

**SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD**  
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**Introduction.** Mike Mansfield is one of Montana’s most important and admired twentieth century public servants. That admiration is based primarily on his thoughtful, principled stand on numerous public policy issues, particularly the Far East, and his consistent personal integrity.

Mansfield lived between 1903 and 2001. His life and career were remarkable, particularly considering how far he came before being first elected to Congress in 1942. He served there for 34 years, including 16 record-breaking years as Senate majority leader. During those latter years, he was heavily involved in the great events of his time with Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon and Ford. He served another 11 years as ambassador to Japan under Presidents Carter and Reagan. Goldman Sachs then employed him as a high-level adviser on Japanese issues before he finally retired.

This article primarily summarizes a 510-page biography, “Senator Mansfield: The Extraordinary Life of a Great American Statesman and Diplomat,” by Don Oberdorfer (2003). The book won the D.B. Hardeman Prize in 2003. The numbers in parentheses throughout this article refer to its pages. Oberdorfer interviewed Mansfield extensively during Mansfield’s last three years. The book is also based on documents declassified for it, and on secret White House tape recordings made by Presidents Johnson and Nixon. It’s thorough, detailed and objective.

Oberdorfer was a distinguished journalist in residence and adjunct professor of international relations at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies of Johns Hopkins University. He also wrote four other books and several academic papers. He was previously a journalist for 38 years, including 25 years on the *Washington Post*. While at the *Post*, he served as a White House, Northeast Asia and diplomatic correspondent. He died in 2015 at 84.

**Mansfield’s early years.** Michael Joseph Mansfield was born in New York City on March 16, 1903. He had two younger sisters. His parents, Patrick Mansfield and Josephine O’Brien, were Irish immigrants who had come to America separately. Patrick was a construction worker who became severely injured. Josephine died of kidney disease in 1910, leaving Patrick unable to care for their three small children. Patrick therefore asked his uncle and aunt, who operated a small grocery store on the south side of Great Falls, Montana, to take the children and care for them (18).

Mansfield’s great-uncle died in 1912. His great-aunt had difficulty in caring for the three children. In 1913, she took Mansfield out of public school and placed him in a stricter parochial school. In 1914, she had him committed to the state home for wayward and orphaned children at Twin Bridges. He returned to her home and the store in 1915. He was an average student, but an “industrious” reader. However, he also cut classes and disappeared from home on occasion (20-21).

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When the United States entered World War I in 1917, Mansfield left home for good. At 14, he walked 90 miles north to Shelby. He rode the rails to Leavenworth, Washington, where he worked in a lumber camp as a whistleblower. He then traveled with members of the Oregon National Guard he had met there, and who were then en route to Europe, to a military depot on Long Island (21-22).

Mansfield left them and reconnected with his father, who had remarried, in New York City. He tried unsuccessfully to enlist in the armed forces. He therefore changed the birthdate on his birth certificate to a date three years earlier, then joined the Navy as an apprentice seaman on February 23, 1918. He made three wartime voyages across the Atlantic on a cruiser assigned to convoy duty. In December 1918, a month after the war ended, he wrote to Montana Senator Thomas J. Walsh, seeking to be released. Although Walsh recommended favorable action, Mansfield's commanding officer didn't release him until eight months later (22-23).

Mansfield returned to Montana. He didn't want to go back to 8<sup>th</sup> grade and couldn't find an attractive job. Less than three months later, he joined the Army. Instead of being sent to Germany, he was assigned to Fort McDowell, a hospital base on Angel Island in San Francisco Bay (23-24).

The day Mansfield's one-year Army enlistment ended, he joined the Marines for two years at 17. He was assigned to Subic Bay in the Philippines, then selected for temporary patrol duty in Tientsin, China, to protect American lives and property and do their share of guarding the embassy and other facilities. However, after four days, the patrol duty was called off as no longer necessary and the unit returned to the Philippines. Despite that limited time, the experience developed Mansfield's interest both in China and the Far East generally (25-28).

**To the mines and the love of his life.** In December 1922, a month after his discharge from the Marines, Mansfield took the train from Great Falls to Butte to find a better job. Beginning at 19, he worked in 18 mines in Butte until December 1931 (32). In 1926, despite his lack of a high school education, he was accepted as a provisional mining engineering student at the Montana School of Mines (now Montana Tech). After initially dropping out, he completed a year of classes during 1927-28. He was then promoted to be a sampler, and later as an assistant mining engineer (34).

In 1928, Mansfield met Maureen Hayes. Maureen had attended college at private schools and UCLA, and graduated from St. Mary's College, the female side of Notre Dame University. She taught English at Butte High School. Her father, Francis Fairclough Hayes, was a prominent Butte businessman and political figure. Maureen encouraged Mansfield to expand his horizons by applying to Montana State University in Missoula. It also accepted him as a provisional student (34-38).

Oberdorfer states, "There was and remains considerable mystery about their powerful bond and unusual relationship." Before meeting Maureen, Mansfield's ambitions and possibilities had been severely limited. Her urging and insistence propelled him forward to the forefront of Washington political life. Without her, it was "highly unlikely" that he would have undertaken any of those leaps, and if he had tried, "less than likely that he would have succeeded" (35).

Mansfield took courses at the university during the summer of 1929, receiving "C" grades. Concerned about being laid off, he went back to work in the mines, then applied for a mining job in Chile. Maureen talked him out of doing so. After taking some correspondence courses, he quit his job as assistant mining engineer and enrolled as a full-time university student in late 1931, on the

condition that he complete a high-school equivalency course before graduating (38-39). Maureen continued teaching in Butte during Mansfield's first year at Missoula. However, she quit her teaching job and married Mansfield there on September 13, 1932. She worked as a social worker while he attended college.<sup>1</sup> They struggled to get by during the depths of the depression (40).

Before graduating from Montana State University with a B.A. degree in history in 1933,<sup>2</sup> Mansfield applied unsuccessfully for two high school teaching positions. Paul Phillips, the history department's chair, offered him a job as a graduate instructor of two freshman history courses for \$22.50 per month while he pursued a master's degree in history and political science. He received that degree in 1934.<sup>3</sup> His thesis was on U.S. diplomatic relations with Korea from 1866 to 1910. Maureen also completed a master's degree in English in 1934 (40-41).

After completing his master's degree, Mansfield unsuccessfully applied for teaching positions at five other universities. Phillips then arranged for his part-time employment at MSU as assistant to the registrar and teaching history classes. After three years, MSU agreed to sponsor him for summer classes at UCLA leading to a Ph.D. degree in history, which MSU didn't offer. Beginning in 1937, Mansfield taught Far Eastern history nearly every quarter for the next five years. He also occasionally taught a variety of other history courses as well (42-43).

**Into the political world.** Going into politics wasn't Mansfield's idea. The ambition and impetus came instead from Maureen (44). He went to Washington, D.C. to call on Montana Senators James E. Murray and Burton K. Wheeler, and Rep. Jerry O'Connell during summer 1937. By then, he was considering running for O'Connell's seat in Montana's western congressional district. O'Connell was defeated in November 1938. Mansfield began campaigning for the 1940 election a month later. He finished third out of four in the Democratic primary. Jeannette Rankin, a Republican pacifist, won the general election, defeating O'Connell (48).

At Maureen's insistence, Mansfield again began campaigning immediately after the 1940 election. This time, after his two prior losses, O'Connell had no chance of a comeback. Rankin had voted against declaring war on Japan after it attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, dooming her chance for reelection. Mansfield won the Democratic primary comfortably (49).

Since Mansfield was on leave without pay from the university because of his political activities, he had no campaign funds or personal income for the general election. However, his Butte friend James Rowe Jr., by then an influential Washington D.C. lawyer, provided financial and other campaign assistance. Mansfield won the 1942 general election with nearly 60% of the vote (51).

On arriving in Congress, Mansfield was assigned to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, his first choice. He became an authority on the war in Asia, emphasizing the importance of China, which became one of his lifetime themes. He also continued to campaign for aid to Chiang Kai-shek's government, to help fight the Japanese (53-54).

The Anaconda Company and its press ignored Mansfield and he never went after them (55). He always pursued his constituents' interests and responded to their requests. He had a phenomenal memory for names and faces (56-57). He tried to avoid being caught up in divisive Montana political issues. His position instead was as a hardworking guardian of his constituents' interests and a non-partisan master of big issues. He lacked ideology and had a cautious political view (59).

Mansfield told Oberdorfer that his greatest satisfaction as a member of Congress was to oppose an Army Corps of Engineers proposal during the early 1940s to raise the level of the Flathead Lake dam. Doing so would have flooded several towns, parts of Polson and Kalispell, and 50,000 acres of rich farmland to provide additional power, much of which would have gone to the West Coast. He instead supported the proposal to build Hungry Horse Dam, which would protect Flathead Lake. That proposal was opposed by the Montana Power Company as public power competition. However, President Roosevelt signed the Hungry Horse bill on June 5, 1944 (59-61).

**Mission to China.** The most important event of Mansfield's career in the House, elevating him from obscurity to national prominence, was his mission to wartime China in 1944 as President Roosevelt's personal envoy. In March 1943, Mansfield initially sent a personal letter to the Chinese ambassador, based on his personal interest and belief in China's importance, requesting detailed information on the war against Japan. There's no record of any response. The ambassador stated in a follow-up contact only that he would bring the matter to his government's attention (62-63).

Mansfield then brought the proposed China trip up to Roosevelt at an October 2, 1944 meeting. Roosevelt agreed he should go to China on official business for him after the 1944 elections. Oberdorfer believes Roosevelt did so to enhance Mansfield's stature so that Mansfield might defeat Sen. Burton K. Wheeler in the 1946 elections (62-64). However, Mansfield ultimately decided not to challenge Wheeler because of his relative inexperience and the expense involved (66).

Mansfield drove into China from India over the primitive Ledo Road. He then flew to Chungking, China's wartime capital in southwest China. The central issues at the time were the nature of the Chinese Communist regime, which wasn't then clear, and whether Chiang Kai-shek was doing all he could to fight the Japanese. Mansfield initially met with Ambassador Patrick Hurley. He then had two conferences with Chiang Kai-shek (69-76).

As the result of Japanese ground advances in eastern China, the Chinese military situation was then extremely tense. Mansfield told Chiang that the United States had done everything within its means to assist China, that China must now assume its full responsibility and "now we expect results" (76). Chiang had previously given priority to fighting the Chinese Communists rather than Japan. His sentiments had not changed (77).

Mansfield's detailed report to Roosevelt endorsed Chiang's leadership, despite his failures, including holding 16 divisions of Chinese troops in reserve to blockade Communists rather than fighting Japanese troops; deterioration of China's military strength through corruption and ineptitude; uncontrolled inflation and profiteering; and impoverishment of the peasantry through high rents and interest rates (77).

Mansfield met with Roosevelt in January 1945 to discuss his 23-page report. They agreed that cooperation among the Chinese factions was the greatest imperative. They then discussed Mansfield's views about Indochina. Mansfield reported General Merrill's view that U.S. forces should stick to supplying war material to China, and avoid becoming involved in reassertion of British and French colonial power in India, Burma and southeast Asia (79).

Mansfield's China mission was an important learning experience for him having extraordinary consequences for the rest of his career. He had the opportunity to meet with Chinese leaders

and see conditions there first-hand. His hour-long speech to Congress on January 16, 1945 was a public version of his report. It embellished his reputation as a congressional expert on the Far East (80). He followed up with monthly speeches to the House on Asian developments until the end of World War II on August 15, 1945 (81).

Mansfield wrote an article on his mission for Montana newspapers and sent telegrams to Montana radio stations. He discussed his report with General George C. Marshall and sent a copy to Secretary of State Edward Stettinius. He also compiled a long list of persons to be contacted about his trip or to receive copies of the *Congressional Record* version of his report. Mansfield saw his chance to break out of the pack on a subject of his greatest interest. He succeeded beyond anyone's expectations (81).

**The Truman years.** Mansfield began asking Harry Truman for another trip to China as a presidential emissary in May 1945, six weeks after Truman became president. At an August 10, 1945 meeting, he told Truman that Roosevelt had asked him "in strict confidence" to make a second trip to China as his emissary in summer 1945. It's doubtful Roosevelt made such a statement. Truman initially agreed to send Mansfield back to China after Congress's summer recess (85). However, because of the difficult China situation he didn't want to send a representative at that time (86).

Mansfield continued to make House speeches on Chinese policy. He was particularly critical of landing 53,000 U.S. Marines on the Chinese coast to help Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist forces accept the Japanese surrender in North China before Communist troops could take over. At Mansfield's request, he met with Truman again on November 27, 1945. Truman then refused his suggestion that a definite date be set for the Marines' withdrawal, because "the situation over there is more serious than most people know" (87).

Mansfield also told Truman that China should use its own divisions to disarm Japanese soldiers and assume control in North China and Manchuria, and that China should settle its own internal problems. Truman responded that Chiang and his government "do not trust Russia or Britain. They trust only us and we got to carry the commitments through to the finish." As the result of this disagreement, there was no more talk of a Mansfield mission to China (87).

Mansfield continued to win re-election. He received 57.5% of the vote in 1946, and more than 60% in 1948 and 1950, despite partisan Republican attacks. Mansfield also helped Truman carry Montana in his upset victory over Republican Thomas E. Dewey in the 1948 presidential election. Democrats then regained control of Congress (89).

Two weeks after the 1948 election, Mansfield wrote to House Speaker Sam Rayburn and Majority Leader John McCormack asking that he be considered for the majority whip position if it was available. Percy Priest, the previous whip, decided to continue in that role. Mansfield therefore was appointed chief assistant whip. In 1950, he became chair of the House Special Committee to Investigate Campaign Expenditures. However, he declined invitations to leave the House to become Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs and Undersecretary of the Interior (90).

Mansfield found other ways to broaden his detailed knowledge of world affairs by traveling abroad. Late in 1946, he participated in a month-long tour of Japan, China, the Philippines and the Micronesian Islands with a naval affairs subcommittee. In September 1947, he participated in a five-

week Senate-House trip through western and eastern Europe to assess the need for a U.S. information program in that part of the world. He also attended the Ninth Conference of Inter-American States at Bogota, Colombia in April 1948 as a congressional observer (93-96).

After the Communist triumph on the mainland and Chiang's retreat to Formosa in 1949, Mansfield opposed additional military aid. He stated that Chiang's failure was caused by the Nationalist Army command's "incredible ineptitude," not American policy. After Truman interposed the U.S. fleet between Taiwan and the mainland following the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, Mansfield reversed himself and approved resumption of military aid (97).

Mansfield decided to run for the U.S. Senate in 1952. Based on his prior involvement with China, Republicans attacked him as pro-Communist. However, Mansfield had co-sponsored legislation to outlaw the Communist Party U.S.A. He made clear that he had no sympathy for the Russian or Chinese regimes. He also debated high-level Russian officials as an alternate delegate to the United Nations during a special session in Paris in late 1951 (99-100).

Senator Joseph McCarthy personally campaigned against Mansfield in Montana (101-02). The Communist-related campaigning against Mansfield became very heated. However, Mansfield defended himself successfully in a radio broadcast shortly before the election. He also then attacked incumbent Sen. Zale Ecton as a "do nothing" senator who had voted against a long list of Montana programs, principally public power projects. That broadcast "probably saved the day" (103).

In the 1952 election, a powerful Republican tide brought Dwight Eisenhower and a Republican Congress into office nationally. Montanans overwhelmingly cast their votes for Eisenhower and elected a Republican governor. However, they also elected Mansfield to the Senate, by fewer than 6,000 votes out of 262,000 votes cast (103).

**Introduction to Indochina.** Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin died weeks after Eisenhower's inauguration in 1953. His successors decided to terminate the stalemated Korean war. Eisenhower then provided vigorous leadership for cold war alliances, but chose not to use U.S. troops to prevent the French defeat in Vietnam in 1954 by Viet Minh insurgents. However, he provided economic support and military advice to Ngo Dinh Diem, South Vietnam's first post-colonial president (105).

During this period, Mansfield grew rapidly in stature within legislative ranks and quickly became its leading expert on Asia. After visits to Viet Nam, he worked intimately with the Republican administration to bolster Diem. Without his help, Diem might have been abandoned or overthrown in the mid-1950s, possibly averting the Vietnam war that was to come (105).

Mansfield supported Lyndon Johnson for Senate Minority Leader, rather than Montana Senator James E. Murray. In return, James Rowe lobbied Johnson to place Mansfield on the Foreign Relations Committee. Johnson persuaded more senior Democrats to take other positions so that the committee had an open position for Mansfield (108). In 1954, Mansfield was described as "probably the Senate's leading authority on the complex situation in the Far East" (110). However, his personal qualities, as much as his foreign policy expertise, led to his growing prestige in the Senate (109).

Mansfield arranged for a trip to South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia in 1953, with authorization from the Foreign Relations Committee and assistance from the State Department, to see

conditions there for himself. After returning, he told the Senate in February 1954 that “in my opinion, the French will not lose the war in Indochina” (114). However, in March 1954 the Viet Minh began a successful two-month siege on the French position at Dienbienphu. After the French surrendered on May 7, 1954, a Geneva peace conference created a cease-fire throughout Indochina and a “temporary” division of Vietnam at the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel (118).

Mansfield concluded that the only way to stave off a Communist victory was to create a truly independent Vietnamese government based on a much broader foundation. He saw the situation as an internal problem with political roots that could not be solve by military means alone (115). He had met Diem in May 1953 at a luncheon hosted by Justice William O. Douglas at the U.S. Supreme Court. Diem then stated that his mission was to create a “third way” (117). Mansfield was impressed. He thought Diem was a “third-force” alternative to both colonialism and capitalism (116).

Mansfield returned to Indochina in September 1954. He visited the French-appointed Vietnamese governor in Hanoi while refugee emigrations were in process. 860,000 refugees, mostly Catholic, emigrated to South Vietnam while it was permitted. He also visited Diem, then South Vietnam’s new prime minister, in Saigon. He found Diem a “virtual prisoner” in his residence because the French still occupied the official palace (119-20). Many observers then doubted whether Diem could continue in office. However, Mansfield concluded that, although Diem had serious defects, he could see no viable alternative. No one else had national stature (119-21).

Mansfield then flew to Manila to meet Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, who had invited him to be one of two congressional participants in the international conference establishing the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty. They always remained on cordial terms, although Mansfield sometimes disagreed with Dulles’s policies. Based on Eisenhower’s caution and congressional opposition, the administration declined to intervene with military forces to rescue the French. However, it was still interested in a collective security arrangement for southeast Asia. Mansfield was one of those signing the treaty on the United States’ behalf on September 8, 1954 (122-23).

Mansfield told Dulles in Manila that Diem might be “the last chance” for a prime minister who might be effective. Dulles repeated that conclusion in discussions with the French minister of state for Indochina. In response to later French efforts to dump Diem, Mansfield sent a cable to Dulles giving Diem the benefit of all doubts and placing the onus on the French. That message was influential in maintaining Washington’s support (128-29).

Mansfield’s 1954 report to the Foreign Relations Committee also concluded that if Diem were forced out of office, his replacement would probably be a military dictatorship unacceptable to the Vietnamese people and incapable of standing up to the Communists. In that event, the United States should consider suspension of all aid to Vietnam and the French forces there. Unless there was a reasonable expectation of fulfilling our objectives, continued expenditure of United States resources would be “unwarranted and inexcusable” (130).

Throughout the 1950s, Mansfield was intensely active on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He traveled abroad each summer and reported on each trip. In 1956, he gave ten lengthy speeches on the Senate floor reviewing U.S. policies in every part of the world with every foreign country. He continued to do so in 1957 and 1958. Although often critical of Eisenhower administration policy, they were restrained “scholarly speeches” and often suggested alternatives. He also

wrote articles on foreign affairs for a wide variety of prestigious publications. Those articles received favorable responses (146).

In January 1957, Johnson selected Mansfield as Majority Whip, the Senate's second-highest leadership position, after lobbying by their mutual friend James Rowe. Although Mansfield had no ambition for this position, he was persuaded to take it after several meetings with Johnson. Under Johnson, the position carried almost no power, despite its status. However, the title added to Mansfield's prestige (147-48).

Mansfield continued to go home to Montana every year while Congress was in recess and to give high priority to Montana constituents and affairs. In 1958, he won re-election with more than three-fourths of the vote against a weak Republican opponent, and carried all of Montana's 56 counties, far different from the 1952 election. During that Senate term, he had become the most popular politician in Montana's history (149-50).

**Into the leadership for Kennedy.** Mansfield and John F. Kennedy became friends when they both came into the Senate from the House in 1953. They were both Roman Catholics of Irish descent, but had vastly different, contrasting backgrounds. Despite those differences, they were comfortable with each other and developed a great deal of mutual respect. In 1956, Mansfield supported Kennedy's unsuccessful effort to become Vice-President (152-53).

When Kennedy became President in 1960, he insisted that Mansfield become Senate Democratic leader. Johnson repeated that offer. Kennedy respected and trusted Mansfield. He also didn't want Johnson to continue to have the job (154-55). However, Johnson expected Mansfield to be an easily led subordinate, with Johnson continuing to exercise the real power in the Senate (156).

Johnson then proposed that he be elected chairman of the Senate Democratic Conference, so he could continue to influence the Senate's internal workings as Vice-President. Mansfield initially agreed. After being elected Majority Leader, he presented that proposal at the Senate Democrats' initial meeting. There was immediate strong opposition. Mansfield assured the Conference that he had no intention for sharing responsibility or authority as Majority Leader with Johnson (157).

The result was a watered-down proposal permitting Mansfield as Majority Leader to ask Johnson or any Democratic senator to preside over the Conference. Johnson's proposal was rejected. He rarely attended a Senate Democratic meeting after that. Instead, Mansfield's authority as Majority Leader was confirmed free of Johnson's influence (157-58).

Mansfield's greatest foreign policy interest continued to be China. To avoid being called "soft on Communism," his public position was to oppose U.S. recognition of China and its admission to the United Nations. However, during an April 1960 Senate speech he called for "new approaches" to China, including an exchange of journalists and recognition of Mongolia. During a December 1960 luncheon with Mansfield, Kennedy seemed "very interested" in exchanging journalists. However, he later decided not to change the China policy until his second term (159-60).

In January 1961, Kennedy asked for Mansfield's advice about how to respond to a military coup in Laos. Mansfield recommended that the United States join international backing for Souvanna Phouma, Laos' centrist leader, and to aid him in seeking a neutralist solution in the pattern of Burma

and Cambodia. He also proposed a neutral commission to act as arbitrators between the warring Laotian factions. He wanted to avoid unlimited U.S. commitment or military involvement. Kennedy partially agreed with the neutral commission suggestion. However, later White House meetings also considered large-scale military intervention in Laos, to prevent a Communist victory (162-64).

In April 1961, the National Security Council discussed how to proceed in response to Pathet Lao advances in Laos. Military advisers urged that U.S. ground troops be sent there. Kennedy then decided to call in congressional leaders of both parties to discuss possible U.S. military intervention. Mansfield then stated, "The worst possible mistake would be to intervene there." He analyzed the political and military situation in Laos at length. Other congressional leaders agreed (165-69).

At the meeting's conclusion, Kennedy stated he had made no decision, but the U.S. position would be weakened if it were thought he had decided not to intervene. Mansfield thereafter discussed the situation further with Kennedy and sent him several memos arguing against intervention (165-69). Kennedy decided to negotiate for a neutral coalition government rather than fight in Laos (184).

Mansfield's performance as Senate Majority Leader was totally dissimilar from Johnson's. Johnson established an all-encompassing, all-consuming and very personal leadership style. He was a dramatic, flamboyant and towering figure, imposing and larger than life. Mansfield was a stark contrast. He was physically "almost completely colorless." He disliked using pressure on senators, instead using appeals to logic and public interest. He reduced Johnson's personal control over the steering and policy committees, and made them more representative of the Senate as a whole. He also relinquished personal control over assignments to the Senate's legislative committees, instead having staff match senators' requests with available vacancies (172-73).

As Senate Majority Leader, Mansfield was in nearly constant communication with Kennedy and his staff. Kennedy sometimes was frustrated by Mansfield's low-key, low-pressure approach. Yet Kennedy held him in close personal affection and felt no Senate leader in those years could have done better in the long run (175-76). Mansfield continued to pay attention first to Montana affairs and to meet constituents whenever they wanted to do so. He also brought federal benefits to Montana, such as agricultural expenditures and military spending (178).

In the summer and fall of 1961, Kennedy initially resisted his senior aides' pressures to authorize much greater U.S. military involvement in Vietnam to reverse a deteriorating situation there. Mansfield sent Kennedy a memo emphasizing the struggle's domestic political and economic roots. He recommended emphasizing nonmilitary issues and means to deal with them (184-85).

In October 1961, Kennedy dispatched General Maxwell Taylor, his personal military adviser, to Saigon to examine the situation and make recommendations. Taylor recommended sending an "initial contingent" of 6,000 to 8,000 U.S. ground troops. Mansfield sent a confidential memo to Kennedy stating that sending U.S. troops "should be approached with the greatest caution" and could become a "quicksand for us" in view of potential Chinese intervention. He instead favored increased American military and economic aid to Vietnam. However, the physical burden of meeting communist infiltration, subversion and attack should be left to the South Vietnamese (185).

Many of Kennedy's advisers advocated an explicit U.S. commitment with whatever it took to prevent the fall of South Vietnam to communism. Mansfield was in a minority arguing for caution

rather than commitment. In a November 11, 1961 meeting with his advisers, Kennedy refused to accept the joint Rusk-McNamara recommendation for a formal U.S. commitment, including possibly unlimited troops. He noted congressional opposition to sending troops. He instead agreed to provide a variety of military support activities, additional U.S. military aid and advisers, and authorized Pentagon planning for full-scale deployment of ground troops if needed later (187). In January 1962, the Pentagon decided to place military advisers with every battalion of the Vietnamese army and in every province headquarters (188).

Mansfield visited Saigon with three other senators in November 1962 as part of a larger international trip. He met with the U.S. ambassador, Diem, his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu and Nhu's wife. He also met with four American journalists, who told him of their problems with the Diem regime and the U.S. mission, which sought to discourage or rebut any negative reporting (190-91).

Upon returning to Washington, Mansfield presented a public report and a prepared a private report for Kennedy. The public report created new concerns. The private report stated that the Vietnam situation had not improved since his last visit in 1955. Outside the major cities, Vietnam was still an unsecure place ruled largely at night by the Vietcong. Mansfield did not recommend going to war against the guerrillas and establishing a neo-colonial rule. Instead, the Vietnamese had to have primary responsibility, since their country and future were at stake. To ignore that reality would place the U.S. in the same unenviable position as the French (192-93).

Mansfield met with Kennedy alone in Palm Beach on December 26, 1962 to discuss his report. Mansfield then also recommended that U.S. troops be limited and then withdrawn, to avoid having to send more troops to beef up those already there. Kennedy expressed anger that the report was contrary to what his advisers were telling him. He questioned Mansfield closely about the report. He later told Kenneth O'Donnell that he "got angry at Mike for disagreeing with our policy so completely, and I got angry with myself because I found myself agreeing with him" (194).

Mansfield spoke out again during a congressional leadership breakfast in spring 1963 against the continuing drift of policy in Vietnam. Kennedy asked O'Donnell to bring Mansfield to the Oval Office for a private chat after breakfast. According to O'Donnell, Kennedy told Mansfield that he had second thoughts about Mansfield's arguments and that he now agreed about the need for a complete military withdrawal from Vietnam. However, he couldn't do so until 1965, after he was re-elected. Mansfield agreed that doing it sooner would create a "wild conservative outcry" against returning him to the presidency for a second term (195). Mansfield later gave varying accounts about whether Kennedy intended to withdraw all American troops or merely some of them (196).

On August 20, 1963, Mansfield delivered an eight-page private memo to Kennedy at Kennedy's request. The memo argued for lessening, rather than increasing, U.S. stakes in the war. It no longer adamantly defended Diem. It instead questioned how great a cost in men and money could be justified in defending Vietnam unilaterally against Chinese domination. It argued that Vietnam was not central to U.S. defense interests. It also proposed an abrupt and "symbolic" ten percent withdrawal of U.S. advisers, followed by withdrawal of another 1,000 troops six weeks later (198-99).

While Kennedy was considering Mansfield's advice, Diem was killed in a military coup. The administration approved and promoted the coup. Mansfield issued a statement that he didn't know about the coup plan. There's no indication he was involved in its planning (200).

Following Kennedy's assassination on November 22, 1963, Mansfield gave an eulogy for him at Jacqueline Kennedy's request, together with House Speaker John McCormack and Chief Justice Earl Warren, at a memorial service held in the Capitol rotunda. Mansfield then gave her the manuscript. The Mansfields later called on her at the White House. She responded with a handwritten note stating Mansfield and Kennedy "were so close and built so much together" (209-10).

**Johnson I: Years of Escalation.** Johnson inherited a difficult struggle in Vietnam and transformed it into a full-blown American war. He was determined to "win" that war or, at the very least, not to be "the first American President to lose a war." As Johnson grappled with decisions that would dramatically expand U.S. military operations and commitments, Mansfield advised him repeatedly, but privately, against doing so at every turn (211). He became Johnson's most insistent and vocal critic. However, as Senate Majority Leader, Mansfield sought to persuade Johnson in private while remaining loyal to him in public. He was walking "a delicate line" (212).

Beginning in December 1963, Mansfield sent Johnson repeated memos arguing that U.S. commitments in Vietnam should not exceed its national interests and that a negotiated settlement should be the most important U.S. objective. There should be a shift in strategy from military to nonmilitary means, an "astute diplomatic offensive" to work out a peaceful settlement, and encouragement of Prince Sihanouk's neutralist policies in Cambodia (213-14). Johnson referred such memos to his advisers, Dean Rusk, Robert McNamara and McGeorge Bundy. They wrote responses supporting their current policies emphasizing greater military involvement (219-20).

Johnson had decided to keep the members of Kennedy's national security team as his principal advisers, to project continuity and enhance public confidence. Doing so stacked the cards heavily against a serious reconsideration of existing policy and hardened Johnson's "preexisting attitude" (215-16, 221-22). Johnson began to shift toward a strictly military view of Vietnam's problems and away from political-economic programs (216). Although he "agonized over the decisions facing him," he had a deep-seated fear of weakness and defeat (221-22).

Mansfield also dissented with others present in top-level White House meetings, on three occasions the only person in the room to speak in opposition to Johnson's plans. His efforts were in vain. If the Vietnam war was the greatest tragedy to befall the U.S., as he later declared, his failure to head off Johnson's escalation was his greatest failure, which haunted him for life (211). He later considered Vietnam "a tragic mistake" (215).

Mansfield and Johnson had a long, often very active, but uneasy relationship. They were polar opposites in personality. Hubert Humphrey stated in his memoir that they "were temperamentally two different people." Rowe stated that fundamentally "they didn't like each other much." Mansfield said "it was always an arm's length relationship. . . . We weren't close." There's evidence that Mansfield's truly close relationship with Kennedy was a sore point with Johnson. According to Johnson's aide Bobby Baker, Maureen Mansfield "hated and detested Lyndon Johnson" even as she adored John Kennedy. Nonetheless, Mansfield and Johnson did a great deal of business with one another (223).

Mansfield sent Johnson a third memo on February 1, 1964, cautioning against expanding the U.S. role in Saigon. He saw no national interest and did not recommend turning the war in Vietnam into an American war. However, at that moment Vietnamese General Nguyen Khanh approved receiving 1,000 more U.S. military advisers at the district level throughout the country, diluting

Vietnamese authority and responsibility. Mansfield met with Johnson on February 10, 1964 to discuss the memo (237-38).

Mansfield made similar statements on the Senate floor on February 19, 1964. The next day, Johnson asked McNamara to line up Marine Corps General David Shoup to try to “put a stop” to Mansfield’s public remarks. The speech stirred discussion among columnists and editorial writers for the first time in Johnson’s presidency about U.S. policy in Vietnam (238-39).

Mansfield handed Johnson another memo on May 25, 1964, appealing again for serious exploration of international negotiations to resolve the Indochina conflict peacefully. Johnson derided Mansfield’s plea for a start of international negotiations, stating “it’s just as milquetoast as it can be” and that Mansfield “got no spine at all” (239). Mansfield sent another memo on June 9, 1964, urging caution that reconnaissance flights and bombing of anti-aircraft sites in Laos not involve the U.S. more deeply in war. He repeated his view that U.S. national interests weren’t served by “a deep military involvement in Southeast Asia” (239-40).

In August 1964, the USS Maddox, a Navy destroyer, and a sister ship allegedly were attacked by North Vietnamese torpedo boats in the Gulf of Tonkin near the North Vietnamese coast. It later turned out that the attack on the Maddox was in response to CIA-backed raids in the same area and that U.S. military had developed plans for retaliatory bombing of North Vietnam months before (245).

In response, Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin resolution authorizing the president “to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force,” to assist South Vietnam under the 1954 Southeast Asia treaty (241). Before the resolution was passed, Johnson called a meeting of congressional leaders to discuss what to do. He had already authorized bombing torpedo boats and an oil refinery. Mansfield then correctly predicted that doing so could lead to North Vietnamese ground action in the south. This would in turn lead to another massive Korea-type involvement (242).

Mansfield instead recommended treating the incident as an isolated act of terror and retaliate only in international waters, taking the incident to the United Nations as a threat to the peace, and asking the Soviet Union and Britain as co-chairmen of the 1954 Geneva conference to consider the problem “as a matter of urgency” (242-43). However, White House reports of the meeting stated that all of the members of congress attending “expressed wholehearted endorsement of our course of action and of the proposed resolution” (244).

Mansfield led the Gulf of Tonkin resolution through expedited approval in the senate, without expressing any public doubts or objections. The Senate passed the resolution by an 88-2 vote. He later stated he was undecided how he would vote on it until Senator Fulbright stated that the resolution endorsed a continuation rather than a complete change in the U.S. role in Vietnam (247).

However, when Johnson later escalated the war by ordering intensive bombing of North Vietnam and sending large numbers of U.S. ground troops to South Vietnam, he repeatedly used the Gulf of Tonkin resolution as his political and legal justification. Mansfield later regretted his role in passing the resolution, calling it “the biggest mistake of my life” (248).

In August 1964, a few days before the Democratic National Convention opened, Johnson told Humphrey he was going “to drop Mansfield’s name into the hopper for vice-president,” as a way to

move Humphrey into the Senate Majority Leader position. Both Rowe and O'Donnell considered the suggestion to be one of Johnson's political games and expressed grave doubt that Mansfield would accept it. Mansfield told Johnson emphatically that he would not consider it. He also issued a public statement at the convention declaring he would "most respectfully decline" a vice-presidential offer. Humphrey was nominated instead (249-50).

As expected, Mansfield instead ran for reelection to the Senate. At Mansfield's request, Johnson gave him a strong presidential endorsement at an October 12 rally in Butte. Mansfield ran against Alex Blewett, who failed to draw Republican national support. Johnson won 59 percent of the Montana vote. Mansfield won 64 percent and carried all but five of Montana's 56 counties (251-52).

Two days before the presidential election, a Vietcong unit attacked the U.S.-built airbase at Bien Hoa, destroying or damaging many aircraft, and killing or wounding nearly 100. In response, Johnson created a high-level working group to look at the future course of U.S. action in Vietnam. Its recommendations, presented to Johnson on December 1, 1964, were a Phase I of heightened military pressure against North Vietnam, beginning with more bombing raids on North Vietnam in reprisal for Vietcong attacks in the South; and a Phase II of progressively mounting attacks on North Vietnam, amounting to strategic bombing and the start of full-scale war. Johnson accepted the study's rationale and general directions, but then ordered only the implementation of Phase I (252-53).

After the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was briefed on the conclusions, Mansfield sent another memo to Johnson, again arguing against becoming saddled with preponderant responsibility for what happened in Vietnam. Instead, limited national interests pointed in the direction of an eventual negotiated settlement as the basis for a sound U.S. policy. Mansfield also emphasized the importance of developing a South Vietnamese government that could begin speaking of peaceful unification of all of Vietnam, rather than "liberating" the North (254). Johnson sent the memo to McGeorge Bundy for response. Bundy's reply rebutted each of Mansfield's recommendations (255).

In February 1965, Vietcong guerillas attacked a U.S. special forces camp and airstrip just outside Pleiku, a provincial capital and headquarters town in Vietnam's central highlands, killing eight Americans, wounding more than 100, and destroying ten aircraft. In response, Johnson proposed a massive air attack. Before making a final decision, he convened a National Security Council meeting at which Mansfield and McCormack were invited as the only outsiders (260).

Going around the table, only Mansfield spoke up against the proposed attack. He stated that the implications and possible developments from that step should be carefully analyzed before action was taken. The situation now developing in Vietnam was worse for the United States than the one it confronted in Korea. Johnson responded that American soldiers shouldn't continue to fight with one hand tied behind their backs, and that the U.S. should face up to China and Russia (261).

At a second meeting the next day, Mansfield proposed taking the evolving conflict to the United Nations or to a reconvened Geneva Conference on Vietnam. Johnson rejected both ideas. At a third meeting the following day, Johnson told the group of his intention to go beyond retaliation for specific attacks and instead undertake strategic bombing against the North Vietnamese aggressors "to deter, destroy and diminish the strength of the North Vietnamese aggressors and to try to convince them to let South Vietnam alone" (262).

Mansfield said nothing in the meeting. He instead sent Johnson another memo, again expressing his concern about where the retaliatory attacks would lead and that North Vietnam had an army of 350,000 well-trained men under the leadership of General Giap, “one of the best military tacticians in Asia.” However, he also stated that, despite his individual views, he would do whatever he could to support Johnson “in the exercise of your grave responsibility” (262-63).

Mansfield told Oberdorfer he did so because he wanted to uphold the institution of the presidency on matters of war and peace, even though he strongly objected to Johnson’s war policies. It was the best he could do under the circumstances at the time. “Let history speak for itself” (264).

Mansfield continued to be invited to top-level policy meetings on Vietnam whenever outsiders were present, while others who opposed the war were not. At one such meeting called to discuss retaliatory air strikes, Mansfield said nothing. He instead provided yet another memo, this time arguing that North Vietnam in response would strengthen their air defenses and initiate further Vietcong attacks against American facilities in South Vietnam. This would require having to “vastly strengthen” them with American forces. Undeterred, Johnson continued to increase bombing raids aimed at punishing North Vietnam. This campaign, “Rolling Thunder,” continued for years without achieving its purpose (264-65).

Despite his memos, Mansfield publicly suppressed his opposition to the growing U.S. intervention and bombing. His refusal to challenge Johnson publicly had enormous consequences. Had he done so, he would have caused more debate about Johnson’s policies. He also would very likely have resigned as Majority Leader (266).

Mansfield instead continued to lead the Senate in passing the “torrent” of progressive social and economic legislation sponsored by the White House. He didn’t object to passage of legislative authority and appropriations to pursue a war he deeply opposed. He walked a “delicate line” between his leadership in the Senate and his personal opposition to Johnson’s course in Indochina (265-66).

On March 6, 1965, Mansfield received a telephone call from McNamara stating that Johnson was considering sending two Marine battalions to defend the Danang air base. Mansfield stated he “leaned against” doing so, but that it was their responsibility. However, McNamara misrepresented to Johnson that Mansfield “sort of half-agreed” (267). Sending those battalions was a major decision made without much planning (268).

On March 18, 1965, Mansfield sent another memo to Johnson asking that the number of American installations to be defended with ground troops be “strictly limited” and that Americans scattered elsewhere in Vietnam be pulled back into those installations. Receiving no response, he sent another memo on March 24, 1965 summarizing his prior disappointments, and stating that the U.S. should arrange a cease-fire and seek to reconvene the Geneva Conference for a negotiated solution to the war (269). Instead, on April 1, 1965, Johnson secretly agreed to send two more Marine battalions, a Marine air squadron and logistical troops to Vietnam, and to change the Marines’ mission from defending airfields to offensive combat operations as the need arose (270).

On April 7, 1965, in an attempt to quell the increasingly passionate opposition to the war, Johnson gave an address justifying the U.S. air attacks and ground action on the basis of “defending the independent nation of Vietnam” from “total conquest” by the North. It also proclaimed a goal of

peaceful settlement and proposed a \$1 billion U.S. investment in a peaceful development on the Mekong River (271). North Vietnam immediately declared that the U.S. must stop its “acts of war” against the North and remove its troops from the South before settlement discussions could begin. Johnson instead asked Congress for a \$700 million appropriation for the war to obtain its support, even though the funds weren’t then needed (272).

On June 3, 1965, with bombing of North Vietnam continuing daily, Johnson told Mansfield and other congressional leaders in an Oval Office meeting that the Joint Chiefs of Staff had advocated attacking Hanoi, which had been off-limits, and bombing the Haiphong port. In response, Mansfield sent Johnson a memo on June 5, 1965 stating that doing so would be “an irreversible extension” of the war that would “forestall indefinitely any prospects of discussions” with North Vietnam, and have a negative impact on the positions of China, Russia and the international community. It also would bring about “an enlargement and acceleration of the ground war,” and require that the war be carried into North Vietnam, other parts of Southeast Asia, and probably into China itself” (273-74).

On June 7, 1965, General Westmoreland proposed increasing U.S. troops up to 151,000, or 44 battalions, more than double the prior authorization. Concerned about potential reactions, Johnson called Mansfield to ask what Congress wanted to do about it. Johnson thought the need to send more troops was irrefutable. However, Mansfield saw a further increase as futile and disastrous, and sought to change Johnson’s mind or his military strategy. There was no resolution of the need for Congressional endorsement. The next day, Mansfield sent Johnson another memo stating that there was no longer an effective Saigon government, that up to 500,000 troops might be required, and advising against seeking another Congressional resolution (275-78).

On July 17, 1965, Johnson secretly approved Westmoreland’s 44-battalion request. Mansfield gave a formal Senate speech on July 21, 1965, stating that the war might last ten years and again suggesting reconvening the Geneva Conference on Indochina. Johnson invited Mansfield and Republican leader Everett Dirksen to a White House meeting on July 23, 1965. Mansfield then brought a new three-page memo asking for renewed emphasis on negotiations and opposing the large rumored troop increases. Both Mansfield and Dirksen opposed seeking another congressional resolution backing the new phase of the war because it would produce more opposition (280-81).

Johnson convened a meeting of Democratic and Republican Congressional leaders and his senior advisers in the cabinet room on July 27, 1965. He reviewed theoretical options he was considering, then went around the table asking for comments. There was no opposition until Mansfield spoke, reading from a written statement. He opposed the proposed increased involvement in the war because U.S. tangible national interests did not justify the kind of involvement “into which we are slipping and sliding every day.” He also stated that escalation would beget escalation for a long time to come, including a devastating wasting war in Southeast Asia. There was silence, then further conversation with no reference to Mansfield’s objections (283-85).

On July 28, 1965, Johnson summoned a much larger number of congressmen to the state dining room. He then stated his plan to raise U.S. troop strength from 75,000 to 125,000 almost immediately, with more to be sent “as requested.” Mansfield was present but did not speak. Johnson then announced it publicly. Mansfield’s persistent but futile efforts to prevent massive U.S. commitment in Vietnam were at an end. Shortly after Johnson’s announcement, Mansfield praised Johnson’s

consultations with congress and stated, “The President is to be commended for the speech he made. . . . He is doing his very best; and that is all that any one man can do” (286-87).

**Johnson II: Years of Frustration.** Johnson’s decision in mid-1965 to send hundreds of thousands of U.S. ground troops to Vietnam was answered by large-scale increases on the Communist side. As both sides sent ever greater numbers of troops, Mansfield consistently opposed the escalation policy in public and private. He also continued to uphold the primacy of presidential authority in decision-making on the war (288).

Mansfield and four other senators again visited Vietnam in December 1965 as part of a much larger presidentially sponsored mission to 16 capital cities (293). There were then 170,000 troops in Vietnam. Westmoreland told the senators that he planned at least to double that number, and that he foresaw the need for a great number of additional U.S. forces and a protracted conflict (294). American troops were now involved in combat, to search out and destroy the enemy. 448 Americans had been killed the preceding month. Mansfield’s nightmare—that American troops would be deployed and destroyed in large numbers in an endless war—was coming true before his eyes (288-89).

Mansfield’s later confidential report to Johnson stated that the war in Vietnam was just beginning, and that it would go on as long as North Vietnam wanted it to go on. This would lead to an “open-ended requirement of unpredictable dimensions.” He concluded that the end, in the sense of military victory, was not even remotely in sight. Johnson didn’t like the report (296).

Mansfield’s public report introduced the concept that greater U.S. efforts on the ground might be matched by the other side and not be decisive. The report was a milestone about the essential problem and the course of the war. Members of both parties began to question the direction of U.S. policy openly and with rising vehemence (291).

Johnson declared a temporary halt in bombing in December 1965. Johnson summoned Democratic congressional leaders on January 24, 1966 to discuss ending the pause. Only Mansfield opposed immediate resumption of bombing. The next day, at a meeting with senior leaders of both parties, only Mansfield and J. William Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, spoke against it. (300-01).

Reading from a prepared statement, Mansfield called for a complete cease-fire, followed by elections, withdrawal of U.S. forces and internationally sponsored negotiations. Otherwise, U.S. casualties and civilian deaths would continue to rise (301). After new appeals and further White House meetings, Johnson ordered resumption of bombing on January 31, 1966. The announcement was greeted with speeches in and out of Congress for and against his action, and rising protests against the action by religious and peace groups (302).

Throughout 1966 and 1967, Mansfield was in an ambiguous position regarding the Vietnam War. He continued to dissent energetically in private meetings and in memoranda to Johnson, but refused to do anything to aid the growing number of senatorial and outside critics of the war (303). In February, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held public, televised hearings on the war, which increased public opposition (304). Senator Morse also proposed repealing the Tonkin Gulf resolution, which Mansfield and others successfully moved to table (305). Mansfield’s muffled dissent drew increasing criticism (306).

By the spring of 1967, U.S. troop strength in Vietnam had soared to 438,000, with presidential authorization to increase the total to 470,000 by the end of the year. U.S. casualties, bombing raids against North Vietnam and public opposition to the war had all increased sharply. On April 27, 1967, General Westmoreland asked Johnson to authorize an additional 80,000 additional troops as a “minimum essential force” or an “optimum force” of nearly 200,000 additional troops. He also guessed that the war would last at least five more years. Westmoreland also delivered a “rousing address” to a joint meeting of Congress declaring that his forces would “prevail in Vietnam over the communist aggressor” (313-14).

The next day, Mansfield delivered a five-page memo to Johnson at the Oval Office outlining three basic proposals to break the “steady escalation” toward a wider war and discussed the memo with him (314). Mansfield proposed meeting with China, Russia and Mongolia to explore the possibilities for movement toward peace. He proposed creating a physical barrier of fences, mine fields and electric sensors, backed by troops across Vietnam and Laos. He also proposed involving the United Nations to discuss a possible solution (315-19). Johnson and his senior advisers considered and rejected these proposals (319-20).

In mid-July 1967, Johnson had not yet decided how to respond to Westmoreland’s request for more troops. He sent McNamara to Saigon in early July with instructions to work out a minimal version of Westmoreland’s “minimum essential troop request.” That visit eventually produced a promised additional 55,000 troops, bringing the total U.S. deployment to 525,000 troops (324).

Mansfield gave a powerful speech in the Senate on July 11, 1967, challenging claims of progress in the ever-deepening war. He then wrote a three-page explanation to Johnson of the concerns he had sought to address (320-21). He also continued to call for UN Security Council action to sponsor meetings of all the warring parties. The Senate approved such a resolution by an 82-0 vote on November 30, 1967 (324).

Antiwar protests grew powerfully from mid-1967. Although strongly opposed to the war, Mansfield was appalled by flag-burning, vulgarity and violence. He was for dissent, provided it was constructive, reasonable and within constitutional bounds (325). The gravest problem was that the war was not succeeding and the end was not in sight (325-26). In response, the Johnson administration in the last months of 1967 energetically sought to convince the American people that the war was on the verge of success. However, Mansfield continued to believe the war would take years and require additional American forces unless a solution was found to bring it to a conclusion (326).

The North Vietnamese Tet offensive in early 1968 was politically the turning point in the war. It destroyed confidence in Johnson, and in his military strategy and actions. On March 2, 1968, Mansfield told Clark Clifford, the new Secretary of Defense, that the administration had reached the end of the line on troop increases. On March 6, 1968, Johnson met with Mansfield and other senior Foreign Relations Committee members. Westmoreland had secretly requested 206,000 more troops. However, Mansfield then stated that the U.S. was in the wrong place, fighting the wrong kind of war, and should not get in deeper. He also gave Johnson a memo on March 13, 1968 urging him to resist any substantial increase in the existing 525,000 troop ceiling (327-29).

Mansfield met with Johnson alone in the cabinet room on March 27, 1968. Johnson then told him the U.S. was going to send some extra troops. The proposal was meeting increasing opposition.

Mansfield told Johnson that the 525,000 troop ceiling was it. Johnson had to do something to find an opening he could seize, to find a way out. If more troops were added, North Vietnam would match them. Johnson doubted it would do so. He read Mansfield excerpts from a “stay the course” speech he was planning to give on March 31, calling for calling up 62,500 reservists, higher taxes and severe budget cuts. Mansfield responded that reaction to doing so would not be favorable. Mansfield also had opposed continued bombing of the North. After two hours of conversation, Mansfield continued to disagree with Johnson’s plans (335-39).

The next day, Johnson’s advisers totally revised the speech to be about peace, rather than staying the course and continuing the war. Johnson accepted its new outline. He agreed to add only 13,500 backup troops. On March 31, 1968, while giving the speech, he added that he wasn’t going to seek another term as President (340). It’s impossible to know how much Johnson’s meeting with Mansfield several days before had to do with his decision not to run again (342).

Johnson’s farewell address on January 14, 1969 praised “the wisdom of Senator Mansfield” among the mainstays that had contributed to his presidency. Mansfield saw little of Johnson after he moved back to Texas. When Johnson died on January 22, 1973, Mansfield issued a brief public statement calling him “the greatest President in the area of social and domestic reform this nation has ever had,” without referring to foreign affairs. Mansfield also refused to attend Johnson’s funeral in Texas, even though a military plane was available (346-47).

Mansfield told Oberdorfer in 1998 that Johnson was a “torn personality” due to Vietnam, where he was determined to win even though his doubts increased the longer he remained in office. Mansfield also was torn between his loyalty to a Democratic president, the president’s predominance in foreign affairs and his opposition to the Indochina war, which he believed would bring only tragic results. The delicate line he walked from 1963 to 1969 was the most difficult of his life (347).

**With Nixon on the road to China.** Richard Nixon was inaugurated as President in January 1969. The Democrats continued to control Congress. As Senate Majority Leader, Mansfield became the Democrats’ leading spokesman and most important officeholder. Mansfield didn’t know Nixon in the House or as Vice-President under Eisenhower. Politically, they were poles apart (348-49).

Nixon decided early on to attempt a close working relationship with Mansfield. They met privately at least 27 times up to September 1973, mostly breakfast meetings. No one else outside the executive branch had such intimate, continuous and substantive contact with Nixon. It’s hard to say whether either had great impact on the other (350-51).

During the Nixon administration’s first year, Mansfield led Democratic opposition to Nixon policies on taxes and developing an antiballistic missile system. However, he accepted Nixon’s declarations that his objective was to terminate the Vietnam war through negotiations. Adding to Mansfield’s confidence were Nixon’s decision in June 1969 to withdraw 25,000 American troops, and his declaration in July 1969 that the U.S. would steer clear of future direct Asian military involvement and expect Asian nations to defend themselves (356-57).

Mansfield had known Cambodian Prime Minister Sihanouk since 1954. Sihanouk had rejected U.S. aid in 1963 to maintain Cambodia’s neutrality. In May 1965, Sihanouk broke diplomatic relations with the U.S. However, he welcomed Mansfield six months later, stating that he wanted to

rebuild relations with Washington, but also insisting on no further bombings or incursions into Cambodian territory (358).

In February 1969, Nixon expressed a desire to improve U.S.-Cambodian relations. They officially resumed in June 1969. Meanwhile, Nixon was simultaneously initiating secret U.S. bombings of North Vietnamese base areas in Cambodia (357-60). Mansfield and Nixon wanted to use Sihanouk's cooperation to make high-level contact with China. In June 1969, Mansfield discussed his interest in going to China with Nixon. Mansfield then wrote to Sihanouk enclosing a letter to Chou En-lai requesting permission to visit Beijing, keeping Nixon informed. However, there was no response from China (361-63).

In August 1969, Mansfield agreed to visit Cambodia at Nixon's request as part of a larger tour of Asian capitals. Mansfield received a lavish welcome in Cambodia. Sihanouk then predicted that a socialist Vietnam could not be avoided and that the U.S. would have to withdraw. He told Mansfield that he did not object to the U.S. bombing North Vietnamese sanctuaries in Cambodia not inhabited by Cambodians. That "secret bombing" became controversial several years later (365-66).

Sihanouk also predicted that friendship would not be restored between the U.S. and China unless the U.S. accepted abandoning Taiwan. That prediction was confirmed when Chou sent a letter to Sihanouk dated August 24, 1969 in response to Mansfield's letter stating the Nixon administration was following a policy of hostility toward the Chinese people and occupying the province of Taiwan by force. Mansfield responded with a letter to Sihanouk thanking him for his efforts (366-68).

Mansfield's stature as Majority Leader continued to grow. However, there was some criticism that he should not accommodate Nixon's North Vietnam policy. Mansfield believed Nixon was moving in the right direction, although that movement was too slow. Protests against the war continued to expand. On October 20, 1969, Mansfield told the Senate that he would like to see the country get behind Nixon to bring about a responsible settlement and peace at the earliest possible opportunity. His speech brought some editorial praise. However, it also dismayed many liberal Democrats and peace advocates (369-71).

Mansfield also persuaded the Democratic Policy Committee to advise Nixon secretly that it would support approaches leading to the end of U.S. involvement in the Vietnamese war, without regard to political consequences. Mansfield delivered that message secretly. On October 31, 1969, he also sent Nixon a "private and confidential" memo that he would not criticize but would give articulate public support for presidential decisions bringing a rapid end to the war (372-73).

Nixon considered the Democrats' and Mansfield's proposals. His November 3, 1969 address, one of his most important, stated he had adopted a plan for withdrawing U.S. ground troops, but didn't state a timetable. He instead stated the U.S. would continue to fight until the communists agreed to a fair and honorable peace or the South Vietnamese were able to defend themselves. He urged "the great silent majority" of Americans to support his decisions, in the face of antiwar protests. Those who hoped for a reversal of U.S. policy were gravely disappointed. Even so, Mansfield refrained from active opposition. He instead gave a statement to the Senate just before it adjourned for the year commending the President's efforts in Vietnam (374-75).

In late April 1970, Nixon sent 12,000 U.S. ground troops and 8,000 ARVN troops into two Cambodian base areas that the North Vietnamese and Vietcong had used for many months. Doing so was the result of Sihanouk's overthrow in March 1970 by an anticommunist regime that touched off new fighting in the Cambodian border area. Nixon's action ended hopes that he was bent on progressively limiting and swiftly terminating the war. Mansfield had repeatedly spoken in the Senate to commend Nixon for staying out of Cambodia. Nixon told his aides to withhold advance knowledge of the attack from Mansfield (376-77).

Nixon's public address exaggerated the significance of the cross-border operation. He stated that U.S. forces would remain in Cambodia until "enemy forces are driven out of these sanctuaries and their military supplies are destroyed." It was perhaps the most divisive speech of its time. Mansfield listened to the speech in silence. The following day, he gave a Senate speech disagreeing with the campaign into Cambodia as an escalation and widening of the war. Numerous antiwar protests also erupted immediately throughout the country (377-79).

Mansfield also decided to seek to establish a termination date after which no more funds would be appropriated for military operations in Indochina. He announced he would back the Cooper-Church amendment prohibiting U.S. military action in Cambodia after June 30, 1970 and requiring a halt to all U.S. combat activity in Vietnam by July 1, 1971. He stated in an interview that he opposed doing anything to keep a stable pro-democratic or pro-western situation in Cambodia. He also stated that it was up to the Southeast Asia countries generally to defend themselves (380-81).

The Cambodian invasion also ended Mansfield's prior deference to the President in making war decisions. He spoke in the Senate supporting the Cooper-Church amendment, emphasizing that the Senate could not transfer its constitutional responsibilities to the President or work for the President in matters of war and peace. On June 30, 1970, the Senate passed the amendment, 58 to 37. An amended version was passed by both houses in December 1970 and signed into law by Nixon. Similar measures were defeated in the Senate despite Mansfield's support (381-83).

Mansfield ran again for re-election in 1970. His only difficulty was his advocacy and votes for gun control. His opponent was Harold E. "Bud" Wallace, a former UM swimming coach and a sporting goods salesman. Wallace claimed Mansfield was "soft on communism" and attacked his position on gun control issues. Mansfield campaigned in his usual low-key way, walking the streets, shaking hands and saying hello. He would fly into Billings on a weekend, then drive a circuit from Billings to Great Falls, Missoula, Butte and Helena before returning to Washington from Great Falls. Mansfield won 60 percent of the vote and carried all but six of Montana's 56 counties (384-87).

Since 1961, Mansfield had been almost a lone voice in the Senate advocating reduction of U.S. troops in Europe, arguing that the increasingly prosperous European countries should bear most of the burden of their defense. On May 11, 1971, he proposed an amendment a Selective Service bill then before the Senate to require a 50 percent cut in U.S. forces in Europe. Nixon, Henry Kissinger and many high-level officials opposed the amendment. Mansfield didn't ask any of his colleagues to vote for the amendment or agree to any of several proposed compromise measures, instead believing that the Senate was made up of mature people who could make their own decisions (387-90).

Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev's declared readiness on May 14, 1971 to begin negotiations on mutual European troop reductions doomed the amendment. The administration agreed to do so.

Those negotiations eventually produced an East-West arms reduction treaty in 1990, nearly 20 years later. Mansfield's amendment was defeated 36 to 61. He kept trying in later years, but his cutbacks never obtained a majority vote in the Senate (391).

Despite Chou En-lai's August 1969 rejection of his earlier request, Mansfield persisted in his desire to visit China. Nixon encouraged him to do so, and told him that if he succeeded, he should be the first to go as the President's envoy. But without telling Mansfield, Nixon made efforts to contact the Chinese on his own. Sihanouk had taken refuge in Beijing after his ouster from Cambodia in March 1970. On April 11, 1970, he sent a letter to Mansfield stating that Chou En-lai was willing to meet him and Maureen in Peking. Mansfield immediately informed Nixon of the invitation, then met with him and Kissinger to discuss it (392-93).

Nixon and Kissinger were wary of involvement with Sihanouk. They preferred that Mansfield pursue an invitation through Romania instead. However, Nixon told Mansfield he had no objection to Mansfield pursuing the Sihanouk invitation. After Mansfield left, Nixon began backing away from the idea that Mansfield or any other Democrat should be the first to go. The more Nixon and Kissinger thought about the idea, the more it irked them (394-99).

Unknown to them, Chou En-lai had sent a handwritten message to Nixon that arrived on April 27, 1970, insisting that the U.S. must withdraw its forces from Taiwan and the Taiwan strait for relations to be "restored fundamentally." To find a solution, an American representative could be sent, including the President. Nixon and Kissinger discussed a number of possibilities, but didn't want to send Mansfield. They finally decided to send Kissinger as an emissary to arrange for a presidential visit. Kissinger took a secret flight to Beijing to do so. Despite those discussions, nothing was said to Mansfield in advance. However, he approved of both the Kissinger trip and its surrounding secrecy. He never criticized Nixon's dissembling and double-dealing on the China visits (399-403).

**Vietnam, China, Watergate and beyond.** In February 1971, Nixon sent troops to attack North Vietnamese supply lines in Laos. Doing so spread the war geographically. The Cooper-Church amendment prohibited doing so. Mansfield took the issue to the Democratic Policy Committee and caucus to consider a resolution calling for an end to the involvement in Indochina, and withdrawal of all U.S. forces from that tragic conflict and a release of prisoners by a "time certain." Mansfield then stated his strong opinion that the Vietnamese were going to wait out the U.S., that the war was doomed, and that the only acceptable U.S. course was to get out as quickly as possible and with as little additional carnage as possible. A roll-call vote supported the resolution 35-12 (406-08).

During 1971-72, Mansfield sponsored three amendments to pending legislation expressing the sense of Congress that hostilities should be ended and U.S. forces withdrawn quickly, so long as U.S. prisoners of war were permitted to come home. The amendments all passed the Senate and created increasing pressure on Nixon. However, they were watered down or abandoned in the legislative process through presidential persuasion (408-14).

While Nixon was in China in February 1972, he discussed with Chou En-lai the possibility that Mansfield and Republican Senator Hugh Scott might visit China later in the year. Chou approved the visit. House leaders expressed resentment that they were excluded and work began on setting up a second visit for them (417-18).

Nixon also had second thoughts, and wanted to “screw Mansfield” or “shove him back,” after Mansfield approved a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing into the relationship between ITT’s \$400,000 secret pledge to support the Republican national convention and settlement of an antitrust case against it nine days later. However, before Kissinger could seek postponement of the Mansfield-Scott trip, the Chinese agreed to receive them, beginning on April 16, 1972. The senatorial trip began as planned (418-19).

By then, Nixon’s anger at Mansfield diminished. It was announced that the bipartisan mission to China “has the approval of the president.” Mansfield and Scott met twice with Chou En-lai, then spent 16 days touring China under Chinese direction. Mansfield was “deeply impressed” with the difference between the “New China” he saw and the poverty-stricken China he had visited as a Marine and young congressman. His private report to Nixon after his return stated U.S. involvement with China “should stop at the water’s edge of the Chinese mainland” (420-24).

On Easter weekend 1972, while Mansfield and Scott were preparing to go to China, North Vietnam launched its biggest military offensive of the war. Only two U.S. combat brigades then remained in South Vietnam. On May 8, 1972, upon returning to Washington and with the fighting still flaring, Mansfield convened the Senate Democratic caucus, which could not decide what to do (425).

Meanwhile, Nixon had ordered mining Haiphong and six other ports, and still greater bombing of North Vietnamese rail and supply lines. Upon learning in Nixon’s meeting with congressional leaders what had occurred, Mansfield was “mad and made no bones about it.” He stated that as the result, the war was enlarged and could be extended in duration. However, the bombing stopped and turned back the Easter Offensive by July 1972. North Vietnam took more than 100,000 casualties in a 200,000-man invasion force, and lost more than 50 percent of its tanks and heavy artillery (428).

Congressional efforts to end the war were unsuccessful during 1972 (425-26). Nixon ordered more major bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong in December 1972, after he was re-elected. That led to the Paris Accords peace agreement in January 1973. Mansfield went to Paris for the signing ceremony. He praised Nixon and Kissinger in the senate for ending “the tragic war in Vietnam” (429).

George McGovern won the Democratic presidential nomination in July 1972. He initially selected Thomas Eagleton as his Vice-President. When Eagleton confirmed he had undergone electroshock treatment for depression, McGovern asked Mansfield to replace him. Mansfield declined, stating that all he ever wanted to be was a senator from Montana. After McGovern finally recruited Sargent Shriver, Mansfield nominated Shriver before the Democratic National Committee (430-31).

After the 1972 presidential election, Mansfield conceived a single, bi-partisan committee to investigate the Watergate break-in and selected its Democratic members. The committee was approved by a 77-0 senate vote. He thereafter took no part in its investigation. He both defended the committee and was respectful of Nixon, despite mounting evidence of Nixon’s involvement (432-34).

Shortly after the Paris Accords, Nixon authorized intensive bombing in Cambodia to assist the Lon Nol regime there. In early May 1973, Congress voted a ban on bombing in Cambodia. Nixon vetoed the legislation. Mansfield spoke against the veto in the Senate, but it was narrowly sustained. Mansfield then stated that he wouldn’t permit passage of any major appropriations bill unless Nixon

agreed to a bombing ban in Cambodia. Nixon capitulated, even after Congress extended the ban to include North and South Vietnam and Laos. The bombing stopped on August 15, 1973 (435-36).

Mansfield participated in the congressional decision to have Gerald Ford replace Spiro Agnew as Vice-President after Agnew pleaded no-contest to a tax evasion charge on October 12, 1973. Mansfield and Scott also met frequently to assess Nixon's situation and prepare the Senate for an impeachment trial. Mansfield attended the Congressional leaders' meeting on August 8, 1974 at which Nixon announced his resignation. That was his last contact with Nixon as President (437-41).

Mansfield had a comfortable personal relationship with Ford. They previously had many opportunities to interact. During Ford's 29 months as President, Mansfield attended 34 bipartisan leadership meetings, nine private meetings and had 42 telephone conversations. Unlike Nixon, Ford treated Mansfield with respect and Mansfield responded in kind. Leading Democrats condemned Ford's decision to pardon Nixon. Mansfield announced he wouldn't do so. However, he expressed regret that Nixon's resignation had cut short the constitutional process of impeachment (441-42).

During 1974, Congress had slashed the administration's request for \$1.45 billion in assistance for Vietnam to \$700 million. Ford asked Congress for a \$300 million supplemental appropriation in January 1975. Mansfield opposed that increase. He also opposed Ford's request of Congress in April 1975 for \$700 million in emergency military aid. On April 30, 1975, North Vietnamese forces rolled effortlessly into Saigon and what was left of the government capitulated (443-44).

Mansfield also opposed aid to the Cambodian government. After unsuccessful efforts to bring Sihanouk back to power, Phnom Penh fell to the Khmer Rouge on April 12, 1975. A month later, he opposed Ford's response to Cambodian troops seizing a U.S. container ship that involved bombing the mainland. The ship and its crew were rescued safely, boosting Ford's popularity (445-46).

In December 1974 and October 1976, Mansfield took two other three-week trips to China. Both were in response to Chinese invitations that Ford approved as official visits. He visited again with Chou En-lai for the last time during the 1974 trip and traveled 6,000 miles across the country. On returning, he gave a positive report to the Senate about China's political system (446-50).

Both Chou En-lai and Mao Tse-tung died in 1976. Despite its internal divisions, the Chinese government did not postpone Mansfield's second trip. His report to the Senate, issued three weeks after Carter's election in November 1976, emphasized the need to settle the Taiwan problem by severing U.S. ties there. However, Carter took two years to do so and to establish full diplomatic relations with China (450-51).

On March 4, 1976, Mansfield announced to the Senate that he had served long enough and that he would not seek reelection. In response, nearly 50 Senators of all political persuasions joined in praising him and his service. The news media did also. However, reviews of his leadership ability were mixed, particularly his efforts to democratize how the Senate operated. In mid-September 1976, after many tributes, Mansfield said his final "thank you and goodbye" to the Senate (451-56).

**Ambassador to Japan.** The Mansfields planned to build a home near Missoula and spend winters in Florida in their retirement. However, after considering ambassador appointments to China and Mexico, and other possible assignments for him, President Jimmy Carter appointed Mansfield

ambassador to Japan in May 1977. Mansfield had experience with Japanese history and issues, going back to his Montana Far East history classes. His first major issue concerned a U.S. demand that Japan modify the Tokai nuclear processing plant so that it couldn't manufacture plutonium for atomic bombs. Despite Carter's initial opposition, a compromise was reached permitting the plant to produce plutonium, at least initially (457-65).

Based on his reputation as Senate Majority Leader and initial success in the Tokai issue, Mansfield's prestige as ambassador was "sky high from the beginning." Mansfield said the job was "not quite as difficult as I anticipated." Maureen found it one of the happiest times of her life. However, she was concerned about the expense of official receptions. Mansfield ran his senior consular staff meetings very concisely, as were his meetings with visitors. He made it a personal project to visit each of the country's 47 prefectures, which he did by September 1980. He also forged close ties with members of the imperial family (467-73).

Mansfield considered himself authorized to communicate personally with Carter and did so on numerous occasions, both in writing and personally whenever he could get to Washington. For example, he urged Carter to beef up American naval and air forces in Asia and the Pacific. He maintained a contrast between deployment of troops on the Asian mainland and naval power positioned offshore. Carter stated he was "quite pleased" with Mansfield's service in Japan. Mansfield also retained his ties to Congress through visits with Congressmen in Japan (473-81).

In June 1980, Mansfield told his embassy staff that he would retire after the presidential inauguration in January 1981, whether Carter won or lost. However, after Ronald Reagan defeated Carter, Mansfield changed his mind. Reagan and Mansfield had never met until April 1978, when Reagan stopped in Tokyo on his way to Taiwan. Despite their political differences, they liked each other. When Reagan was elected, Mansfield made calls to ask for recommendations that be retained as ambassador. Reagan announced his appointment on January 7, 1981 at a luncheon with Senate Democrats. They responded with a standing ovation and prolonged applause (481-84).

An initial major issue during the Reagan years was the effect of steadily increasing Japanese car imports on the American auto industry. The industry wanted the U.S. government to "get tough" with Japanese automakers and threatened to launch a boycott of Japanese cars. Mansfield instead called for Japanese restraint. The Japanese agreed to acceptable voluntary quotas (484-86).

Mansfield also was concerned with Japan's military and security issues. One such issue was how to increase the amount of Japan's defense spending and support for U.S. forces in Japan. Another was dealing with the situation and apologizing to the Japanese government after a U.S. nuclear submarine collided with and sunk a Japanese cargo ship, then left the scene (487-92).

Mansfield considered the U.S.-Japanese relationship "the most important bilateral relationship in the world, bar none." Japanese trade surpluses created increasing dissatisfaction in the U.S. He thought Japan must open its markets to correct the enormous trade deficit and cut tariffs. He was criticized for not being strong enough. There were recurrent rumors that he would be replaced. However, he retained the confidence of Reagan and Secretary of State George Schultz and had no intention of retiring. Reagan appreciated his calm, clear way of thinking and speaking (496-500).

In early 1988, Mansfield had triple heart bypass surgery and a prostate operation. Shortly after George H.W. Bush won the November presidential election, Mansfield notified Schultz that he and Maureen had concluded “it is time for us to go.” He announced to the Japanese and U.S. press on November 14, 1988 that he and Maureen would leave Japan before the first of the year. The Mansfields left for Washington on December 22, 1988. On January 19, 1989, Reagan presented the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Mansfield and Schultz. The Japanese prime minister presented Mansfield with Japan’s highest civilian award two weeks later in another Washington ceremony (500-02).

**The final years.** At 85 in 1989, Mansfield was expecting to go into full retirement. However, he was asked by Goldman Sachs to become a senior adviser to the firm. He joined its Washington office in March 1989 for \$75,000 per year, plus the exclusive use of a car and driver. The firm had been looking for a recently retired high-ranking Japanese official to smooth the way for its contacts and activities in Tokyo. Mansfield made clear that he would do no lobbying on any subject. He instead introduced members of the firm to high-ranking Japanese (503-04).

Mansfield’s most prominent return to the Capitol came in March 1998. Republican Majority Leader Senator Trent Lott asked him to address the Senate as the first of a Senate-sponsored lecture series on leadership. Mansfield then read the speech he had expected to make but had never given on November 22, 1963, when Kennedy was assassinated (506-07).

By 1995, Maureen had begun to show signs of memory loss, then went into Alzheimers. With the assistance of a day worker four or five days a week, Mansfield cared for her until she was admitted to a nursing home in December 1998. Maureen died on September 20, 2000. Mansfield’s eulogy for her stated, “She sat in the shadow, I stood in the limelight. . . . She literally remade me in her mold, her own outlook, her own honest beliefs. What she was, I became. Without her—I would have been little or nothing” (508).

By 1999, Mansfield’s circulatory system was beginning to wear out. He had surgery to improve his blood flow. However, he then again had difficulty doing anything that put a strain on his heart. His heart valve was slowly failing. Oberdorfer visited with him for the last time on September 25, 2001 at his apartment. He entered Walter Reed Hospital the following day. He died peacefully of congestive heart failure at 98 on October 5, 2001 (508-10).<sup>4</sup>

**Legacies.** The Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library at the University of Montana in Missoula was opened in 1973, while Mansfield was serving as Senate Majority Leader. The top two floors were opened for use in 1978.<sup>5</sup> The five-story library was funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce. It’s designated as a depository for government documents. It has the largest collection of books and media in Montana. It’s located on the east side of the campus, on the southern portion of the first Dornblaser Field. It was dedicated to the Mansfields in 1979.<sup>6</sup>

Congress established the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation in 1983 with a \$5 million appropriation (505). The Foundation’s purpose is to “promote understanding and cooperation among the nations and peoples of Asia and the United States.” The foundation sponsors exchange programs, policy dialogues, research and education.<sup>7</sup> It also operates the Mansfield Center, located on Level Four of the Mansfield Library at the University of Montana. The Mansfield Center is an academic unit of the University of Montana. Its programs concern modern Asian affairs and ethics in public affairs.<sup>8</sup>

The Mike Mansfield Fellows Program, established by Congress in 1994, is another outgrowth of the Foundation. That program designates U.S. civil servants to receive a year of Japanese language training and a year of full-time work in Japanese ministries in Tokyo, to build a corps of Japanese specialists within the U.S. government (505).

In March 1999, a Montana legislative committee asked Mansfield to authorize a statue of him to be placed in the state capitol. He responded, “If me alone, no— with Maureen, yes” (507-08). A private fund-raising drive came up with \$57,500 for the statues. They were sculpted by Gareth Curtis, a Montana native then living near Olympia, Washington. They were unveiled at the Montana state capitol on November 26, 2001.<sup>9</sup>

Another statue of the Mansfields was placed on the mall behind Main Hall at the University of Montana in May 2000. The mall was then renamed the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Mall. The bronze was commissioned by UM alumni Magnus and Velma Aasheim of Mesa, Arizona and Antelope, Montana, and sculpted by artist Terry Murphy, a Helena native and lifelong Mansfield admirer.<sup>10</sup>

**Conclusion.** Mike Mansfield’s mother died when he was seven. He had a disadvantaged childhood, living with a great-uncle and aunt because his father was disabled, and unable to care for him and his two younger sisters. He dropped out of school before completing the eighth grade to join the Navy during World War I. He served in the lowest enlisted ranks of the Navy, Army and Marines for five years, then worked in the Butte mines for nine years. After attending a year of classes at the Montana School of Mines, his apparent ambition was to continue a mining career.

Meeting and marrying Maureen Hayes totally changed Mansfield’s life. She encouraged him to obtain a college education in history, without having attended high school. He taught classes at the University of Montana, primarily concerning Far East history, for several years because he couldn’t find teaching employment elsewhere. Her ambition then pushed him into running for Congress. Thereafter, beginning with a presidential mission to China in 1944, Mansfield pursued and developed his personal long-time interests in China and the Far East into widely-respected institutional expertise.

Mansfield’s Senate membership and position as its Majority Leader coincided with the Vietnam war. He was personally involved in many of the high-level conversations and meetings, and much of the decision-making as that war initially developed during the Kennedy administration, repeatedly escalated during the Johnson years, then finally wound down during Nixon’s and Ford’s presidencies. If Kennedy’s statement that he would withdraw U.S. troops after his 1964 reelection had become true, the Vietnam war as it eventually developed might not have occurred.

Mansfield was severely conflicted personally during the Johnson years. He repeatedly spoke at high-level policy meetings and in conversations with Johnson, and sent repeated memos to Johnson arguing that the U.S. had no national interest in fighting an Asian ground war, and that he should withdraw all U.S. troops as soon as possible. However, he also believed in the President’s power to make decisions concerning war and peace.

Mansfield therefore didn’t publicly oppose the war, but instead supported Johnson’s decisions. Despite increasing general public opposition to the war, he also deferred to Nixon’s decision-making on gradual reduction of U.S. troops. He didn’t take action in the Senate to attempt to end the war until after Nixon decided to bomb Cambodia in April 1970, thereby expanding it.

After Johnson's heavy-handed, politically intense years as Senate Majority Leader, Mansfield's shift to a more democratic, nondirective approach in that role was also criticized as being less effective. However, although Mansfield was personally highly regarded, he simply didn't have the dominating personality or style to continue to lead the Senate as Johnson had done.

Mansfield always was effective as a Montana Senator. After his initial election to the Senate, he was re-elected by large majorities. He was perceived as fair and impartial, did not become involved in divisive Montana politics, and did his best to respond to constituents' concerns and requests. He always met with constituents and developed a highly personable, effective campaign style.

Despite his flaws, Mansfield was highly regarded at every stage of his career. His tributes and honors were well deserved. His life and career were highly successful. The question concerning how much influence Maureen had on his career behind the scenes is perhaps best answered in the eulogy he gave at her funeral. In light of that tribute to her and their personal history, one wonders who wrote all of the reports, memos, articles and speeches that Mansfield delivered and read from to support his positions over the years.

## END NOTES

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