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Excerpts From Mansfield Speech on War

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WASHINGTON, May 1— Following are excerpts from a speech opposing United States action in Cambodia, delivered in the Senate today by Mike Mansfield of Montana, the majority leader:

I listened with grave interest to the President of the United States speaking to the American people about the situation which has developed in Cambodia. Previous to that speech, members of Congress and the Cabinet met with the President. He gave us an explanation of the situation with reference to the sanctuaries extending from north to south on the Cambodian border. He gave us, too, the reasons why, on the advice of his senior advisors, he had approved the present operation.

I appreciate the fact that the President did call a number of Congressmen to the White House to give us this preview. He has exercised his responsibility, arrived at decisions after some days of consideration and in announcing them to the American public, has laid his cards on the table.

Mr. President, we as individual senators and as a Senate, also have responsibilities to reach conclusions, which may or may not coincide with the policy enunciated by the President of the United States. I must, therefore, as a senator from the state of Montana, and laying aside all political considerations, most respectfully disagree with the campaign into Cambodia.

The present U.S. South Vietnamese thrust into Cambodia, in my opinion, can be

regarded in no other light than as a widening of the war and an escalation of the conflict. That the operation is supposed to be "temporary" does not in any way alter this evaluation. I have seen too many so-called "temporary" operations down through the years in that part of the world. I have watched, too, with concern, all too often the transition from temporary operation to continuing operations to forgotten operations.

Mr. President, too many people have presented the Cambodian situation as a "golden opportunity" to save American lives and to shorten the war. The step-up into Cambodia can do just the opposite. It may well lengthen the conflict, widen it into an Indochinese war, increase U.S. costs by billions, increase U.S. casualties, which now number almost 50,000 dead and almost 275,000 wounded or a total of close to 325,000 American soldiers. At the same time, it may well accentuate problems at home and increase the divisiveness among our people.

I must now state in public that I am just as interested as anyone else in safeguarding U.S. troops in Vietnam and elsewhere, but I do not think that this new policy, this additional campaign, this new ball game is the way to safeguard them.

What confronts this nation in Indochina is not a question of saving face. It is a question of saving lives. The vital concern of this nation, and I use the word "vital" advisedly, must be to end our involvement in the war in

Vietnam. It is not to become bogged down in another war in all of Indochina.

The President's decision on Cambodia last night relates directly to these questions. It was not a political decision. Politics has no business in his calculations on this grave matter anymore than it has in ours. In the Senate, today, there is no party orientation on the issue of Vietnam. There has not been, and insofar as I am concerned, there will not be.

The President has national responsibilities as he made clear in his remarks last night. As I have stated, the Senate has national responsibilities.

The President reached a conclusion which was his to reach as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces under the Constitution. I respect his decision even as I regret it and am deeply concerned by it. I hope that, as he expects, his decision will reduce American casualties, speed the withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam, and hasten the end of the war. I would be less than honest, however, if I did not express the grave doubts which I have expressed today on these expectations. There is nothing in past experience in Indochina to suggest that casualties can be reduced by enlarging the area of military operations. There is nothing in past experience to suggest that the way out of the Vietnamese conflict follows the road of a second Indochina war. Indeed, that road may well meander throughout all of Southeast Asia and end nobody knows where.