are treated more as opportunities rather than impediments to further cooperation and understanding.

This is indeed an inspiring approach to the conduct of international relations and because of our Interparliamentary Sessions, it is there for all the world to see. We can be justifiably proud of it, and we can leave here today knowing that the Fourteenth Mexico-United States Interparliamentary Conference has made a substantial contribution to it.

In terms of specifics, I want to focus attention on the Colorado River Desalinization Agreement signed August 30, 1973. It is--to say the least--an historic agreement. It provides a permanent, definitive and just solution of the problem of the salinity of the Colorado River.

As those familiar with the salinity issue are aware, no other issue in recent times has so troubled our relations; no other problem has so taxed our determination to seek mutually satisfactory solutions to common problems; no other problem has so tested the sincerity and ingenuity of our diplomats; and no other problem has so challenged the mutual respect and goodwill that our two countries have for each other.

In the end, our deeds have matched our words. Looking back, I am convinced that it could not have been otherwise--given the solemn determination of President Nixon and President Echeverria to resolve this issue. Their enlightened leadership on it deserves the highest praise. Likewise, a very special tribute is owed to former Attorney General Brownell, who worked closely with the U. S. delegation, and Foreign Secretary Rabasa, whose tireless efforts contributed so much to making the August 30 agreement a reality.

Legislation to implement the salinity agreement reached Capitol Hill in February. The appropriate committees of Congress have started the ball rolling on it, and because of the interest in this legislation, I fully anticipate that it will have priority status. Most certainly, we are indebted to Congressman Morris Udall for successfully bringing the necessary legislation out of the House Interior Committee on yesterday. While I cannot give our colleagues from Mexico an exact date on final passage, the sooner the better. In fact, speaking on behalf of the entire United States Delegation, I pledge our sincere efforts to do all that we can to expedite consideration of this historic legislation.

I express such confidence and make this pledge largely because of our deliberations on the salinity issue during this and previous conference sessions. These deliberations have helped immeasurably to lay the groundwork for early legislative action. They have given us a sober appreciation of the facts and helped produce a political climate that is very encouraging and follows in the pattern of the Chamizal settlement.

As a final note and with respect to the Colorado River issue, I want the record to show that for its demonstrated patience and the justness of its cause, we salute you and the great Republic which you represent so ably and with such distinction. May we live forever in peace and understanding and on the basis of equality, dignity and mutual respect.