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### Speeches, A View from the Senate

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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For Thursday A.M.s

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REMARKS OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA)

at the

EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE ALLIED EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

AMERICANA HOTEL, NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Wednesday, April 29, 1970, 7:00p.m.

A VIEW FROM THE SENATE

It used to be said that aspiring politicians went West to establish a base of operations. Now the style is to come East. That is not, however, why I am in New York today. I am not a candidate for office in the Empire State.

It is not that I could not establish my credentials. I do not know about some of the others who are running here but I qualify as a native son since I was born on Manhattan Island. Fortunately, my parents anticipated the problem of New York's air pollution by over half-a-century. They had the good sense to pull up stakes shortly after putting them down. Before I was three, I was living in the Big Sky Country. Montana not only surrounded me with an exhilarating natural environment but the State also provided me with the only political stimulant I have known, needed, or sought.

So, I repeat, I am not here to crowd into your over-crowded New York politics. Nevertheless, I am grateful to you for inviting me to be with you today. It is a welcomed opportunity to participate in this significant educational experience. It is also an opportunity to get away from Washington, even if it is only for a day.

The second session of the Congress which began in mid-January has already proven to be among the busiest. By April 24, the Senate had acted on four times as many items of major legislation as in the same period last year. One hundred twenty-eight roll calls had been taken by that date, a total not reached until November last year. In these opening weeks, the Senate rejected one of President Nixon's appointments about which you heard a great deal. You did not hear that it had also confirmed over 7,000 of his other appointments this year.

An intensity of activity such as has characterized the present Senate is not necessarily a measure of constructive

achievement. Yet, what is going on in the Senate, today, is not merely "sound and fury signifying nothing." It is, in my judgment, a response of concern from the Senate to the concern of Americans over the troubled state of the nation.

Nor is the disquiet in the Senate political in origin. Rather, it is a disquiet which is shared by Members of both parties. The current Senate, in fact, is one of the least partisan I have known. For the past year, most Members of both parties have been inclined to agree with President Nixon that it is a time for lowered voices.

Restraint in speech was and still is an excellent idea but it is not of itself a response to the nation's difficulties. It does not meet, for example, the implications of the first widespread strike of postal employees in the nation's history or labor crises in half a dozen other industries or continuing outbursts of racial hostility, school disorders and other forms of violence or multiplying reports of the poisoning

of lakes, rivers and shore waters by pollution. These are all flashes of deeper dangers--of the physical, economic and social time bombs which are ticking in our midst. To manage the underlying problems at all seems to me to require a combination of intense thought, discussion and purposeful action. Indeed, what you are doing here, today, is a part of that process. To strengthen that process, however, will require the consistent application of leadership by the Administration supplemented by the Congress.

This session's activity to date offers evidence that the Senate is more than willing to supply its share of the supplement. The concerns which have spurred the Senate to vigorous and purposeful action are many-sided. For one thing, the state of the economy is distressing. As there has been for several months, again in March there was an increase in the unemployment figures to 3.7 million persons. That is a rise of 300,000 since the start of the year. The 4.4 percent

unemployment rate in that month was the highest in five years. All indications in the press suggest that the figures for April when they are released will show that these trends are continuing. Industrial production is lower than it was six months ago when it should have been increasing at this time of the year. There is now an unused capacity of 20 per cent in the factories of the nation. Reports of lay-offs continue to rise. At the same time, the work week has shrunk in many industries, cutting heavily into the overtime on which the living-level of millions is dependent. Whether or not the situation is given the name recession is immaterial. Clearly, we are in a period of less-than adequate economic activity. Has anyone heard of Dow-Jones lately?

The only figures which have consistently climbed for some time are prices. Price levels are at an all-time high and that includes interest rates which are holding to a 100 year pinnacle. It is only too apparent that what began

a year ago as a laudable effort by the Administration to restrain a serious inflation has not yet succeeded in achieving that goal. At the same time, a large segment of the American public has been hurt in consequence of those measures.

Economists grasp the significance of these indicators in one way. Bankers in another. Business managers in still another. Senators read the mail from home. We are well-informed, for example, of the consequences of unemployment or shrinking incomes in terms of personal hardships. We are well-aware of what high prices mean to old people living on Social Security annuities or pensions of \$100 a month or thereabouts. If Senators are concerned about the nation's economic situation, it is in great part because we are sensitive to the human plight of Americans who are caught in the statistics--the Americans who are squeezed in a vise of declining or fixed incomes as against still unchecked price-rises.

An economy which is, at once, sluggish and price-inflated, joins the carry-over national ills which have long been a source of anxiety. These other difficulties were there during previous administrations and remain pressing in the current administration. Included, of course, is the still-seething issue of race-relations. In the Senate, this problem is now seen more and more not as peculiar to the South but one that is woven into the social fabric of the entire nation. The problem of crime in all of its ramifications, including the condition of the courts, continues to disturb the Senate which has already passed all of the anti-crime measures that the President has sought. There is concern at the loss of the sense of sheer physical safety on the streets and even in one's home. So, too, is there deep distress over the proliferating use of dangerous drugs, particularly among the young, and the apparent inability to grapple effectively with this phenomenon.



Finally, the nation has suddenly awakened to the rapid polluting of the environment. It did not take an Earth Day to alert the Senate to this problem. Years before the commercials began to sing songs in praise of clean air, the Senate was already aware of the gathering clouds. Pioneer legislative work had been done in past sessions and effective follow-through in the Executive Branch is now awaited. In this instance, the Congress was able to supply, in advance, legislation and appropriations to support the emergence of an Administration-leadership on the subject.

The accumulation of national difficulties is a consequence of a long abuse and neglect of the nation's inner structure. Disintegration of the physical environment, especially in the urban areas, is far advanced. The social cement of community responsibility and personal restraint and civility appears to have given way in many places. At times, the whole range of public services--state, local and federal--

seems indifferent to the situation. More often these services  
are inadequate and ineffective in the face of rising need.  
Whatever the case, the pillars of the nation's habitability  
are tending to weaken--and some faster than they can be  
reinforced.

Solutions to complex problems in a complex  
society cost a great deal of money. We have spent much and  
we will, undoubtedly, have to spend more. Whatever is spent,  
however, will not be enough if we do not also direct to these  
difficulties a concentration of intelligence and skills and  
a diligent and determined industry. That kind of effort  
requires effective leadership in all parts of the nation.  
Whether we like it or not, it also requires substantial  
financing by the federal government.

I do not think that a prohibitive increase in  
taxation is the sole alternative to decaying cities or inse-  
cure streets. Nor is a run-away inflation necessarily the

inevitable consequence of providing for the needs of the old and the poor, for adequate health facilities and services and for a decent education of the young--education of all the young who seek it and are prepared to work for it, not just for those who in someone's self-ordained judgment fit into a corps of intellectual elite.

A practical alternative to more taxes and more inflation, I believe, involves steering the economy out of the recession without delay. Equally, it involves moving towards a better balance between federal expenditures for security against threats abroad and against erosion of our security by neglect and indifference at home.

For many years, this balance has been heavily weighted on the side of defending against foreign dangers--real or presumed, immediate or projected. That is why the cost of the Defense Department towers above all other federal expenditures. At \$72.6 billion it is far and away the greatest

single item in the current budget. The balance has become lopsided primarily because as a nation we have acted for too long on the basis of lopsided fears. We have concentrated on alien dangers and overlooked or disbelieved the dangers accumulating at home. In consequence we have been all too ready to pursue new weapons systems, with inadequate scrutiny of need and with little regard for costs merely because they are packaged in the name of national defense. By the same token, we have accumulated, somewhat at random over the past two decades, allies by the dozens and military installations abroad by the hundreds. Whatever the initial merit, many of these arrangements are now outdated and dangerous. All of them add to the enormous burden of military cost.

An example of a wasteful obsolescence is to be found in the size of the U. S. force in Europe under NATO. For two decades, it has been maintained, largely in Germany, at public expense and, today, it still numbers over one half

million American military personnel and dependents and others. A significant reduction in the size of this great contingent has yet to be made. It has not been made even though a lavish commitment of resources in Europe has contributed to the inflation at home and weakened the international position of the dollar. It has not been made, notwithstanding the changed relationships between Eastern and Western Europe, in particular, the increasing commercial and other amicable contact. It has not been made notwithstanding the consistent disinclination of the Europeans to meet their NATO commitments at anywhere near the agreed on levels for the obvious reasons that we have been prepared to carry the preponderant burdens and that they do not regard the Soviet military danger in anywhere near the same light as do we in our NATO policies.

It is ironic, for example, that the Germans are able, simultaneously to take vigorous initiatives which expand commercial and other friendly contact with the Soviet Union and other Communist countries while they have remained

adamant against any reduction in U. S. forces in Europe as a threat to their security. At the same time, Germany has declined to meet its commitment to NATO or to pay any share of maintaining what amounts, in the circumstances, to the lopsided over-commitment of U. S. forces to NATO.

I do not point out these contrasts to discourage the kind of initiative which the German Chancellor has taken towards his counterpart in East Germany, as part of an effort to advance German and general European reconciliation. Nor am I suggesting that the Germans need to contribute more military forces to NATO if they do not feel that the raising of their forces to levels agreed upon earlier by the NATO nations continues to be valid policy. However, I do suggest that if it is proper for the Germans and other Europeans to scale down their commitments and costs under NATO, it is, to say the least, as appropriate for us to do the same.

It is not surprising that a majority of Senators are now urging a contraction in the U. S. troops deployment in Europe. What is surprising is that the Executive Branch has resisted, through several administrations, any reasonable reduction in this commitment. I fear greatly that this reluctance to make timely reductions may lead to a precipitous and, perhaps, total withdrawal in the future. That would be regrettable because the continuing presence of some U. S. forces in Europe seems to me to remain in the interests of this nation and world peace.

What can no longer be ignored is the cost of the U. S. commitment to NATO which Senator Percy of Illinois has estimated at \$14 billion. That is a severe drain on tax resources, a source of inflation and a major strain on the value of the dollar in relationship to the mark and other European currencies. I look to the Senate to press for a confrontation on this extravagant use of U. S. funds which

can better be used elsewhere in what is otherwise, in my judgment, a desirable participation in NATO.

Before turning to the nub of the Senate's international concern, that is, to Viet Nam and Southeast Asia, I should like to refer briefly to another deeply troubled area--to the situation in the Middle East--from which no country in the world can insulate itself. Since the end of World War II, the Israelis have demonstrated great capacity and determination to survive in a setting of fierce hostility. There is no gain-saying that the efforts of the Israelis to develop a modern, democratic state out of a desert have been extraordinary. It is not necessary to berate the Arabs, whose hostility from their point of view is comprehensible, in order to recognize that the Israeli achievement has been one of great magnitude.

So long as the Arab hostility persists, however, the survival of Israel will depend heavily on a continuing willingness of the Israelis to live on the razor's edge of



war and to bear the great sacrifices which are entailed thereby. It will depend, too, on a flow of assistance from abroad which in recent years has come largely from the United States.

To be sure, there are differences of view as to the adequacy and timing of this help. It seems to me, however, that not only U. S. sympathies but the U. S. stake in world peace is likely to bring about continuance of adequate aid to Israel as long as aid to the Arab nations flows from the Communist nations and other countries. I say that without presuming to judge the President's recent decision to provide economic assistance rather than to send fighter planes to Israel. That may or may not have been the right decision. In any event, on the basis of his responsibilities, it was his decision to make and he made it.

Survival by aid and other makeshift arrangements is clearly to be preferred to no survival at all. In the long run, however, it seems to me that the security of Israel and

very likely the peace of the world depend upon a very substantial reduction in the hostility which surrounds this beachhead democracy of the Middle East. To that end, I would prefer to see in all frankness a total cut-off of arms shipments to the Middle East from all sources and a conversion of aid from purposes of destruction to constructive economic and social undertakings for the benefit of both Israel and the Arab states.

That is the direction in which I believe we must continue to press in the search for a durable peace. As a practical matter, however, the day still appears a long way off. The fact is that there has been no response from the Russians to such proposals as have been made along the lines of an arms curb. Moreover, I think our efforts to join with the Soviet Union, as impartial intermediaries of the conflict in the Middle East have been less than fruitless. The Arabs ridicule the possibility of our impartiality; the Israelis reject Soviet impartiality in these joint mediatory efforts

and, I believe, look upon the proceedings with a degree of mistrust since they are persuaded that there is no likelihood of effective negotiations for a settlement except on a face-to-face basis with the Arabs. Frankly, I can see little value in a continuation of a course of U. S. diplomacy which finds us acting as middlemen and which may well be regarded as meddling on all sides. The recent unfortunate experiences of the Assistant-Secretary in the Middle East seem to underscore the point.

That is not to say that we should or can divorce ourselves from the problem of peace in the Middle East. We share with the rest of the world a great stake in the solution to that problem. It does seem to me, however, that we would do better at this time to speak for ourselves alone and to lay  
we may have to offer  
whatever constructive proposals/before the United Nations or  
some other open forum.

In any event, our difficulties in Southeast Asia tend to limit our effectiveness in dealing with situations elsewhere in the world. To date, our involvement in that region has exacted an immense cost--easily over \$100 billion for Viet Nam alone. The war continues to command U. S. resources at a rate usually estimated at about \$1.5 to \$2 billion a month. More tragic, Viet Nam has claimed almost 50,000 U. S. lives and caused over 250,000 other casualties and many times that number of Vietnamese victims--military and civilian. The toll on all sides continues heavy as the war's devastation remains unchecked.

On top of the drain of Viet Nam, there is another war within Laos--the so-called "hidden war"--which carries the constant risk of a new U. S. enmeshment. As has recently been noted by the Senate, we have already been engaged in this war for at least half-a-decade. Our involvement includes not only air-bombing the remote border routes from North to South Viet

Nam where the U. S. military effort is at least related to Viet Nam. Our activities have also been projected elsewhere in this remote and primitive land. It has long been an open secret that we have been "secretly" engaged on one side of <sup>secret</sup> "the/war" within Laos.

It takes a great stretch of the imagination to find U. S. interests in this remote land which require us to play therein a role far greater than that of any other major outside power. The region is in no way vital to our national interests. Indeed, it was not even recognized as a separate political entity by the United States until twenty years ago. Nevertheless, we have somehow already managed, by way of aid to have become deeply involved in Laos and to have sunk billions of dollars into the situation. To aid has been added U. S. advisors and those who go beyond advice and, inevitably, U. S. casualties. It is a familiar pattern, akin to that which drove us step-by-step ever deeper into Viet Nam.

We are confronted again with a possible repetition of the same pattern, this time in Cambodia. For a decade and a half that kingdom was an oasis of peace in Indochina. In scarcely a month, it has been converted by the Cambodian military coup into a bloody battlefield--into a conflict between people who remain loyal to Prince Sihanouk and the supporters of the military government which seized power in his absence from the country. It is also the scene of ever-deeper incursions of Vietnamese forces from both North and South Viet Nam into Cambodian territory. It is the scene of a carnage of civilians, with many victims of the genocidal tendencies that grow out of centuries-old cultural animosities and fears. For the most part the victims have been Vietnamese farmers, fishermen and tradespeople who have lived in peace in Cambodia for decades and even generations.

It is into this appalling extension of the Indochinese tragedy that we are invited to step with military aid

by the government which seized power in Cambodia. The trap door is baited, again, with an appeal, not for American men but only for American aid and, again, with the promise of shortening the war in Viet Nam. It is the same bait that plunged this nation step-by-step into Viet Nam as well as into Laos. In neither case, did the involvement stop at limited aid. In neither case did the progressive involvement shorten the war.

In my judgment, therefore, it is urgent to the future of this nation to avoid a U. S. involvement of any kind in Cambodia. It is vital--and I use the word "vital" advisedly--to see to it that what transpired in Viet Nam not be repeated in Cambodia. Unless this bleeding of men and resources can be halted now, where on the Asian mainland does it end? What lies beyond Cambodia? Thailand? China? As the drain goes on in Southeast Asia, where will we find the resources and the young

vitality and ideals which are essential elements for meeting the difficulties within the nation? In the face of this war's divisiveness, on what will we rebuild our national unity?

The President has properly resisted the pressures which he was under from within the Executive Branch to halt the reduction of American forces in Viet Nam. He has stuck to his intention of cutting the over-all numbers by 150,000 more

in the next 12 months. I do not see that that reduction is likely if

we now become embroiled in Cambodia in any way, shape, or form. It seems

to me, therefore, that the line against a further entanglement in Cambodia,

which may well have begun, must be guarded with great care by the President

and, as necessary and possible, by the Senate. Moreover, efforts should

be intensified to get out of the entanglement in the internal affairs of

Laos by a return to international consideration of this problem. Will

continue to have my support.

It seems to me that negotiations still offer the

best prospect for the emergence of a reasonable solution to the



problems of Viet Nam and Indochina. It is doubtful, however, that the way to achieve a settlement is still open at the Paris talks which have yielded, in any event, nothing relevant to date to the restoration of peace. Now with the spread of the fighting into Laos and Cambodia, the conflict in Viet Nam has evolved into a second Indochina war which is beyond the scope of Paris. Therefore, it seems to me that the Administration should not let pass the Soviet diplomatic suggestion that the Geneva Conference may have to be reconvened. Insofar as I am concerned, there might well go forth a clarion call to merge the Paris talks into a revival of the Geneva Conference of 1961-1962 on Laos, with the membership of that Conference appropriately broadened in order to consider the situation of all of Indochina and ~~the~~ the Southeast Asian mainland.

If there is no further desire on the part of the Soviet Union to pursue this matter, after having raised it, then the initiative can be taken by this nation. It might be

desirable for this nation to poll the members of the 1961-1962 Convention to determine which of the participants are prepared to sit down now to try to contribute their efforts to ending the war without further delay.

From the point of view of the interest of the United States, it is time to delineate a clear policy in support of the neutralization of all of Indochina, if not the entire Southeast Asian mainland. It is time to join with other outside powers in bona fide multilateral guarantees of the neutrality of the region. On that basis, this nation should be prepared to terminate forthwith its participation in the various conflicts on the Southeast Asian mainland, to depart militarily therefore and to work in concert with others for the restoration of the war's terrible devastation.

I do not underestimate the difficulties. But what is the alternative except to go on as we are, indefinitely,

or perhaps to become even more deeply and inextricably enmeshed. And while we are playing out this grim tragedy to the point of exhaustion in Indochina, what will transpire here at home? This nation has everything to gain by working without cease to reactivate diplomatic machinery to try to bring this tragic situation to an end. Our international position calls for it; our domestic situation urges it.