1942

Campaign Speech

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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My fellow-Americans:

Tonight marks the end of 3-1/2 years of hard work in covering the 17 counties which comprise this district & getting to know you & your needs. As you know, I grew up among you and have lived in Montana all my life except when serving in the armed forces of our country. At the age of 14 I enlisted in the U. S. Navy for the duration of the World War & served 15 months overseas. After the war I served in the Army & Marine Corps being stationed in China, Japan, Siberia & the Philippines. For nine years I worked in the Butte mines & since 1933 I have been on the faculty at your state university. I feel I know the problems facing this district & I shall, if elected, do my best to handle them efficiently, honestly & well.

At this time I want to thank my opponent for his fine sportsmanship. Whether or not I am better qualified than he to represent you in Congress is not for me to say but for you to decide. I also want to thank all of you people now for the consideration you have shown to me. Regardless of the outcome of this election I am grateful for your kindness toward me during this & previous campaigns. I have tried to meet as many of you as I could but the district is large & the population scattered. I have nothing to hide as my cards have always been on the table & my position known. I entered this campaign clean; I'm ending it the same way. I would like you, regardless of party, to have the faith & confidence in me that I have in you.

Filing for Congress was my own idea & the carrying out of the campaign is my responsibility--& mine only. No one has asked me for a job; no one has been promised one. I am trying to win on my own merits.

I should like to be the people's candidate--to represent every man, woman & child regardless of race, religion, or political preference; to work for a Federal pension for our aged needy; to look after our undernourished children.
I want to see Montana's resources developed—to carry out a sound program of water & soil conservation; to protect our forests because they are a public utility; & to see governmental encouragement given to the small mines & miners so that our resources in that field will be developed to the utmost.

The farmer—who constitutes 23% of our total population but who in the last 10 years has secured only 7% of the national income—is entitled to parity. If the farmer is to continue to produce for victory he must be assured of sufficient help & fair prices.

The workers must have decent wages & hours so that they can enjoy the security to which they are entitled. The small businessman—the forgotten man of today—must be protected. All of us are in favor of the defense program but many of us view with alarm the effect on small business. Some legislation must be enacted whereby the small businessman & those dependent on him—& they are many—can survive. If this is not done the present system will leave behind it a wreckage of small plants, a dislocated population, & an economic society more than ever in the hands of big business & monopoly.

The interests of our farmers, workers & businessmen are the same. They are working for each other but right now they are working for America first of all because our country is at war. They are paying their full share of the cost—in blood, in sweat, in sacrifice, & in taxes. They entered this war as free men & they are determined to come out of it the same way.

I should like to see defense industries—preferably of a permanent nature—brought to Montana. We have the resources, the facilities, & the will. I should like to see all our educational institutions made use of by the government to train the men & women it needs to carry on the
war effort successfully. Montana has never turned a deaf ear to America's call. We ask for war industries not on the basis of a spoils system but on the basis of facts. We have the resources; why not use them?

In seeking the office of Congressman I realize our country faces great danger & also that the next few years will be the most important in our history. I look upon Congress as a front line position which must become offensive-minded & in which body, politics must be forsworn for victory--no matter what the cost.

I do not claim to be a superman. I have no illusions about the job I aspire to. It will be a difficult one & decisions of vital importance will have to be made. When I speak my mind, I feel I'm speaking yours. I have the same fears, the same anxieties, the same hopes, the same prayers as you. I have only one thought uppermost in my mind & that is to win the war--soon.

I do not want military politicians or political generals or admirals to direct our war effort. I know it is easy to be critical but we do want to see something done NOW and not after this or any other election. We must not only fight but we must work--& work our hardest--to win. We must work like the men on Bataan & Corregidor fought--until we drop in our tracks. It is not a matter of maybe but a matter of must. We are not interested in excuses; we want results.

In this struggle we cannot afford the luxury of fighting among ourselves. There must be no hatred & no continual sniping attacks on one group or another. The enemy wants to disrupt us--& the spearhead of that attack is prejudice. They focus the attention of our people on minor points of disagreement, playing down those basic principles upon which we are all agreed. They hope by so doing to split the nation & bring down defeat upon us. Today, the sons of farmers, workers, & businessmen are fighting & working together. We can do no less. We all must fight as Americans--for America & for ourselves. Let us not fight each other but let's defend each other.
If we do that we will all win. If we don't stand together we will all lose.

To date we have appropriated or authorized the expenditure of more than 200 billion dollars to prosecute the war. No man can say how much more may be spent but one thing is certain—many more billions will be required in the months ahead, 10 to 13 millions of the manhood of the nation will be in the armed forces.

We have our armies all over the globe. We are trying to be strong everywhere at the same time but to continue this policy, it seems to me, will allow the enemy to concentrate against our weak spots & wear us down. We are fighting not one nation but three, & of the three the most dangerous is Japan. We defeated Germany in one war & will do it again. Italy would rather be with us than against us, but the Italian people have no choice. Japan has never yet lost a war; neither have we & we do not intend to lose this one. The Japanese have invaded American territory & seized some of our Aleutian Islands, which lie within 3000 miles of the State of Montana and not more than 2200 miles from Tokyo. One of these islands, Ilika, has such a fine natural harbor that it can accomodate more than three times as many ships—of all classes—as Pearl Harbor, our main naval base in the Pacific. Furthermore, the Aleutians are on the shortest route to Japan & also the shortest route to Siberia. Surely we have somewhere the power necessary to drive out the Japanese!!

According to authentic reports the Japanese have used land-based planes at Kiska to fight patrolling American aircraft. They have also undertaken constructions of a type which indicates a planned permanent occupation. This is significant because it indicates the importance & danger of the Japanese control & also because it raises a barrier for cargo-carrying aircraft which must—at some time—carry supplies & munitions to embattled China & Russia.

It has been said that in the fog, wind & rain it is difficult to fly in the Aleutians. It is evidently not so bad that aircraft on both sides
cannot operate. It is perhaps true that flyers trained in non-fog & rain areas like Texas & Arizona would find flying difficult in the North Pacific but why couldn't our pilots be given training in flying under such conditions in the W. W. part of the U. S.? Why couldn't airfields already developed--such as those at Kalispell & Missoula--be used for such a purpose?

The Aleutian islands are today the most important area in the war. The fog has kept us from retaking these bits of American territory, say our public spokesmen, but the fog has not hindered the Japanese. The fog isn't all in the Aleutians either & I feel we should have definite information as to why the Japanese were allowed to land & why they have not been driven out. Then there would be less fog for all of us.

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What can we do? Here is a suggestion:-- We can concentrate enough naval & air forces to drive them out of the American territory they occupy. We can then use those islands as springboards against Japan itself & from them pound the Japanese empire to pieces. 1800 miles from Attu to Tokyo & 2500 miles from Dutch Harbor to Tokyo are distances that bombers can traverse in carrying the war to Japan. Not in Doolittle raids--that was a token bombing only--but in flights of 200, 500 & 1000 planes at a time. We must bomb, destroy & defeat Japan & the only way we can do it is by using the Aleutians as bases for offensive operations.

The most important problem confronting us is winning this war. We are in this war up to our necks, & if we lose, we will lose our necks too.
The events of the past few months have shaken the last false grain of optimism from the American mind. Any illusions any of us may have harbored that this would be a short war, an easy war, a war merely of out-producing & out-talking the Axis—these illusions have gone down with the fortress of Tobruk & the ships that the Nazis are sinking along our shores. We cannot win this war on 2 lumps of sugar instead of 3, nor can we beat our mortal enemies by driving only 35 miles an hour instead of 40. We will win this war only after blood & sweat, after sacrifice & hardship, after fighting & working with unbounded passion & deep determination. You & I know that we will win this war--& that we will not stop until the war is won. But we also know that the road ahead is dark & tortuous, & that it will require every ounce of our strength & courage to find our way into the light. We are willing to make any & all sacrifices so that our gifts of freedom & justice shall survive & flourish in the world of tomorrow.

Our business now is to defeat our enemies. We are fighting them as a mature people, conscious of the terrible stakes involved, conscious of the utter ruthlessness of those who oppose us, conscious that we must either win thru to total victory or lose our birthright & our future. There is no such thing as a popular war. We do not need super-patriots shrieking at us from the street corners nor do we need a band on every block to convince us that we are fighting, NOW.

Production alone will never win this war. Just turning out guns & tanks & planes & ships won't defeat our enemies. We must have faith in ourselves & our institutions—faith in our purposes & goals—or the tanks, guns, planes & ships will be ghostly instruments without meaning.

Japan bombed us into this war at Pearl Harbor, but the U. S. will blast her out of it in Tokyo. We are in a fight to the finish and what we do not determines our destiny.

We must win because this is a battle for existence.
We fight a war that we did not want; we invest our money in messengers of death & destruction instead of promoting peaceful pursuits; & our sons, relatives & friends are facing death today.

This time we are not fighting to make the world safe for democracy. We are fighting for the right of democracy to live. We are not fighting someone else's war. Whoever fights our enemies, fights with us at the moment, and we are not, under any circumstances, obligated to accept what they think or believe.

As a nation we have short memories. We fight and forget. The heroes of today are the forgotten men of tomorrow. Words are the only things that last forever--words such as Valley Forge, Gettysburg, Argonne, Wake Island, Corregidor and Bataan.

Wake Island, Corregidor & Bataan taught the United States a thing it had forgotten: pride of arms & pride in what Americans could do when tested. They taught America a humiliating thing, too: that American soldiers could be beaten & could be taught the fullest shame of unconditional surrender.

It took the fighting & dying of these Americans on those battlefields to bring home to us the seriousness of this war. To say that we have now entered on the most critical years we have ever known is simply to state the obvious. Today our obligations & responsibilities as true, loyal American citizens are greater than at any time in the history of our country. This is total war. It will be fought, unfortunately, not only in the Pacific & the Atlantic, the jungle, the desert, but also in every home, every office, every factory, & on every farm of all America. It will be a battle to the death against those who would turn back the clock & wipe out everything that we hold dear.

The men on Wake & Bataan kept the faith to the end. It is now up to us to finish the job they began. We will keep the faith, & will win, for back of the American fighting man is a tradition of valor that extends unbroken from the battle of Saratoga to the battle of the Solomons. But valor alone will not
win in this modern warfare of dive bombers & tanks. The final result will be decided by the organized, united civilian army which supplies the uniformed army with the ships, planes, tanks, guns, ammunition, food, clothing & medicine—everything possible for victory. We must produce or perish.

We must all work as one. With national unity must grow the spirit of individual sacrifice. What matter tires or taxes; what matter sugar or steel, if we can maintain our liberties? We who stay at home should think it shameful even to mention these things.

We should have a sense of responsibility & a sacred regard for the truth. We have come a long way since December 7th, but the fact remains that the road ahead is longer & tougher & more exacting than any we have traveled thus far. We have had some good news & a great deal of bad news. It is well for us to remember that when good news is magnified a thousand-fold by a headlines writer, it will sell papers but it will not win wars. Victory will come for America only if all of us shake off dreamy optimism and face realistically the sacrifices we must undergo and the crucial shortcomings which continue to impede our war effort, and which must be overcome.

Daily it is becoming apparent that sacrifice is not something which we can casually take or leave alone—it is a condition which is being forcibly rammed down our throats whether we like it or not. This war is no longer an unpleasant incident which is going on some thousands of miles away; it is right in our own laps and we may as well raise our chins in anticipation of far worse to come. Defeating our enemies is not going to be an idle process; it is going to require the stoutest concentration of effort ever put forth by this nation; & the price of failure will be enslavement, undreamed of misery, and degradation. Our task is to work, to buy, to deny ourselves & then do the same things over again—only harder.
Complete victory can be accomplished only thru the full cooperative efforts of every man & woman able to work, give or fight. That means every single one of us in this country.

We will win this war--make no mistake about that but we must, in addition, win the peace as well. We must have a peace, this time, that will make the world & especially our own country a decent and safe place in which to live. We must be done with this 20 year cycle of wars because our boys are too precious to raise for sacrificial purposes on the altar of barbarous struggles. We must insure peace for our children.

Since the next Congress will play a significant part in the peace to come, I feel that I have the right experience and training to be of value in that body. I have served our country in the Far East and taught the history of that area for the past 8 years at your University. When it comes to settling with Japan--in Tokyo--this experience will stand me in good stead.

Our post-war economic life will be more closely linked with that of Latin America. Having travelled in that region & taught the history of those countries, I again feel that this experience of mine will be of value to you.

I feel also that in carrying out the war effort there are certain other things that we must do:

1. We must decide on a standard of military fitness for the army and Navy and stop turning down men who volunteer, only to draft them later;
2. We must never announce an impending shortage. Wait till all the rationing rules have been worked out, then announce the whole thing;
3. Admit the Chinese to our war councils & learn about Japan from them.
4. Get behind Henry J. Kaiser's plans to build cargo-carrying & troop-carrying flying boats & in that way overcome the submarine menace;
5. Publish the casualty lists.
My thoughts at this moment, are on people who, in the main, will not be able to vote in this election. They are the boys & the men I've known in the classroom, on the farms, in the mines, the mills, & on the railroads and who are now in service & stationed in many lands. Some of them are buddies who served with me in the first World War. They are our sons, our brothers, our fathers, and our friends. They are the ones who are shouldering the real burden & they are the ones who must be considered & taken care of when this conflict is over. They are the ones who are first in my thoughts. They are both Republicans and Democrats but they are—as I am—first of all Americans.

For them we must be determined, united, unafraid, & unconquerable. We must bend all our efforts to win, but must produce to the limit, we must use all our brain power, all our horse power, all our muscle power, & all our will power. Nothing is so important now as winning the war. A storm & harrowing period lies before us but there can be no doubt, no uncertainty but only an unswerving faith in God that ours is to be the ultimate victory in this barbarous struggle.

Tonight, I once again pledge my full support to our state, our country, & our commander-in-chief. I owe allegiance to one country and one country only—the United States of America. I believe in one form of government and one form of government only—that is the democracy under which we live.

Tomorrow, friends, you go to the polls to elect a Congressman. Exercise your privilege of voting & speak out for democracy. Ballots are bullets these days & thru them you make your wishes known. If you vote for me I hope it is because you know that Mike Mansfield will attend to his state's & his nation's business. I promise to do my honest best. No one can do more; no one should try to do less.

Thank you.
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The farmer—who constitutes 23% of our total population but who in the last 10 years has secured only 7% of the national income—is entitled to parity. If the farmer is to continue to produce for victory he must be assured of sufficient help & fair prices.

The workers must have decent wages & hours so that they can enjoy the security to which they are entitled. The small businessman—the forgotten man of today—must be protected. I have traveled over the district & have talked to businessmen in these places & found them uncomplaining but wondering what to do. Some of them were going bankrupt & others were those dependent on him & they are many. It is not moving to new localities to find work. They were all willing to do what they could to further the war effort but they were not being given the chance. Unless & unless Congress, small business will be the first economic casualty of the war.

The interests of our farmers, workers & businessmen are the same. They are working for each other but right now they are working for America first of all because our country is at war. They are paying their full share of the cost—in blood, in sweat, in sacrifice, & in taxes. They entered this war as free men & they are determined to come out of it the same way.

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war effort successfully. Montana has never turned a deaf ear to America's call. We ask for war industries not on the basis of a spoils system but on the basis of facts. We have the resources; why not use them?

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Announcer: You are listening to Mike Mansfield, candidate for Congress—speaking.

I do not want military politicians or political generals or admirals to direct our war effort. I know it is easy to be critical but we do want to see something done NOW and not after this or any other election. We must not only fight but we must work—& work our hardest—to win. We must work like the men on Bataan & Corregidor fought—until we drop in our tracks. It is not a matter of maybe but a matter of must. We are not interested in excuses; we want results.

In this struggle we cannot afford the luxury of fighting among ourselves. There must be no hatred & no continual sniping attacks on one group or another. The enemy wants to disrupt us—and the spearhead of that attack is prejudice. They focus the attention of our people on minor points of disagreement, playing down those basic principles upon which we are all agreed. They hope by so doing to split the nation & bring down defeat upon us. Today, the sons of farmers, workers, & businessmen are fighting & working together. We can do no less. We ALL must fight as Americans—for America & for ourselves. Let us not fight each other but let's defend each other.
If we do that we will all win. If we don’t stand together we will all lose.

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It has been said that in the fog, wind and rain it is difficult to fly in the Aleutians. It is evidently not so bad that aircraft on both sides
cannot operate. It is perhaps true that flyers trained in non-fog & rain areas like Texas & Arizona would find flying difficult in the North Pacific but why couldn't our pilots be given training in flying under such conditions in the N. W. part of the U. S.? Why couldn't airfields already developed--such as those at Kalispell & Missoula--be used for such a purpose?

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total war. It will be fought, unfortunately, not only in the Pacific & the
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the battle of Saratoga to the battle of the Solomons. But valor alone will not
Complete victory can be accomplished only thru the full cooperative efforts of every man & woman able to work, give or fight. We have come a long way since Dec. 7th; we have won some victories but we've lost more. It is well for us to remember that when good news is magnified a thousand-fold by headlines, it will We will win this war--make no mistake about that but we must, in addition, win the peace as well. We must have a peace, this time, that will make the world & especially our own country a decent and safe place in which to live.

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5. Publish the casualty lists.
To you fathers and mothers I want to say

that my thoughts at this moment are on people who, in the main, will not be able to vote in this election. They are the boys and the men I've known in the classroom, on the farms, in the mines, the mills, and on the railroads and who are now in service and stationed in many lands. Some of them are buddies who served with me in the first World War. They are our sons, our brothers, our fathers, and our friends. They are the ones who are shouldering the real burden, and they are the ones who must be considered and taken care of when this conflict is over. They are the ones who are first in my thoughts. They are both Republicans and Democrats but they are— as I am—first of all Americans.

For them we must be determined, united, unafraid, and unconquerable. Send all our efforts to win, we must produce to the limit, we must use all our brain power, all our horse power, all our muscle power, all our will power. Nothing is so important now as winning the war. A stormy and harrowing period lies before us but there can be no doubt, no uncertainty but only an unswerving faith in God that ours is to be the ultimate victory in this devastating conflict.

Tonight, I once again pledge my full support to our state, our country, and our commander-in-chief. I owe allegiance to one country and one country only—the United States of America. I believe in one form of government and one form of government only—that is the democracy under which we live.

Tomorrow, friends, you go to the polls to elect a Congressman. Exercise your privilege of voting and speak out for democracy. Ballots are bullets these days and thru them you make your wishes known. If you vote for me I hope it is because you know that Mike Mansfield will attend to his state's and his nation's business. I promise to do my honest best. No one can do more; no one should do less. I always kept before me a motto learned while young with the Marines in the Far East. It is— Semper Fidelis; it means—"Always Faithful." Thank you and good night.

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