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Edmund S. Muskie Papers

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Remarks by Senator Edmund S. Muskie Before the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland

Edmund S. Muskie

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REMARKS BY SENATOR EDMUND S. MUSKIE
BEFORE THE JEWISH COMMUNITY FEDERATION OF CLEVELAND
CLEVELAND, OHIO
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1971

THERE CAN BE NOTHING MORE EXCITING
THAN TO SEE A GREAT ADVENTURE TAKING PLACE.

THIS WAS MY PRIVILEGE DURING MY FIVE
DAYS IN ISRAEL LAST MONTH.

I SAW AN ADVENTURE IN WHICH PEOPLE ARE
WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD SOMETHING LARGER
THAN THEMSELVES.

SO MUCH OF WHAT IS BRIGHT AND NEW AND
HOPEFUL ABOUT ISRAEL HAS BEEN TOLD AND RETOLD.

MANY OF YOU, I AM SURE, KNOW ISRAEL AT
FIRST-HAND.

YET TO SEE HER VIBRANT REALITY IS TO UNDER-
STAND THAT HER MESSAGE CANNOT BE REPEATED TOO
OFTEN.

I HAD HEARD AND READ ABOUT THIS BRAVE,
YOUNG NATION -- HOW HER PEOPLE WERE ENGAGED
IN A COMMON CAUSE TO BUILD A WHOLE SOCIETY...
HOW THEY MIGHT OFFER US A LESSON, HERE IN
AMERICA.

AND I FOUND THESE THINGS TO BE TRUE.

I SAW A LAND OF LIFE AND BEAUTY...RECLAIMED
FROM AREAS WHICH ONCE WERE SWAMP OR DESERT.

THIS IS A MIRACLE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT.

AND I BELIEVE WE MUST HELP ISRAEL PRE-
SERVE THAT MIRACLE.

I SAW THE INSTITUTIONS WHERE ISRAEL SUP-
PORTS SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH...AND FROM WHICH
ISRAEL SENDS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO DOZENS
OF COUNTRIES IN AFRICA AND ASIA AND LATIN
AMERICA.

THAT KIND OF EFFORT IS OF IMPORTANCE TO
THE ENTIRE WORLD.

AND I BELIEVE WE MUST HELP ISRAEL SUSTAIN
THAT EFFORT.

I SAW PEOPLE WORKING TO BUILD A SOCIETY...
WHERE EDUCATION AND HEALTH CARE AND JOB OP-
PORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE TO EVERY CITIZEN.

AND I BELIEVE WE MUST HELP ISRAEL DEFEND
THAT SOCIETY...AS WE CONTINUE TO BUILD OUR
OWN.

I KNEW BEFORE I LEFT FOR ISRAEL...THAT
IT WAS A LAND WITH ANCIENT PLACES WE LEARNED
ABOUT WHEN WE WERE CHILDREN...PLACES LIKE
JERUSALEM AND JAFFA AND NAZARETH.

I KNEW THAT IT WAS A LAND WHOSE HISTORY
AND SPIRITUAL TRADITION IS WOVEN INTO THE
FABRIC OF ALL OUR LIVES.

YET IN VISITING ISRAEL, I CAME TO UNDER-
STAND EVEN BETTER THAN BEFORE...THAT THIS
HERITAGE ALONE CANNOT EXPLAIN OUR CONCERN
FOR ISRAEL'S FATE.

NOR MUST WE CARE ABOUT ISRAEL SIMPLY
BECAUSE OF HER LOCATION IN A STRATEGIC PLACE
ON THE GLOBE.

THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL MATTERS TO ALL OF
US...BECAUSE HER VALUES MATTER -- VALUES
WHICH HAVE BEEN NOURISHED THROUGH AGES
OF AGONY AND PERSECUTION AND WAR.

THEY ARE VALUES OF LEARNING...OF FREE-
DOM...OF THE DIGNITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL...
AND OF PEACE.

THEY ARE VALUES WHICH DEFINE WHAT IT
MEANS TO BE CIVILIZED.

THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL KEEP THESE VALUES
AT THE CENTER OF THEIR LIVES.

LET ME TELL YOU OF A KIBBUTZ I VISITED ON
THE GOLAN HEIGHTS.

IT IS ONLY TWO YEARS OLD.

IT SITS ON THE EDGE OF A PERILOUS FRONTIER.

on the Golan Heights

IT CONTAINS SOME THIRTY YOUNG MEN AND
WOMEN...WHO WERE RAISED IN ISRAEL'S CITIES,
OR IN OTHER KIBBUTZIM WHICH THEIR PARENTS
AND GRANDPARENTS HAD A PART IN ESTABLISHING.

THEY ARE ENGAGED -- NOT IN PREPARING
FOR WAR -- BUT IN BUILDING LIVES FOR THEM-
SELVES...IN CULTIVATING THE DIFFICULT LAND...
IN SHAPING A NEW COMMUNITY WHERE PEOPLE

SHARE EQUALLY WITH ONE ANOTHER.

I ASKED THEM WHAT THEY DO FOR RECREATION -- AND THEY TOLD ME THEY GO TO LECTURES AND CONCERTS.

THEY TOLD ME THEY READ...AND THEY SHOWED ME THEIR ROOMS LINED WITH BOOKS.

THEY ARE THE SPIRIT OF ISRAEL -- A SPIRIT OF LOVE FOR COUNTRY...OF DEDICATION AND VITALITY...OF BUILDING A WHOLE SOCIETY.

IT IS FROM THIS SPIRIT THAT WE IN AMERICA CAN LEARN THE MOST.

I FOUND THIS SPIRIT WHEREVER I WENT --

AT THE WEIZMANN INSTITUTE...ON THE STREETS
OF JERUSALEM WITH TEDDY KOLLEK...AND IN THE
BOMB SHELTERS OF THE CHILDREN'S HOUSE AT
KIBBUTZ GESHER.

THERE WAS NO PROPAGANDA ON THE WALLS
OF THESE SHELTERS -- NOTHING TO TEACH THE
CHILDREN THAT THE SHELTERS WERE THERE BE-
CAUSE OF A WAR...OR BECAUSE THEY HAD HOS-
TILE NEIGHBORS.

ONE OF THE YOUNG FATHERS OF GESHER TOLD
ME WHY.

HE SAID THE PARENTS OF GESHER DO NOT WANT
THEIR CHILDREN TO GROW UP HATING THEIR

NEIGHBORS -- AND I COULD SEE THAT THESE
PARENTS HAVE DONE A REMARKABLE JOB.

I SAW THE PICTURES THEIR CHILDREN HAVE
DRAWN AND HUNG ON THE WALLS OF THESE VERY
SAME SHELTERS -- PICTURES WITH NO EXPLOSIVES
IN THEM...NO AIRPLANES OR TANKS...NO PEOPLE
WITH GUNS.

THEY ARE PICTURES OF PEACE -- OF THE
LAND AND OF THE THINGS THAT GROW ON THE
LAND...OF BIRDS IN THE SKY...AND OF PEOPLE
AT WORK OR AT REST.

I AM CONVINCED WE MUST DO ALL WE CAN
TO HELP MAKE THESE PICTURES COME TRUE.

FOR THEY ARE NOT ONLY CHILDREN'S
PICTURES.

THEY ARE ALSO THE PICTURES IN THE
MIND OF A MAN I SHALL NEVER FORGET -- DAVID
BEN GURION.

I SAW HIM IN HIS COTTAGE IN THE KIBBUTZ
OF S'DE BOKER IN THE NEGEV DESERT -- AND HE
WAS WEARING A TIE.

BUT HE IS TOO WARM AND VIBRANT A MAN TO
STAND ON FORMALITIES -- AND HE SPOKE WITH ME
OF MANY THINGS...NOT ONLY OF THE WORLD HE
HAD KNOWN...BUT ALSO OF THE WORLD HE HOPED
TO SEE.

WHAT WILL REMAIN WITH ME THE LONGEST --
AND WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU --
ARE THE COMMENTS HE MADE ABOUT JUDAISM.

JUDAISM, HE SAID, CAN BE SUMMARIZED
IN THREE SENTENCES:

THERE IS ONE GOD.

LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF.

LOVE THE TRUTH AND PEACE.

THESE ARE THE THOUGHTS HE WANTED TO
LEAVE WITH ME.

AND HOW RICH A GIFT THEY ARE...COMING
FROM A MAN WHO HAS KNOWN STRUGGLE AND CON-
FLICT...AND WHO HAS LED HIS PEOPLE IN THEIR

COURAGEOUS RISE FROM AN UNSPEAKABLE HOLO-
CAUST...TO THE REASSERTION OF THEIR DIGNITY
AND INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-DETERMINATION IN
ISRAEL.

TO MEET WITH BEN GURION WAS NOT ONLY
TO LOOK INTO THE PAST...BUT TO GLIMPSE WHAT
THE FUTURE COULD BE.

WILL THERE BE PEACE IN THAT FUTURE?

THERE MUST BE.

ISRAEL'S NEIGHBORS MUST RECOGNIZE THAT

ISRAEL IS HERE TO STAY.

THEY MUST RECOGNIZE -- AND SO MUST
OTHERS -- THAT THE UNITED STATES IS -- AND

WILL REMAIN -- COMMITTED TO ISRAEL'S
SECURITY.

I TOLD THE STUDENTS AT HEBREW UNI-
VERSITY I WOULD SAY THAT WHEN I WENT TO
CAIRO...AND THAT IS WHAT I DID SAY...BOTH
IN CAIRO AND IN MOSCOW.

I WAS STRUCK OVER AND OVER AGAIN -- IN
MY CONVERSATIONS WITH PRIME MINISTER MEIR --
BY HER CAPACITY TO SPEAK WITHOUT BITTERNESS
ABOUT ISRAEL'S NEIGHBORS.

AND NO ONE SPOKE TO ME WITH GREATER

UNDERSTANDING THAN GENERAL DAYAN...ABOUT
THE REFUGEE CAMPS IN GAZA AND ON THE WEST
BANK OF THE JORDAN.

BUT STRONG EMOTIONS DO EXIST...ON ALL
SIDES.

FEAR AND UNCERTAINTY DO AFFECT...ALL
THE PARTIES.

REAL AND LASTING PEACE WILL NOT BE
ACHIEVED...EASILY OR QUICKLY -- BUT IT MUST
REMAIN THE GOAL.

PEACE DEPENDS ON HONEST NEGOTIATIONS --

-- TO ESTABLISH SECURE AND RECOGNIZED
BOUNDARIES;

-- TO ENSURE THE RIGHT OF NAVIGATION
THROUGH INTERNATIONAL WATERWAYS IN THE
MIDDLE EAST;

-- TO SOLVE THE REFUGEE PROBLEM IN A
FAIR AND EQUITABLE MANNER.

IT IS NOT CLEAR WHAT THE FORMULA FOR
A SETTLEMENT WILL BE...BUT I AM CONVINCED
THAT THE ONLY FORMULA WHICH CAN LAY THE
FOUNDATION FOR PEACE WILL BE ONE WHICH

IS HAMMERED OUT BY THE PARTIES IMMEDIATELY
CONCERNED.

THAT IS WHY WE SHOULD DO WHAT WE CAN...
TO ENCOURAGE PROGRESS IN THE JARRING TALKS.

THERE WILL OF COURSE BE RISKS IN ANY EF-
FORT TO MAKE PEACE.

BUT I BELIEVE ISRAEL IS WILLING TO MAKE
THAT EFFORT.

THIS IS A NATION OF BRAVE MEN AND
WOMEN, WHO ARE WHAT THEY ARE BECAUSE THEY
HAVE TAKEN THEIR DESTINY INTO THEIR OWN

HANDS...AND DEFENDED THEIR HOMES WITH
THEIR OWN LIVES.

YET THEY ARE THE FIRST TO SAY THAT THEY
DO NOT STAND ALONE...AND THAT THEY WOULD
NOT BE WHERE THEY ARE TODAY WERE IT NOT FOR
THE UNTIRING HELP OF JEWISH PEOPLE ALL
OVER THE WORLD, ESPECIALLY IN THE UNITED
STATES.

MEN AND WOMEN LIKE YOURSELVES CAME
TO THIS COUNTRY...OR YOUR PARENTS CAME
HERE, AS MY FATHER DID FROM POLAND -- TO

ESCAPE REPRESSION...TO FIND OPPORTUNITY
AND FULFILLMENT FOR THEMSELVES AND FOR
THEIR FAMILIES.

ALL THIS YOU HAVE DONE AND MORE.

YOU HAVE MAINTAINED A SENSE OF COM-
MUNITY...OF CULTURE...AND OF PURPOSE.

BUT YOU HAVE DONE STILL MORE.

FOR YOU HAVE HELPED TO SUSTAIN THE
DREAM...AND TO SUPPORT THE STATE..OF
ISRAEL.

IT IS THAT GENEROSITY...THAT COMMITMENT
TO A CAUSE WHICH BRINGS US HERE TONIGHT.

AND WHAT IS THE CAUSE ?

IT IS -- IN BEN GURION'S WORDS -- THE
LOVE OF GOD...OF NEIGHBOR...OF TRUTH AND
PEACE.

THAT IS THE CAUSE OF ISRAEL.

IT IS A CAUSE ALL OF US MUST SUPPORT.

IT IS A CAUSE FROM WHICH ALL OF US CAN
LEARN.

IN THE LAST TWO YEARS, I HAVE TRAVELED TO
45 STATES...AND I HAVE LISTENED TO AMERICANS
OF EVERY DESCRIPTION.

BEYOND ALL THE SPECIAL GRIEVANCES AND
THE LOCAL PROBLEMS, I FOUND A DEEP CONCERN --

THAT WE SEEM TO HAVE LOST A SENSE OF DIREC-
TION...THAT PEOPLE HAVE GROWN SUSPICIOUS
AND FEARFUL OF EACH OTHER...THAT PARENTS
AND THEIR CHILDREN HAVE DRIFTED APART.

WE KNOW THIS NEED NOT BE.

TO VISIT ISRAEL IS TO KNOW THIS NEED
NOT BE.

THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL SHARE A COMMON
PURPOSE -- TO BUILD A WHOLE SOCIETY...WHERE
EVERY PERSON HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO GROW...
TO BECOME ALL THAT HE OR SHE IS CAPABLE OF

BEING.

THEY ARE WORKING TO ACHIEVE THAT PURPOSE TOGETHER.

NO MATTER WHAT THEIR ORIGINS OR THEIR BELIEFS, THEY RESPECT EACH OTHER...THEY CARE ABOUT EACH OTHER.

AND WE SHOULD TOO.
