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Biographical Note
Mike Mansfield (1903-2001) was a Senator from Montana from 1953 to 1977 and the Senate Majority Leader from 1961 to 1977. This interview focuses on the Kennedy administration's foreign policy, especially concerning the Soviet Union, and legislation passed during John F. Kennedy's presidency, among other topics.

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(Date) 8/10/64

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Mike Mansfield– JFK #1
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ORAL HISTORY PROJECT - JOHN F. KENNEDY LIBRARY

INTERVIEW WITH SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD

Date of Interview: June 23, 1964

Place: Majority Leader's Office
Suite S 208, Capitol

Interviewee: Senator Mike Mansfield

Interviewer: Mr. Seth P. Tillman

Mr. Tillman: Senator, when did you first know President Kennedy? What are your first memories and impressions of him? When did you first regard him as a serious presidential candidate?

Sen. Mansfield: I first knew President Kennedy when he came to the House of Representatives after the Second World War. I didn't get to know him well at that time, though we did strike up a friendship of sorts. After all, we were from different parts of the country and we did look upon many things from a different point of view. However, we came to the Senate together and I watched him very closely there and came to admire and respect him more and more with the passage of the years. I was also his seat mate for a number of years, during which time he suffered from an old back injury and also from a recurrence of the malaria which he incurred in the Southwest Pacific during the war. During that period we had a good many conversations of a personal nature which gave me a deep insight into just what he was, what he stood for and what he hoped to achieve.

Mike Mansfield

Mike Mansfield

Seth P. Tillman

Seth P. Tillman

As to his becoming presidential timber, the first time I noticed that was in Stevenson's first campaign. I recall that then Congressman Kennedy (we were both running for the Senate that year) came to see me, although he was not a member of the Massachusetts delegation to the national convention in Chicago, to see if Montana would not vote for Stevenson. I told him that as far as the Montana delegation was concerned we had split our vote between Stevenson, Kerr, Dick Russell, and one other whose name I cannot recall at the moment. He went back, worked for Stevenson, and, of course, Stevenson got the nomination but failed of election.

In 1956 Stevenson was nominated again and this time I did my best to get the Montana delegation to go for Kennedy for the Vice Presidential nomination, but the delegation was split and most of them went for Kefauver. Only a few of us went for Kennedy for the Vice Presidential nomination. At the convention in 1960 I worked for the nomination of the Majority Leader of the Senate, Lyndon B. Johnson, but I was not very successful: of Montana's fourteen votes Johnson got only two and Kennedy got the rest.

Mr. Tillman: Another area it might be interesting to explore, Senator, is your relationship with President Kennedy in your capacity as Majority Leader. How, for example, did you work out decisions with him relating to the business of the Senate? What forms of contact did you have with him besides the formal legislative breakfasts? What in general was the character of this relationship?

Sen. Mansfield: It was a personal relationship; I had great

faith and confidence in President Kennedy. I believe that at the time of his passing he was just on the verge of greatness. We used to have conversations not only at the leadership breakfasts, but on other occasions when he would call me down to the White House. He would also call me on the telephone. And at his request I would sometimes furnish memoranda to him on foreign policy questions. At other times I would do so on my own initiative. President Kennedy was really a warm individual though his exterior appearance did not seem to indicate it. But he did have feelings and sensitivities. He was aware of events as they developed. He had a prescience in looking ahead and seeing things as they began coming to the fore and he was a man who had a deep interest in the welfare of the American people and certainly a profound respect for the Congress. He was a man of great historical understanding and he recognized the line which divided the executive from the legislative. He never crossed it so far as I know. No President ever treated the Congress with greater respect, in my opinion, and with more understanding than did President Kennedy.

Mr. Tillman: Would you say that his relations with the Congress were of an exemplary character for the purposes of getting a program successfully through?

Sen. Mansfield: Yes I would, and I would say that the record would bear that out, because despite comments which have been made about the lack of cooperation between President Kennedy and the Congress, there was close cooperation and there was mutual respect. If you will look at the record of his recommendations, you will find

that by far the great majority of them were agreed to by the Congress and most especially by the Senate, that the few defeats which were suffered in the Congress were not the fault of the President but were in some instances, as a matter of fact, my fault, because I tried to bypass committees on various proposals. It was a mistake, but that's how you learn; that's how you become experienced. The President had a very successful record with the Congress and I think that over the three years that he was in office approval of his recommendations would average somewhere close to 75 to 78 percent.

Mr. Tillman: What were the legislative breakfasts like, Senator? How did they proceed? Were they informal or rather more businesslike?

Sen. Mansfield: Very informal but businesslike as well; the issues discussed were not of a personal nature but had to do primarily with legislation and what the President thought should be done. He was always courteous to us. He asked us for our views and he gave them consideration. He was not averse to calling us down at other times besides the breakfast period, either singly or in groups, and he kept us very well informed of events as they were developing overseas. He especially kept us informed, for example, of his conferences with the chiefs of state of other countries.

Mr. Tillman: Did the President do most of the talking at the legislative breakfasts or did he encourage the legislative leaders to do most of the talking?

Sen. Mansfield: He would usually get the conversation rolling.

Then he'd sit back and listen. He was a great listener, but he was also a man of convictions and he would express his point of view. Nonetheless he would appreciate points of view which differed from his own. I for one never differed with the President on the point of view which he expressed on the most important issues. If a difference had arisen, I would of course have discussed it with him. But that point never came.

Mr. Tillman: It seems clear that during both the Senate and the Presidential years you were in reasonably close harmony and perhaps more than reasonably close harmony with the President on most issues. Can you recall any major issues on which you would consider yourself to have been in fundamental disagreement with President Kennedy, either during the Senate years or during the Presidential years?

Sen. Mansfield: Not one. I was with him all the way. I may have differed with him on some points in the beginning, but his logic won me over without too much difficulty because I felt that he was right and my doubts were not worth very much.

Mr. Tillman: Do any specific legislative issues come to mind in which you had important doubts about President Kennedy's proposals or disagreed with him?

Sen. Mansfield: Well I had some doubts about the Peace Corps in the beginning. I didn't know how it would turn out. I felt that it might be a failure and have adverse repercussions for the Administration, but after talking to President Kennedy, Mr. Shriver and others, I found it not too difficult to come around to their point of view and, of course, the results have shown that President

Kennedy was quite right about the Peace Corps.

Mr. Tillman: Unless something else comes to mind about legislative relations at this point, Senator, perhaps we can turn to some foreign policy questions, starting with relations with the Soviet bloc. We might start with a very general question about your assessment of President Kennedy's policies toward the Soviet Union and toward the Communist bloc.

Sen. Mansfield: Well I think that President Kennedy opened up new paths in our relation with the Soviet Union. I think that he did so with courage and understanding and an awareness of the fact that the world had changed and that if we were to survive we would have to change with it. I think he made this very plain in his American University speech. I think he indicated it again quite strongly in his advocacy and leadership in bringing about the wheat deal with the Soviet Union. I think the test ban treaty is one of the hallmarks of his Administration and one of the great legislative feats of the past several decades. In addition, there was the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, which marked an extension of a policy which had been inaugurated by Cordell Hull and President Roosevelt. The trade act, I think, was a milestone, and while I disagreed then and disagree now with certain aspects of it, nevertheless, as far as the broad sweep of the policy is concerned, it was a milestone in our relations, political as well as economic, with other nations throughout the world. In summary I think President Kennedy made many innovations toward establishing some sort of a reasonable relationship between the Soviet Union and ourselves. He suffered disappointments as, for example, when he met with Mr. Khrushchev in Vienna, but he

recovered quickly, adhered to his goals, and tried to do what he thought best for the people of this country and the free world.

Mr. Tillman: Speaking of the Vienna meeting, the President's appointment book shows that you attended a meeting at the White House on June 6, 1961, which would have been right after his return from Vienna and from France, and that Vice President Johnson was there and Senator Fulbright and Senator Hickenlooper. I don't think there were any others. Do you have any recollections of that meeting which followed immediately after the President's return?

Sen. Mansfield: I do indeed. The President was very disturbed, I might say a bit shaken. He had hoped to achieve something in the way of a détente with Mr. Khrushchev, but Mr. Khrushchev had looked upon him as a youngster who had a great deal to learn and not much to offer. I think though that before the Vienna meeting was over President Kennedy had taken the measure of Khrushchev, and while they could reach no agreement on Berlin and other matters, he did wrench from Mr. Khrushchev a promise to do his best to see is the situation in Laos could be settled, or at least alleviated. I recall him saying that his parting remarks to Khrushchev were, "Well, this is going to be a cold winter." That was based on the fact that President Kennedy felt so little had been accomplished and he had desired so much. But not to be taken in, it was shortly thereafter that he called up some of the reserve elements of the armed services and the National Guard to make it very plain to Mr. Khrushchev that as far as he and

we were concerned Berlin was not up for a price, that it would be defended, and I think the message was received.

Mr. Tillman: Well, Senator, what about your own position on Berlin? You've certainly been one of the outspoken members of the Senate on this issue. You made your speech on the "third way" on June 14th, 1961, in which, as I recall, you suggested the possibility of a free city that would embrace East Berlin as well as West Berlin. Could you elaborate on the origin of that proposal and on whether and in what ways it was coordinated with the Kennedy Administration?

Sen. Mansfield: It was not coordinated with the Kennedy Administration. It was my idea only and I'm glad you mentioned the fact that what I advocated was a unified East and West Berlin. So many commentators and columnists and others seemed to have the idea that what I was advocating was a neutralized free West Berlin alone rather than a unified whole. It was my belief -- although the time for doing it is past since the creation of the wall between East and West Berlin -- that the way to start to bring about the unification of Germany was first to try to bring about the unification of East and West Berlin. Out of the microcosm of a unified Berlin, I thought, might come the reunification of the two Germanies. However, the proposal met with a great deal of criticism. I'm not at all certain it met with the approval of President Kennedy or the people downtown in the State and Defense Departments, but I think it was a good idea at that time. I think the idea is still good but, as I have said, with the erection of the wall some months after that speech, the possibility of unification on the basis which I advocated went out with the wind.

Mr. Tillman: Did you consult President Kennedy or anybody in the Administration before making that speech?

Sen. Mansfield: No, I did not because I was still a Senator of the United States. I had and still have a certain amount of independence, which, if the times call for it, will continue to be exercised.

Mr. Tillman: Did President Kennedy ever discuss the speech with you after you made it?

Sen. Mansfield: To the best of my knowledge, no.

Mr. Tillman: Your feeling then was that after the wall was put up it created a different kind of situation. You went to Berlin in November of 1962 with Senators Boggs, Pell and Benjamin Smith of Massachusetts, and upon your return you gave a report to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, and I think the record shows that you also gave a personal report to the President. Was that a written report about which it would be worth saying something at this point?

Sen. Mansfield: Yes, I gave him a written report. I would have to check it to find out what I said on Berlin. The situation in Yemen was just then developing; the crisis in India had come to a head with the Chinese invaders coming down to the Brahma Putra; and a difficult situation was developing in Malaya because of the Tunku's desire to create a Malaysia including the three northern areas of Borneo and Singapore. Just what I did recommend at that time I do not recall at the moment, but I did give the President both a written and oral report on all these areas.

Mr. Tillman: Well,the written report will presumably turn up

somewhere in the record, and it's just worth noting that it is in existence. How about President Kennedy's policies toward Eastern Europe and the satellites, Senator? Do you feel that President Kennedy launched significantly new policies in that area?

Sen. Mansfield: Oh yes, he was very interested even while he was in the Senate in establishing trade and other relations with the captive countries of Eastern Europe and the record will bear out his interest in both Poland and Hungary. The fact that he pushed the wheat deal with the Soviet Union is a further indication of his interest in that part of the world and his desire to bring about closer cooperation on a respectful and honest basis which would recognize the facts of life as they are and not as so many of our people would wish them to be. You can't look back. You have to face up to the present and look towards the future. Kennedy did this; he was of this century's generation and not of the nineteenth century's.

Mr. Tillman: One more specific point on Eastern European relations. The President's appointment book shows that you attended a luncheon last October 17th, that is 1963, for President Tito, who was then visiting, along with Senators Fulbright, Aiken and Dirksen. Do you have any memories of interesting conversations at that lunch?

Sen. Mansfield: No, none at all. I wasn't close to Tito or Madame Tito. As I recall,I was sitting next to the Yugoslav Ambassador and our conversation was of a general nature. Nothing intimate; nothing startling came of it. It was just a luncheon, an honor accorded to a visiting chief of state who was in this country on an informal basis.

Mr. Tillman: It might be worth coming back to the test ban

treaty a little later in the context of the legislative process. But unless there's something further you want to add on relations with the Soviet bloc, I suggest that we turn to Western Europe at this point.

Sen. Mansfield: Fine.

Mr. Tillman: What is your assessment of President Kennedy's policies toward the unification of Europe and an Atlantic partnership, particularly the concept of partnership as it was developed in his speech of July 4, 1962, the "declaration of interdependence," of which the Trade Expansion Act was clearly meant to be the heart and core at that time. What is your assessment of this policy aiming toward Atlantic partnership?

Sen. Mansfield: Well I think he believed in it very firmly. I recall that he was criticized quite strenuously for using the 4th of July date for the "declaration of interdependence" in Philadelphia. But I think he was on the right track because there has to be cohesion and unity between Western Europe and the United States in this day and age if they are to survive and to live and to prosper. I think he recognized that one of the ways to bring this about was to make a public declaration and then to follow it through with proposals of a substantive nature designed to put the concept into effect. And as you've indicated, one of the proposals was for a liberalization of trade of a magnitude up to that time unknown.

Nonetheless, he was none too happy about the Western Alliance because he felt that the NATO countries were not living up to their responsibilities -- and they weren't. He felt that we were carrying an undue share of the burden in the defense of Western Europe and we

were. He thought that the Western European nations themselves could do a great deal more -- and they could have but didn't. It was his hope that if he emphasized again and again the fact that there was this interrelationship, this interdependence, then together we could go forward and achieve some sort of a millenium, but he feared that if we did not get together and kept going off in divergent directions, the results would be disastrous for all of us.

Mr. Tillman: What was his feeling about President de Gaulle, both personally and politically?

Sen. Mansfield: Personally, one of great respect and admiration, politically, one of frustration because he couldn't seem to reach De Gaulle and arrive at some sort of modus operandi which would allow the French and the Western Europeans and the United States to go forward together. Then I'm afraid that the way he felt towards De Gaulle was as many chiefs of state feel toward him. It's understandable because I personally admire De Gaulle very much. I think he's done a great deal for France. He's brought some stability to that country and has restored a degree of prosperity, but he is a difficult man to deal with and he is hard to get along with. But the answer for that, I believe, lies in the fact that he believes in the future of France as a nation more than he does in the idea of the Western alliance and NATO or Western unity.

Mr. Tillman: Did President Kennedy ever talk with you about this problem of reaching De Gaulle? I've heard it said that he was puzzled by De Gaulle's motivation. Did he ever comment on this?

Sen. Mansfield: Puzzled is a good word, but the only conversa-

tions we had were indirect and not of much significance.

Mr. Tillman: Do you recall any expression of his reaction to the exclusion of Britain from the Common Market in January of 1963?

Sen. Mansfield: Yes, he was quite angry about that because one of the reasons he wanted the Trade Expansion Act put into operation was to meet the threat of the Common Market, and I use the word "threat" advisedly. He thought that Britain ought to be associated with the Common Market. He thought this would help to bring about an accord between the six members of the Common Market, Britain and the United States. He never looked upon this country as a prospective full member of the Common Market, but he did look upon it as a prospective associate member. He was disappointed. He was hurt. He was disturbed when De Gaulle vetoed Britain's entry because he felt that much which he had been seeking to achieve was thereby diluted and part of it made worthless.

Mr. Tillman: Did he continue to believe that Atlantic partnership as he had outlined it on July 4, 1962, was still a valid and viable concept?

Sen. Mansfield: He never deviated from that concept.

Mr. Tillman: Did he at any point that you recall devise or contemplate new policies that would have been designed to cope with the problems posed by General de Gaulle?

Sen. Mansfield: No, he was feeling his way along as I've indicated earlier in this interview. He was just on the verge of greatness. He had to feel his way. He had to inaugurate new policies; he had to tread new paths. And I think that if he had continued to be with us, in his second term he would have been one of the great

Presidents of the United States and would have accomplished things which would have really paved the way to a better world, a more peaceful world, and a more understanding world.

Mr. Tillman: Turning to Latin America, I seem to recall expressions of great concern and even doubt -- if that's not putting it too strongly -- on your part about the prospects of the Alliance for Progress. These occurred as early as the time of your visit to Latin America in 1961 and were focused on the problem of self-help. If this is accurate, could you elaborate on your view of the Alliance for Progress and on President Kennedy's view?

Sen. Mansfield: Well I was hasty. It was the first year. I expected too much and I was disappointed when I noticed that many of the Latin American countries, if not all of them -- outside of Mexico --, were making very little effort to assume the burden which was their part of the Alliance. However, since that time I have revised my own views and my judgment on the subject. Despite the fact that mistakes were made initially, I think the Kennedy program for Latin America was sound. I think the Alliance has a great future. I do not think that ten years will be enough, but if we keep on working toward the goals of the Alliance, it will greatly benefit the hemisphere as a whole and all nations in the hemisphere will be better off because of the initiative shown by President Kennedy in undertaking the Alliance.

Mr. Tillman: There are a couple of interesting meetings that took place at the White House which you attended in connection with the Bay of Pigs -- in April of 1961. I wonder if you could recall

some of the proceedings at those meetings that you would want to put in the historical record? The appointment book shows that you attended an "off the record" meeting on Cuba in the President's office from noon until 2 P.M. after a legislators' meeting on April 18 1961, which was the day after the landing in the Bay of Pigs, and also shows an "off the record" meeting on Cuba on the morning of April 19, which ran from 11 to 12:30. Those would be the two days following the landing in the Bay of Pigs.

Sen. Mansfield: Well, all I can say is that I'm sorry that I wasn't at any of the meetings preceding the Bay of Pigs because I had some pretty well defined views and would have expressed them as I had on previous occasions covering other parts of the globe. But we were called in after the débacle. There was nothing much that could be done at the time. The President took full responsibility. He was disturbed. He was disheartened. But I think out of that he achieved a degree of maturity he did not have before and I think this experience taught him a great deal which stood him in good stead in the months and years ahead.

Mr. Tillman: Is there anything in the way of the proceedings at these meetings, the conversations that took place, that's worth recording?

Sen. Mansfield: None that I can recall.

Mr. Tillman: You accompanied President Kennedy to Mexico City in June of 1962. The departure date was June 29 and the party included the President and Mrs. Kennedy, Dick Goodwin, Teodoro Moscoso, Ed Martin, Kenny O'Donnell and Pierre Salinger. What are your recollections of that trip? Is there anything about it that

should be put on the record?

Sen. Mansfield: It was a tremendous success. I've never seen such great crowds, such great enthusiasm. I was called in by President Kennedy to attend meetings he had -- private meetings -- with President Adolfo López Mateos, at which time we discussed the possibility of settling the Chamizal dispute, and also the salinization of the Colorado River as it flowed into lower California. The President was quite interested in both these matters and he assured President López Mateos that he would do everything he possibly could to bring about the solution of the Chamizal question because he admitted that the Mexicans were in the right and he also indicated that he would do all he could in the matter of the salt waters flowing down into Mexico from the Colorado. The meetings were quite informal. Frankly, I had never been in meetings of that nature before.

The President said in effect: Here's the situation at home. We have to take into consideration such questions as the feelings of Texans, especially the people of El Paso, and the feelings of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, Senator Hayden of Arizona , regarding the Colorado waters. You of course have your problems here and the best thing we can do is to lay them all out on the table and, on a practical basis, see what can be done.

I don't know that President López Mateos had ever been in a meeting of that kind before, but he certainly met President Kennedy more than half way, and out of it came a communiqué which has been partly fulfilled through the Chamizal Treaty and which I hope will

shortly be fulfilled through the solution of the problem of salt water emanating from the Colorado River.

The President enjoyed his visit to Mexico. He and Jacqueline Kennedy were enthused with the crowds, and on the day we left we went to the Church of the Virgin of Guadalupe in the outskirts of Mexico City. I do not believe that the Mexican President, even though he may be a Catholic, is allowed to go to church. It has something to do with their Constitution. But Mr. and Mrs. Kennedy went in and they asked Mrs. Mansfield and me to sit with them in the front row. We did. During the course of the ceremony, the Archbishop came out and put an order around the neck of Jacqueline Kennedy, who was called up before the altar. I forget the name of it. Maybe it was the Order of Guadalupe or Dolores or some such name. The crowds in that part of the city were tremendous. They were there spontaneously. We left the Church and went to the airport and there were very few policemen or guards on the way, but the crowds were overwhelming. The President and Mrs. Kennedy met the President and Senora López Mateos at the airport, and I believe for the first time in his life the President engaged in what the Latin Americans called an "abrazo" -- somewhat gingerly because he wasn't used to it and also because he had a back he had to watch. In any case, he embraced Lopez Mateos and then left. The feeling was great. The admiration for Kennedy was tremendous and the same goes for Mrs. Kennedy. I just couldn't think of a more worthwhile trip and it did much to bring about a bettering of already good Mexican-U.S. relations.

Mr. Tillman: There's another interesting meeting on the record, Senator, the one that followed the President's speech to the country about the Cuban missile crisis. The President made his announcement to the country on October 22, 1962, and you, of course, were one of the members of Congress who were called back to Washington on that day to be briefed in advance of the President's speech. There was another meeting at the White House on October 24, which ran from 5:15 to 5:55 P.M. and was attended by you, Senator Fulbright, Senator Dirksen and other legislative leaders. I think it would be very valuable to have your memories of any of the events surrounding the Cuban missile crisis, starting with the degree of your advance knowledge of the crisis and of the President's decision to act on it.

Sen. Mansfield: I had no advance knowledge. I was with Mrs. Mansfield in Florida trying to get a little rest when the call came from the White House. It was Larry O'Brien talking and he said that he wanted me to be back in Washington the next afternoon. Well, I said, "I'm at a place that I can't get away from." He said, "Where are you?". I told him. He said, "We'll send a helicopter." They sent a helicopter the next day, took me up to the air base at Tampa, and there I met George Smathers and together we came back in a jet star to Washington. We talked about what the possibility might be for the meeting. Cuba was mentioned incidentally. We thought it might have something to do with Chinese aggressions -- aggression against the Indians at that time. But really we were in the dark. They took us from the air field directly to the White House. We met others of the leadership there.

We tried to find out from them what the situation was. None of them knew. We even asked the newsmen, who usually know everything, and they didn't know.

We were called into the Cabinet Room and the President told us that he had found out for certain without a shadow of a doubt that there were missiles in Cuba and that emplacements for other missiles were in the making. He said he had first heard about this from John McCone, the director of the CIA, about a week previously. I believe the date was October 14. He had wanted to make absolutely certain, so he had ordered the reconnaisance planes to fly as low as they possibly could to get as many pictures as was possible so that they would know for certain that this information relayed to him by McCone was correct. He had the pictures in the room when we got there. He had cancelled some engagements previously. Supposedly he had a cold when he was in Chicago, but that was just put on for cover purposes. He came back to the White House, kept in close touch on a day and night basis with the missile situation which was developing in Cuba, had these pictures all blown up which we saw when we went into the Cabinet Room. The President explained them in detail along with some man from Intelligence who was able to pinpoint the locations, so that there was no question in the minds of any of us. He said that he had sent a message to Khrushchev indicating that he wanted the missiles out. He asked us if we had any suggestions. Senators Russell and Fulbright said that we ought to move in right away. Well, the President said he had thought of that, but --

Mr. Tillman: You mean with ground forces, Senator?

Sen. Mansfield: Ground and air force -- ground, air and sea forces. The President had thought of that, but he said it would take from six to possibly ten days to mount the necessary forces with enough logistical support. He felt that this might create a situation which could possibly endanger the lives of some of the Soviet personnel there and create a situation from which Khrushchev could not retreat. He stated that in his opinion it would be better to give Khrushchev a few days, in the meantime to mass our forces and be ready to take action, and if within a certain length of time Khrushchev did not accede to his demands, that he would be prepared to move.

Mr. Tillman: That is to say with ground forces --

Sen. Mansfield: All kinds of forces. At that time there was a marine brigade at least and maybe a larger force on the way from Camp Pendleton down the Pacific coast to go through the Panama Canal. There were a number of units alerted on the East coast. The strategic air command was put on a 50% -- I believe -- "alert aloft" basis. The Navy was ordered to intercept all ships and search them if need be, and we were all aware of the terrible moment which confronted us at that time. It was the general belief that if any action were taken the Soviets would probably strike at Berlin and if they did strike at Berlin we were prepared to carry our nuclear activity into the heart of the Soviet Union. None of the leadership doubted that this would be the case if that happened, but all of the leadership, including Fulbright and Russell, who came around to the President's

point of view, pledged their full support and then the President left us to make his statement to the people of the nation.

During this time I stayed in the White House and watched his speech from Larry O'Brien's room. I thought it was excellent. I thought it brought home to the American people the grimness of the situation. He called us back the next day on October 24, gave us some further report, and that afternoon I left for Montana. I could sense the feeling as soon as I landed in the State because the air bases in Great Falls had distributed their lighter planes to some of the civilian fields. There was no doubt but that the business was both serious and grim and that we were prepared for any eventuality. I travelled through Montana for a few days. I went over to Washington to speak for Senator Magnuson that weekend. I could feel the tenseness everywhere I went and that Sunday morning the news came that Khrushchev had agreed to withdraw his missiles and you could literally feel the sense of relief among the people. They knew how close we were to a nuclear war, and we were, but as far as the President was concerned, I have never seen anyone more contained or more cool than was Kennedy on that occasion.

Mr. Tillman: What is your assessment of the workings of the Administration as well as the President himself during the course of this crisis?

Sen. Mansfield: Well I think that by and large the workings of the Administration were well coordinated except in the field of mass communication. There was a breakdown there and a situation developed which indicated that we were tremendously weak in that respect, and I hope that situation has been corrected since. And the reason I know

about that is that shortly after the missile crisis in November, at the request of the President, I undertook this study mission to Berlin and Vietnam and points in between, and one of the men I wanted to have with me was one of the Deputy Assistant Secretaries of State, Henry Ford. I had a difficult time getting him, but I insisted because of my great respect and admiration for his efficiency and ability. He did come with us, but the reason that I had some difficulty was that he had been called in by Mr. Crockett of the State Department and others, I believe, to see what could be done to correct the deficiency shown up in the mass communication system.

Mr. Tillman: The next area that would be interesting to go into is the Far East and Southeast Asia, starting with a general question about your assessment of President Kennedy's policies toward China and toward Southeast Asia. We might start with China.

Sen. Mansfield: President Kennedy's policy towards China did not change from that of his predecessors. It couldn't very well. We had to maintain our two divisions in Korea because while we were not at war with China there we certainly were not at peace either. We had -- and have -- an uneasy truce. We had a security agreement with Formosa which we were in honor bound to uphold. We had a situation in Southeast Asia centering on Laos and Vietnam. There wasn't much we could do in Laos except arrive at the agreement which Harriman was able to work out at the instigation of the President for a neutralization of the country. A lot of fault has been found with that policy, but I think it was the only reasonable one at the time because had the 1962 agreement not been put into operation, Laos would have been fully

Communist dominated long ago. As far as South Vietnam is concerned, President Kennedy did step up our forces there so that at the time of his passing we had something on the order of fifteen to sixteen thousand military "advisors" there. Of those, probably two thousand were out in the field, mostly in the strategic forces working with some of the Vietnamese, but to a large extent with the Montagnards in the mountains to the north. The difficulty there was not of course with President Ngo Dinh Diem -- who I thought then and still think was the only one, despite his frailties, who could have kept South Vietnam together -- but with Ngo Dinh Nhu, the President's younger brother, and Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu who, of course, was the publicist for the regime. It was too bad that Ngo Dinh Diem could not remain the type of man he was and retain his own independence, but my impression was and is that he came under the influence of his younger brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu, who looked upon himself as a tactician and a planner and who was a very smart man indeed, and also under the influence of Nhu's wife, Madame Nhu, who became in effect the first lady of Vietnam because the President himself was unmarried. President Kennedy did the best he could with an extremely difficult situation. He sent out our best military personnel to act in an advisory capacity, but in the kind of a war waged in Vietnam it is extremely difficult to fight the guerillas who operate on a hit and run basis and who operate mostly at night as well. What we were up against then and are up against now is the same sort of tactics that the French had to contend with and were unsuccessful in coping with even though they had something on the order of 400,000 men there covering the entire Indo-Chinese area.

Mr. Tillman: You made a personal report, didn't you, to President Kennedy and also to Secretary Rusk after your mission to Southeast Asia in November of 1962. There was a formal report which you submitted to the Foreign Relations Committee with Senators Boggs, Pell and Benjamin Smith, but the record also shows that you submitted personal reports to the President and to the Secretary of State. I think it would be interesting to record your recollections, not only of those reports but of the mission itself.

Sen. Mansfield: That is correct. Offhand I don't recall whether I made a written report to Secretary of State Dean Rusk or not, but I did make a written and an oral report on the Vietnamese situation to President Kennedy. I got back around the middle of December. I went to Palm Beach on December 26, the day after Christmas. I joined President Kennedy on a boat he was sailing on Lake Worth at the time, and we spent about two hours going over my written report, which he read in detail and about which he questioned me minutely. He had a tremendous grasp of the situation. He didn't waste much time. He certainly never wasted any words. What effect the report had on him I don't know, but he did start to raise a few points -- I don't remember which at the present time -- which were in disagreement with what I had to say, but at least he got the truth as I saw it and it wasn't a pleasant picture that I had depicted for him.

Mr. Tillman: What's your assessment of the overthrow of the Ngo Dinh Diem's regime in November of 1963?

Sen. Mansfield: I thought then and I think now that it was a most serious mistake because the only man who could have held South

Vietnam together was Ngo Dinh Diem. I think events have proved that and I think the difficulty was not with him so much as it was with his brother and sister-in-law.

Mr. Tillman: One lesser point that may be difficult to recall. The record book shows a meeting on Laos on February 21, 1962. Does that strike a memory?

Sen. Mansfield: Yes, the question was brought up and I expressed myself in no uncertain terms because the idea seemed to be that many people in the Administration were advocating that we ought to move into Laos. And as I recall I stated that if they were going to do that they had better tell the whole truth to the American people, realize that this would be worse than Korea, would cost a great deal more and very likely bring us into conflict with the Communist Chinese. I said that I thought it was the worst possible move we could make. The President and the others listened respectfully. It just happened fortuitously that I had been doing some thinking about this subject over the preceding several days, and from my point of view at least I was well prepared to advance my arguments. I think that the congressional leadership were in full accord with my views, and I have an idea that the President was too although he didn't say anything.

Mr. Tillman: You mentioned earlier that you thought that President Kennedy's China policy was essentially a continuation of the Eisenhower administration's China policy. Would you consider this to have been appropriate under the circumstances of the period from 1961 to 1963, or would you think there might have been possibilities to change that policy somehow?

Sen. Mansfield: No, I think he did the only thing he could because China policy is an emotional and a political issue in this country. It's a question you have to approach very carefully. I think he would have sought new avenues of access and communication in time, but the Lord didn't give him enough time.

Mr. Tillman: Do you recall any conversations -- informal conversations -- with President Kennedy about China and also about the Sino-Soviet split?

Sen. Mansfield: Not about China, but we had several conversations on the Sino-Soviet split and I gave him my views, sometimes solicited, sometimes unsolicited, to the effect that I thought that this was a real cleavage, that it would deepen, that it was based on complex circumstances, partly historical. I said that the Sino-Soviet problem had its origins in the advances of the Czars at the beginning of the 17th century across Siberia which brought them into territories under the control of the Manchu Emperors, territories which they took from

China and which became and remain bones of contention between the two countries. I also brought out my belief that the Chinese population, which exceeded 700 million and was increasing at the rate of 13 to 15 million a year, would be an explosive factor, that in time the Chinese would have to expand somewhere and that, while Southeast Asia could take care of 25 million, maybe up to 50 million, the real area in which the Chinese would expand would be to the west and the north, not only in the areas which were formerly under control of the Manchus but in areas which had never been tributary or vassals to the Chinese emperors. I said further that in my opinion the Soviet Union was seeking ways and means to ally itself with the West not because it liked us much but because they considered it a protective device and because their real fear was that this encroachment on the part of the Chinese might take place and endanger their position. I pointed out to President Kennedy that there was a zone of competition between the Soviet Union and Communist China apart from places like Sinkiang, notably Outer Mongolia, where the Chinese and the Russians were striving for supremacy with the Russians in control. They had been the ones responsible for establishing the Outer Mongolian Republic in 1922, and for a number of reasons there was an enmity on the part of the Mongols toward the Chinese, as a result of which Ulan Bator

always seemed to take the side of Moscow against Peking. I pointed to these and other factors and I think that President Kennedy agreed at least in part. Whether he agreed wholly with me or not, I don't know, but at least our conversations constituted some consideration of a question which was, is and will be important in the decades ahead in an area which may well determine which way the world is going to go.

Mr. Tillman: Unless there are other comments on foreign affairs that you think ought to be made at this point, I suggest that we turn to some legislative questions, starting with your role in the enactment of the United Nations bond issue authorization in 1962. How did you work this out with the President? How did you collaborate with him in getting it through the Senate?

Sen. Mansfield: The President did a lot of work himself. He talked to a lot of members, realized the difficulties he was laboring under and put Larry O'Brien, Mike Manatos and the others to work. Then he also made a special effort, as he always did, to contact Everett Dirksen, and the fact that Everett Dirksen, after being a little questionable in the beginning, came around to our side made it possible to get the bond issue through the Senate. If it hadn't been for Everett Dirksen, I think that we would have failed.

Mr. Tillman: The communications satellite act of 1962 is another very interesting case because of the implications of cloture. Was the President very much involved in this or was this largely a Senate issue that led to the cloture?

Sen. Mansfield: The President was very little involved. He became involved because of the fact that Senator Kerr pushed the bill and the Administration just couldn't get out of it. We had to push it then. It became an Administration measure, though not with the wholehearted approval of the President, and as leader we felt we had to push it through because it had merits -- probably had demerits too as its opponents pointed out -- but also because we had to depend upon Kerr for a lot of legislation which came up that year because that was the year in which he was the strong man in the Senate. Much of the important legislation came out of the Finance Committee and without his support and leadership on these proposals we might have met with failure. As it was, because of his support and leadership, we were uniformly successful.

Mr. Tillman: Senator, you commented before on the significance of the nuclear test ban treaty. I think it would be interesting now if we could trace back your recollections of the way in which the test ban treaty came up as a possibility, starting with the President's American University speech, or even farther back if appropriate, down through its ratification by the Senate, your role in its ratification, and your assessment of the President's role.

Sen. Mansfield: Well, we had discussed this possibility when I joined him at Los Angeles to go to Honolulu.

Mr. Tillman: When was that?

Sen. Mansfield: Just prior to his American University speech. He called me down from Montana to Los Angeles and we went to Honolulu from there, spent a day or so, and then came back to Washington on a Saturday. I believe that he gave his American University speech on a Sunday or a Monday. He talked this matter over with me on the plane coming back from Honolulu. I told him I thought the idea was good.

Later the legislation was sent up. We heard testimony from the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They were in favor of it, but no one was in favor of it so much, so thoroughly and so completely as General David Shoup, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, who was a favorite of the President's and a favorite of mine. We went through this tortuous procedure, having three committees sit in on the hearings. I recall, for example, Senator Goldwater really being torn -- and I mean that sincerely -- as to what he should do. He told me that he wanted to vote for the treaty, but that he had gotten some communications or advice from a Doctor Possony, who was at Stanford University, and others who raised questions and he just didn't know what to do. Of course, finally he made up his mind to vote against it, but I think he went through a real struggle and the advice of some of these friends of his may

have been the decisive factor. In any case, the proceedings involved hearings, both executive and open, but most important once again was the role of the minority leader, Senator Dirksen of Illinois, who, after being doubtful in the beginning, swung around, went for the test ban wholeheartedly and was the decisive factor in getting the votes for ratification. One of the things I treasure is a letter from the President who had some kind words to say about the speech I made on behalf of the test ban treaty and referred to it, as I recall -- and I say this with all due modesty -- as one of my finest efforts. That's about it.

Mr. Tillman: That was your floor speech.

Sen. Mansfield: That's right.

Mr. Tillman: Do you have reason to believe that President Kennedy contemplated a test ban treaty at the time of his American University speech or was it exploratory in an even more general way than that?

Sen. Mansfield: It was more exploratory. He was trying to open up new avenues, and when this opportunity came, he grabbed it, tried to make it work and did make it work.

Mr. Tillman: What was the President's assessment of the importance of the test ban treaty?

Sen. Mansfield: He regarded it as a small step. He said something to the effect that if you're going to travel a mile, you've got at least to take the first step. He didn't expect

great things of it, but he thought it might increase the thaw, might open paths which hitherto had remained closed, and might mark a beginning in a better relationship between the Soviet and ourselves. Most important of all, he thought it might give mankind as a whole some hope of not being subjected to nuclear destruction or radioactive fallout.

Mr. Tillman: Senator, what is your assessment and what would you regard as President Kennedy's assessment of the importance of the wheat sale -- even in relation to the test ban treaty?

Sen. Mansfield: Well, I think that the President had to be taught about the importance of the wheat sale because the question came up just last September during his conservation trip. I joined him at Duluth in September -- Humphrey and McCarthy were also there, I believe -- when the news came from Secretary of Agriculture Freeman that American wheat brokers were in Toronto or Ottawa sounding out the Soviets, who were then in Canada seeking to buy more Canadian wheat, about buying American wheat. When we left Duluth to go to North Dakota and Montana, the question was raised and I advocated that we go ahead and sell wheat to the Russians because it would reduce our stockpile and the cost to the government of maintaining it. If enough were sold, I suggested, it would stabilize the price and give the wheat farmer a break. It would furnish employment to our longshoremen, to our seamen,

and to the people working on the railroads. As long as it was a regular commercial deal, I contended, we had nothing to lose and a great deal to gain. The President went along. We had quite a time getting the wheat sale through the Senate, but we did finally. I think it has been a good thing. I think it has been to our benefit. The payments have been on the spot and the government has lost nothing. The economy of the country has gained something and I think the lot of the wheat farmers as a whole has been stabilized by our getting rid of this excess of wheat.

Mr. Tillman: How direct a role did the President play in the Senate discussion of the Mundt amendment to the foreign aid bill, which would have prevented the Export-Import Bank from guaranteeing credits extended to finance the wheat sale?

Sen. Mansfield: He sent me a letter which I read into the Record and I think the letter was decisive in the ultimate rejection of the Mundt proposal. The Mundt amendment was set aside in November and taken up again in December, after the President's death, as a separate bill, having been reported unfavorably by the Committee on Banking and Currency. At that time I read President Kennedy's letter again, which was the last communication I received from him and, I think, one of the last he ever wrote, and also a letter I had received from President Johnson. I used

both letters and with them we were able to win. President Kennedy's played a very decisive part -- both while he was alive and after he died.

Mr. Tillman: Your motion to table the Mundt amendment to the foreign aid bill was unsuccessful, and it was then that you agreed with Senator Mundt to send it to the Banking and Currency Committee as a separate bill. Did the President comment or intervene in any way during these proceedings?

Sen. Mansfield: He may have. I don't recall.

Mr. Tillman: The President's appointment book shows an off-the-record meeting on the wheat sale on the morning of October 9, 1963, attended by you, Senator Fulbright, Senator Aiken and the bipartisan legislative leadership. Does this bring to mind anything of importance?

Sen. Mansfield: Yes, it sure as hell does. This was the time that Congressman Halleck raised hell with it, castigated the wheat deal and, I thought,was discourteous to the President. For once I lost my temper and I castigated him and said it was a good deal and that it would help the farmers. I didn't like his language and suggested that we let the factsspeak for themselves. That's the only thing I can recall of that meeting.

Mr. Tillman: We haven't hit very much on domestic issues. But there are a few that you might want to comment on. Why don't I

just list them and if you want to comment we can stop. How about the minimum wage bill in 1961?

Sen. Mansfield: I don't recall much about it except that we passed it.

Mr. Tillman: And depressed areas legislation?

Sen. Mansfield: We passed that too and din't have much difficulty. That was during the honeymoon period as I recall.

Mr. Tillman: And what about medicare and the President's feelings about it?

Sen. Mansfield: The President was very interested in medicare. He certainly worked hard on Wilbur Mills to try to get some action. He brought up the question with Harry Byrd and Wilbur Mills to see if the Senate Finance Committee wouldn't consider it. Harry Byrd said no. It had been the Finance Committee's policy to wait for the House Ways and Means Committee to act before they did anything. Later, on my own initiative, I brought up medicare. I bypassed the Committee. It was a mistake. This was in 1962. Most of the committee chairmen were against me; they thought the same tactic might be used against them. But Senator Kerr was also against me -- he felt that the Kerr-Mills bill was the answer. The result was that we were defeated by two votes, but that was not the President's fault. That was my own fault. Bypassing committees was a tactic I tried once or twice. I failed both times, and I learned something from it.

Mr. Tillman: How about education legislation?

Sen. Mansfield: Well, that's where Senator Morse performed exceedingly well. He really went to bat and carried the President's education program through as no one else possibly could have. I think it indicated that if Morse were given greater responsibility on the floor, he would, with his managerial talents, really shine because nobody could be more courteous, more tolerant, more understanding, more skillful in managing bills than Senator Morse was in securing the adoption of the Administration's education proposals. I would say that in 1961 Morse was the strong man of the Senate because he was able to get through so many good educational bills, and in 1962 Kerr was the strong man of the Senate because he got through so many bills which came out of the Finance Committee.

Mr. Tillman: How about mental health?

Sen. Mansfield: A great achievement, especially so in view of the fact that the President had such a personal interest based on his sister's situation. He was most concerned about mental health and he looked upon legislation in this field as one of the real contributions which has Administration has made to the welfare of the nation as a whole -- a great bill.

Mr. Tillman: Senator, do you recall any issues of importance in which you as Majority Leader found yourself unable to support President Kennedy, or alternatively, issues in which you did give him full support because of your responsibility as Majority Leader despite having misgivings about a bill?

Sen. Mansfield: None really. He was one of the easiest men for me to follow because I think our thoughts ran along the same lines and it was no trouble for me to advocate all his program. If there had been any real basic difficulties, I would have talked it out with him, and if we couldn't have arrived at an accommodation, I would have resigned. But that never happened, never even came close to happening.

Mr. Tillman: To modify the question, were there issues on which you had relatively mild doubts but nevertheless gave your vigorous support?

Sen. Mansfield: Some in the beginning. As I've mentioned previously, I was doubtful about the Peace Corps in the beginning. There were other matters as well about which I had doubts, such as foreign aid. I thought that something should be done in the way of reform, renovation and rehabilitation of the aid program, but my differences with the President were minor. I approved wholeheartedly of the objectives of his policies and there were no differences of any substance.

Mr. Tillman: How about the Department of Urban Affairs?

Sen. Mansfield: There again, I took matters into my own hands. If I had waited one more day, we could have gotten a bill out of McClellan's Government Operations Committee and brought it to the floor legitimately, but I jumped the gun and brought it up ahead of time, thereby incurring McClellan's opposition -- which was perfectly

understandable. Because I failed to take due account of a Committee Chairman's sensibilities, we lost a bill which, had I waited for a day, would have passed the Senate without any trouble.

Mr. Tillman: Had you regarded the Department of Urban Affairs as important and valuable?

Sen. Mansfield: Yes, I did because, although I come from a sparsely populated area, nevertheless I think that people who come fom heavily populated areas -- they comprise 70% of the population -- are entitled to just as much consideration from us as they have given to the West in the fields of reclamation, irrigation, power projects and the like. There was a real need -- and there is a real need still -- because the urban population is growing. Agriculture now occupies only 8% of the population, and the farm population is decreasing whereas the rest of the population is increasing, and becoming more concentrated. Its problems are becoming more difficult of solution, and if 8% of the people are entitled to a Secretary of Agriculture, then I think that 70% of the people are entitled to a Secretary for Urban Affairs.

Mr. Tillman: How about the question of foreign aid? You mentioned twice, I think, that you had some questions about the validity of the Administration's foreign aid program. Could you comment on that?

Sen. Mansfield: Well, I'm afraid I'll always have questions about foreign aid because it seems to go on and on. We seem to have a hard time ending the dependency status which some nations have developed. I would like to see a foreign aid program based more on economic assistance than military support and aid. I'd like to see it more on a people to people basis, such as the Point Four Program emphasized. I'd like to see fewer students brought to this country and more of our people sent to the underdeveloped countries because too many of these students who come here and become trained want to stay here and forget their people and the needs of their nations. Whereas if we could send over our own people to train them there, they would probably stay home to help build schools and generally give their people a better life. I think, however, that at the present time we do have probably the best administrator of the program in the person of David Bell. I think that was a sound appointment by President Kennedy.

Mr. Tillman: Did you have occasion to discuss these questions about foreign aid personally with President Kennedy?

Sen. Mansfield: I think he knew my ideas quite well from conversations we had in the Senate because for a couple of years I was his seat mate and during that period we discussed such things as foreign aid, health care and the like, and other matters.

Mr. Tillman: What was President Kennedy's reaction to these questions that you raised about foreign aid?

Sen. Mansfield: In general, he agreed with what I had to say. But, of course, there's a difference between being a Senator and a President.

Mr. Tillman: The one major remaining legislative question is civil rights. It would be valuable to trace your recollections of the origins of the civil rights bill that has just passed and your role in it and your cooperation with President Kennedy in it.

Sen. Mansfield: The one thing President Kennedy didn't want to do really was to become involved in civil rights legislation; he hoped that this matter would work itself out. He acted only because he had no other choice, but once he acted he went all the way and his heart was really in getting civil rights legislation. I recall , for example, that I discussed with the President a literacy voting test using the sixth grade as a means test, so to speak, for voting qualifications. He asked if I thought we ought to include state as well as federal elections. I said no, that for a starter we ought to include only federal elections. He then said, "Go ahead." I talked to Bob Kennedy about it and I tried it and the so-called liberal groups thought this was a useless effort. The southerners fought it for ten days or two weeks. The liberal groups came in after ten days of doing nothing to ask me what they could do and I said in effect: "You're too late. You could have helped before, but it's gone too far now." And we were defeated.

Then of course events in Alabama, Mississippi and elsewhere brought about the sending of legislation by President Kennedy to Congress. He had no other choice. His hand was forced. But once he stepped forward, he was for it all the way. I discussed with him several times the difficulties I thought I'd have in getting a public accommodations bill passed. He said, "you've got to get it done. It's the heart of the matter. These people are entitled to this consideration, and I'm depending upon you to see that what I recommended is passed." "Well," I said, "I'll do my best, Mr. President, but I'm just explaining the situation to you." I said, "I think then we ought in that instance to take up the public accommodations bill and try that on." "No,"he said, "I want you to wait and bring up the whole bill." As it was worked on in the House and right down to the end, he was very interested. He wanted a civil rights bill. He was committed completely and now he's almost got it.

Mr. Tillman: You said that he had not wished to take up civil rights before last spring presumably before the Birmingham riots in May of 1963. What was his feeling about civil rights prior to that?

Sen. Mansfield: Well, he was hoping that the Governors and the local authorities in the states would recognize the gravity of the situation and would preclude the need for all-embracing federal legislation. He was prepared to give them a certain amount of rope,

but once they had gone so far, he figured he had no choice but to send down the package which he did.

Mr. Tillman: The appointments book shows a meeting at the White House of the bipartisan legislative leadership on June 17, 1963, which was two days, I believe, before the civil rights bill was presented to the Congress. It doesn't indicate that the subject was civil rights. I guessed it might have been. Did the President have any strongly held views or did he express any views on the Senate Rules, in particular Rule 22?

Sen. Mansfield: No, and he shouldn't have because he was in a different branch of the government. That was our business, not his. He understood that, and he never raised the question. He had been interested in a change in the Rules Committee of the House, but as far as the Senate was concerned he said nothing.

Mr. Tillman: How about during his years as a Senator? Do you recall expressions of his views on the Senate Rules?

Sen. Mansfield: No, I don't, but I would imagine the record would show just what his views were on the basis of attempts made at the beginning of each new Congress to change the rules, especially Rule 22.

Mr. Tillman: Going back just a little bit to the years when he was Senator Kennedy, I've heard it said that during the Senate years he had the habit of consulting you personally, particularly as to

meetings of the Foreign Relations Committee that he had missed, and that you were one of the members of the Senate whose advice and counsel he sought fairly consistently. Does this bring to mind any conversations that should be recorded, any exchanges of views that should be recorded regarding the years when he was in the Senate?

Sen. Mansfield: No, I think that's overdone a little bit. There were some things which we did discuss. We both had an intense interest in French Indo-China as it was at that time. We both had an interest in Algeria.

Mr. Tillman: He had made that interesting speech on Algeria in 1954.

Sen. Mansfield: That's right, in which I participated after he got through.

Mr. Tillman: What was your role in that?

Sen. Mansfield: Well, he was going to introduce a resolution, and I assured him it would be given every consideration, but at the same time I tried to dissuade him from pressing it, because I felt that it might hurt our relations with the French, and he didn't press it. We were having enough trouble as it was. He did a really great job. I didn't agree with many parts of what he said about Algeria, but it was a thorough, scholarly job. It didn't get anywhere, but only because he didn't push it.

Mr. Tillman: Why did he make that speech?

Sen. Mansfield: Well I couldn't tell you.

Mr. Tillman: Some other interesting things came up when you were fairly closely affiliated with him during the Senate years. One of them was the subcommittee on naming the five great Senators which operated in 1957.

Sen. Mansfield: Of which he was chairman.

Mr. Tillman: Of which he was chairman.

Sen. Mansfield: Yes. Well we didn't have any trouble picking out the five, although Kennedy and I thought that instead of LaFollette it should have been Tom Walsh of Montana.

Mr. Tillman: How about the civil rights bill in 1957? What was his role in that particular case?

Sen. Mansfield: He didn't take much of a role. I seem to recall that we discussed the jury trial amendment and other aspects of the bill. But he took a quiet role in that bill. The details I wouldn't know. He'd get back there with a bunch of us and we'd try to thresh out Title 3 and some other matters and to arrive at a consensus.

He did take an active role in the field of labor legislation. I have never seen a man more brief, more concise, more accurate, more knowledgeable and informed than was Senator Kennedy in handling the labor bill. He didn't waste words. An amendment would be offered and he would spend a minute, maybe two minutes,answering it while the proponent of the amendment would spend 15 or 20 minutes

or a half-hour or an hour. He had a gift for getting right to the heart of the matter. And he made a great record in the Senate in the field of labor legislation.

Mr. Tillman: Another issue that comes to mind is the Mundt-Daniel Constitutional amendment, which would have reformed the electoral college -- by allocating electoral votes in proportion to the popular vote.

Sen. Mansfield: I don't know anything about that although I do recall that Kennedy took a very active part -- against it I believe. But I don't recall that.

Mr. Tillman: Is there anything else, Senator, during the Senate years that would strike you as important to record?

Sen. Mansfield: No, only that he wasn't the most conscientous of senators. He would miss a lot of sessions, but when he spoke he knew whereof he was speaking. He was well-liked by his colleagues, respected, but he always seemed to have other interests which attracted him. There was also the fact that he was in the hospital for a year with his back ailment and the fact that he went to the hospital at least once for four or five days with this recurrent Malaria which affected him in the beginning of his Senatorial career. But all in all he was a well-respected, well-liked man. A little cool, a little reserved on the surface, but very friendly and warm-hearted, kind, generous, understanding and tolerant underneath. That's about it.

Mr. Tillman: One small personal question. He visited Montana on September 25, 1963, and it's also reported that he paid a call on your father.

Sen. Mansfield: That's right.

Mr. Tillman: What do you recall about that?

Sen. Mansfield: Well, he did so on his own. If he'd asked me about it, I would have urged against it, for security and other reasons. We live in a very poor section of town. It's on the wrong side of the tracks, but it was on the way to the airport, and he wanted to do it, so we went in and he said to my father, "Well, how do you think Mike's doing." My father said, "I think you're both doing well, Mr. President." Then he talked some about Irish history and that was it.

Mr. Tillman: Senator, what is your assessment of the major achievements of the Kennedy Administration?

Sen. Mansfield: The test ban treaty, the Trade Expansion Act, the wheat deal with the Soviet Union, education, and legislation in the field of the mentally retarded and the mentally ill. Offhand that's all I can think of, but his record was a splendid one. He was on the verge of greatness. He was a man of grace and ability and of understanding. He was a man who will not be soon forgotten.

Mike Mansfield

Mike Mansfield

Seth P. Tillman

Seth P. Tillman