

## Mr. Mansfield's Mistake

Despite Senator Mansfield's rejoinder to critics of his resolution calling for a "substantial reduction" in the number of American troops in Europe, the effect is still unfortunate. This is certainly not Mr. Mansfield's wish. The Senate has no more thoughtful and conscientious member than the Majority Leader, and personal abuse ought to play no part in the discussion. Nevertheless, we think that he and the Senators who have joined with him are wrong, in the substance as well as the timing of the resolution.

Apart from any difficulties it may cause for German Chancellor Erhard, there are three principal objections to the Mansfield proposal. First, it would substitute a unilateral decision for what ought to be a matter of deliberate strategic determination by NATO. Second, it would undercut the "pause" doctrine whereby enough conventional strength would be available to establish enemy intentions before a resort to nuclear weapons was necessary. Third, even though Mr. Mansfield does not contemplate immediate action, a unilateral withdrawal announced in advance would impair the ability to bargain with the Soviet Union for a similar reduction. Some even fear that it might invite another 1961-type Berlin crisis, possibly in a Soviet effort to offset Chinese criticism.

The effect in diminishing Western bargaining power can be overdrawn. If there actually were a reduction in the size of American forces, there could be embarrassing pressure on the Russians to do likewise. But the slight to NATO consultation and the blow to the "pause" doctrine could be very damaging. One of the many difficulties with instant massive retaliation, which abandonment of the "pause" would make necessary in event of a clash, is that it simply would not be credible to either the Soviets or the Western Europeans in all sorts of marginal situations such as a Hungarian-style revolt in East Germany that might transgress the border.

This is not to say that revisions in NATO concepts are not long overdue. In that sense Senator Mansfield and his colleagues are forcing the hand of the Administration after a frustratingly long period of glacial immobility. Clearly the NATO

## ington Post

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Allies need to talk in the frankest terms not only about strategic concepts and troop deployment, but also about such ancillary problems as support costs. How long a war should be contemplated in Europe? If the present 90-day figure for stockpiling supplies is too great, the 10-day period advocated by Britain is too short. Perhaps 30 days is a reasonable compromise.

These are questions that ought to concern the NATO Council but also specifically the McNamara Committee, which is one of the most promising developments in the alliance. More than this the United States ought to be taking the lead in proposing a meeting with the Russians so that the onus, if such efforts should fail, would be on Moscow. But a Senate demand for unilateral troop reduction, repealing the sound congressional basis for the American military presence in Europe and promoting an impression that the United States is retreating in petulance into an isolationist shell, is scarcely the way to bring about any sort of desirable movement. It would be likely to cause far more harm than good.

Pres 9/10/66