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REMARKS OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA)

AT THE

DEMOCRATIC CONGRESSIONAL DINNER

THE WASHINGTON HILTON HOTEL

THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 1975, 7:00 P. M.

A Congressional dinner is not the usual setting for serious remarks.

Yet, recent events require that some be introduced here tonight. That we are gathered for a political rally does not excuse us from comment on the situation which confronts the nation. Nor should we avoid doing so for fear that what may be said will be dismissed as partisan.

To be sure, what is spoken tonight and in the months ahead may bear on what happens to this party in the next election. Far more important, however, it bears on the responsibility of the Congressional majority--no less than the President--to account to the people.

As we open a Congressional campaign here, an era of American policy is closing on the other side of the globe. It has been a tragic era, a most tragic era. The President is correct when he says, we need now to look ahead.

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The time is not for finger-pointing; in any event, the fingers are on the hands of both parties. Nor is this the place for blame-fixing, there is enough to go around the political circle and more.

This is a time and this is a place, however, to take note of what the Southeast Asian experience has done to us all. The war has already changed the life of this nation and will continue to do so. It subtracts from the well-being of the people. It is part and parcel of the inflation-recession. It is of the root of national divisions and disturbances. It leaves deep scars of grief and doubt throughout the nation. These are realities from which there is no escape. We will have to live with them for a long time to come.

But the war need not leave us without hope.

Out of a decade of tragedy, this nation can emerge into a new day. We can do so if we do not now make haste to sweep the experience under the rug or to dismiss it as a bad dream. Instead, we need to ask ourselves; Do we ~~not~~ more clearly perceive the limits of our international strength? Has the bitter conflict lit up the difference between international cooperation and isolated internationalism, to the end that henceforth, we will pursue the

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former vigorously and, avoid the latter? Will we now put some restraints on unilateral efforts to force the pace of world peace, progress and freedom? Will we now eschew dead-end ideological crusades abroad? Has the vast wastage of this war made clear that we must take a new look at the accumulated needs of our own people? Is the federal government now enjoined to concentrate more on revitalizing the nation's inner life and unity?

These questions are of the very substance of the political campaign which is now beginning. They cannot be evaded by any responsible political party. They must be confronted. Your party in Congress is alert to them. More than ever before, we are unified in our responses to them. We are determined to seek answers to the nation's difficulties with new policies and in new directions. Yet we do not approach them with a cackling partisanship. The President and his party willing, we are prepared to work with them for our common objective--a better nation in a better world.