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STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA)

at the

DEMOCRATIC CONGRESSIONAL DINNER

Wednesday, May 27, 1970

Washington Hilton Hotel, 6:00 p.m.

We meet in an hour of deep national distress.

It is a time, not of war-diminished but, again, of war-expanded.

We meet at a time when the nation's economy is gripped in the dead hand of war, when Americans are caught in the cross-currents of inflation and recession. Jobs disappear. Profits shrink. Pensions can be stretched no further. Not prices, but production falls. Public problems--pollution, crime, transportation, education, drug addiction, health and a hundred others--cry out for attention. The cry is lost in the costly cacophony of war.

It is a time when dissension divides the land, when young are separated from old, when black is riven from white, when soldier is shunted from civilian. Yet there are those whose response to this national shame is still the rhetoric of denunciation and inflammatory division.

Let me say to those who compartmentalize the nation as they generalize their private hostility: Democrats will not join in dividing America. The Democratic Party will not turn away from any segment of Americans because they are too young or too old, because they wear a uniform or do not, because they are of one color or another, because they are of the north, south, east or west, of city or suburb. The door is open

in this party. The door is open to students and teachers, to labor and to farmers, to service-men, to the professions and to business. It is open to all who would stop the spread of this war. It is open to all who see that this/^{war}abroad must end so that the nation may get with its urgent business at home.

The door is open in this party to Republicans and to independents, to those who have been with us in the past and to those who have not. We invite them, wherever they are, in office or out, whether of a silent majority or a silent minority, the articulate and the inarticulate, to join us. We ask them to join us with their energy, their support and their votes. In this year of national crisis, there is no partisanship. There is only national obligation.

We must work together to strengthen the legislative branch of the government. The great issues of war and peace have slipped too far out of the hands of the representatives who are closest to the people of the nation. The responsibilities of the Congress must be reasserted.

It is the Congress this year and the next and the next which is called on to provide the critical balance-wheel in the federal system. It is the Congress which must act to restore good sense to foreign policy and stability to the economy. It is the Congress which must heed the many voices of the nation, reconcile them, and then move to reorder the priorities of public commitment.

With this Republican Administration, the balance-wheel is a Democratic Congress. That there is little of the joy of a political gathering, tonight, does not stem from our political fortunes. It is due

to the nation's misfortunes. It matters little what happens to us as Democrats. It matters greatly what happens to those Americans in Indochina whose lives are on the line. It matters greatly what happens on the streets of America, on the campuses, on the farms, and in the factories of America.

The purpose of Democrats in this critical year cannot be merely to retain control of the Congress. Our purpose must be to strengthen that control and consecrate this party to a new dimension of national leadership.