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Remarks by Senator Edmund S. Muskie at the Roosevelt Day Dinner

Edmund S. Muskie

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Mayor Pete Flaherty *May* *Joe Cardo*
REMARKS BY SENATOR EDMUND S. MUSKIE *Prob Carey*

ROOSEVELT DAY DINNER

PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA ADA

WILLIAM PENN HOTEL BALLROOM, FEBRUARY 17, 1971

*VP agrees - his sense of direction on the golf course
is no better than it was last fall
& take it the Wilsons have succeeded in bringing ya back*

THE VICE PRESIDENT AND THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MAY NOT AGREE WITH ME, BUT I AM PROUD
TO BE IN THE COMPANY OF SOME AMERICAN PATRIOTS THIS EVENING.

FEBRUARY IS THE MONTH IN WHICH WE HONOR TWO OF OUR
NATIONAL HEROES, THE FATHER OF OUR COUNTRY AND THE PRESIDENT
WHO SAVED OUR NATION FROM A FATAL DIVISION. IT IS A MONTH
WHEN WE SHOULD LOOK: NOT TO OUR LAURELS, BUT TO THE MEANING
OF OUR COUNTRY; NOT TO OUR ACHIEVEMENTS, BUT TO OUR CHALLENGES;
AND NOT TO STANDARD DEFENSES OF THE AMERICAN SYSTEM, BUT
TO THE WAYS IN WHICH WE CAN MAKE THAT SYSTEM WORK FOR EACH
ONE OF US -- BECAUSE WE ALL SHARE THE HERITAGE OF WASHINGTON
AND LINCOLN.

A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY IS NOT A SOCIETY IN WHICH THERE
ARE NO DIFFERENCES ^{OF} OPINION. IT IS A SOCIETY IN WHICH DIFFERENCES
ARE SETTLED BY PEACEFUL MEANS AND WHERE CHANGES ARE MADE
THROUGH THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED.

DEMOCRACY IS NOT PERFECTION, BUT IT IS A SYSTEM IN
WHICH MEN AND WOMEN CAN WORK TOGETHER FOR A MORE PERFECT
SOCIETY.

DEMOCRACY IS NOT AN ABSTRACT PRINCIPLE, BUT A WAY
OF WORKING TOGETHER TO DEAL WITH THE DAY-TO-DAY NEEDS AND
ASPIRATIONS OF MEN AND WOMEN WHOSE LIVES AND HOPES MATTER
TO EACH ONE OF US.

DEMOCRACY IS NOT ONLY A SYSTEM FOR ORGANIZING THE GOVERNMENT, BUT A WAY OF LIBERATING THE BEST THAT IS IN US.

DEMOCRACY DOES NOT ALWAYS REACH THOSE IDEALS, BUT IT SHOULD ALWAYS CHALLENGE US TO TRY TO REACH THEM.

TWO WEEKS AGO, I HEARD SOMEONE SAY THAT "ASKING QUESTIONS IS NOT ENOUGH. THAT CAN BE A PHILOSOPHER'S GAME. WHEN YOU DON'T JUST STOP WITH QUESTIONS, BUT TRY TO FIND ANSWERS -- WHEN YOU TRY TO BE PART OF THE ANSWER YOURSELF -- YOU'VE BEGUN SERIOUS BUSINESS."

THESE ARE JOE DUFFEY'S WORDS.

THEY ARE THE WORDS BY WHICH THE ADA HAS LIVED SINCE ITS FORMATION.

YOU HAVE ASKED THE TOUGH QUESTIONS.

YOU HAVE WORKED AT BEING PART OF THE ANSWERS.

YOU HAVE PURSUED THE CAUSES OF OPPORTUNITY, OF THE DIGNITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL, OF FREEDOM AND OF PEACE.

IN THE BATTLE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS, IN THE DEFENSE OF CIVIL LIBERTIES, IN THE STRUGGLE TO DEVELOP A RESPONSIBLE FOREIGN POLICY -- IN ALL THESE EFFORTS, YOU HAVE ASSUMED A ROLE OF LEADERSHIP AND YOU HAVE FULFILLED THAT ROLE TIME AND TIME AGAIN.

IT IS NOT HARD FOR LIBERAL AMERICANS TO FIND TARGETS ABROAD WHICH MERIT THEIR ATTENTION AND THEIR UTMOST CONCERN -- THE TREATMENT OF JEWS IN THE SOVIET UNION, OF BLACKS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, OF ARTICULATE POLITICAL OPPONENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM.

WE MUST USE OUR INFLUENCE TO END THE OPRESSION OF
THE HUMAN SPIRIT IN ANY FORM.

BUT THERE IS ANOTHER TASK, AT TIMES A MORE DIFFICULT
AND CRITICAL AND COMPLEX TASK.

IT IS THE TASK OF MEETING AND OF MASTERING THE FORCES
AT HOME WHICH OPPRESS THE HUMAN SPIRIT -- THE FORCES OF
VIOLENCE, THE FORCES OF POVERTY, THE FORCES OF DISCRIMINATION,
THE FORCES OF FEAR.

THAT TASK IS AS IMPORTANT TODAY AS IT WAS WHEN THIS
ORGANIZATION WAS FOUNDED.

IT IS AS IMPORTANT TODAY AS IT WAS WHEN FRANKLIN
ROOSEVELT WAS FIRST INAUGURATED.

ROOSEVELT UNDERSTOOD WHAT THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION
DOES NOT SEEM TO UNDERSTAND -- THAT POLITICAL SLOGANS MEAN
NOTHING TO THE PEOPLE IF THEY MEAN NOTHING TO THOSE WHO UTTER
THEM.

FORTY YEARS AGO, AS HE PREPARED TO TAKE OFFICE, FRANKLIN
ROOSEVELT CONFRONTED A NATION WHICH HAD LOST ITS SPIRIT.
THERE HAD BEEN MORE THAN AN ECONOMIC COLLAPSE. THERE HAD
BEEN A FAILURE OF GOVERNMENT TO RESPOND TO THE PRESSING
NEEDS OF A MAJORITY OF ITS CITIZENS. THERE HAD BEEN AN EROSION
OF CONFIDENCE IN THE BELIEF THAT GOVERNMENT AND ITS LEADERS
COULD CONTROL THE FATE OF THE NATION.

IN HIS FIRST HUNDRED DAYS -- AND IN THE THOUSAND
DAYS THAT FOLLOWED -- ROOSEVELT'S CONQUEST OF FEAR AND HIS
BOLD IMAGINATION RESTORED THE CONFIDENCE OF THE AMERICAN
PEOPLE IN THEMSELVES AND IN THEIR GOVERNMENT. HE REAFFIRMED
THE FAITH THAT OUR NATION CAN RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF ITS

INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS.

IN A NATION AS LARGE AS OURS AND IN A TIME AS COMPLEX AS OURS, THE TRUST THAT PEOPLE PLACE IN THEIR LEADERS PROVIDES THE LIFEblood OF DEMOCRACY. WHEN CITIZENS BELIEVE THAT THE GOVERNMENT CANNOT OR WILL NOT RESPOND TO THEIR PROBLEMS - - WHEN THEY COME TO DOUBT THE GOALS AND PURPOSES OF AN ADMINISTRATION, THEN TRUST DISAPPEARS.

FOR TWO LONG YEARS, WE HAVE HEARD PROMISES ABOUT AN "ERA OF NEGOTIATIONS", ABOUT "A GENERATION OF PEACE." AND WHAT HAVE WE SEEN?

WE HAVE SEEN SOMETHING CALLED VIETNAMIZATION.

WE HAVE SEEN AN INCURSION INTO CAMBODIA WHOSE CONSEQUENCES WE HAVE YET TO MEASURE FULLY.

AND WE HAVE SEEN HOSTILITIES SPREAD INTO THE JUNGLES OF LAOS.

DOESN'T THIS ADMINISTRATION UNDERSTAND WHAT WILL RESTORE AMERICA'S TRUST IN HERSELF AND WHAT HER PEOPLE WANT?

THEY WANT AN END TO THE FIGHTING.

THEY WANT A CHANCE TO GET ON WITH REBUILDING THIS COUNTRY.

THEY WANT TO CHANGE THE CLIMATE OF VIOLENCE BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD.

AND IF THIS ADMINISTRATION WILL NOT UNDERSTAND THESE THINGS, THEN WE MUST MAKE CERTAIN THAT THE NEXT ADMINISTRATION WILL.

WE MUST MAKE CERTAIN THAT IT ALSO UNDERSTANDS WHAT

FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT UNDERSTOOD IN THE 1930'S -- THAT A STRONG AND GROWING ECONOMY IS ESSENTIAL TO A HEALTHY SOCIETY.

ROOSEVELT UNDERSTOOD WHAT THE LONG UNEMPLOYMENT LINES MEAN.

HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THEY MEAN MORE THAN PERCENTAGE POINTS.

HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THEY MEAN INSECURITY AND FRUSTRATION AND ANGER.

HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THEY MEAN MEN AND WOMEN DEPRIVED OF THE DIGNITY OF WORK.

HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THEY MEAN PEOPLE HOSTILE TOWARD EACH OTHER BECAUSE THEY ARE AFRAID SOMEONE ELSE MIGHT TAKE THEIR JOB.

HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THEY MEAN NOT ONLY POVERTY, BUT ALSO THE FEAR OF POVERTY.

AND HE NEVER TALKED ABOUT THE ECONOMY AS IF IT WERE A GAME OF FOOTBALL.

WHEN STRONG MEASURES WERE NEEDED, ROOSEVELT DID NOT ADOPT A GAME PLAN. HE ACTED TO PUT LIFE BACK INTO THE ECONOMY, TO CREATE JOBS, TO BUILD SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS.

THIS ADMINISTRATION HAS MUCH TO LEARN FROM HIS EXAMPLE.

~~X~~ I BELIEVE THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION SHOULD HAVE THE COURAGE TO ENDORSE AND NOT VETO THE CONCEPT OF PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYMENT.

~~W~~ I BELIEVE THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION SHOULD HAVE THE COURAGE TO DECLARE AN ECONOMIC CEASEFIRE IN THIS COUNTRY BETWEEN BUSINESS AND LABOR, AND TO ESTABLISH THE MECHANISM

PRICE AND WAGE REVIEW BOARD WHICH REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS ALIKE HAVE BEEN URGING FOR MONTHS.

~~X~~ I BELIEVE THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION SHOULD HAVE THE COURAGE TO ABANDON THE POLICY OF PASSING THE BUCK.

FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT TAUGHT US HOW EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT CAN BE WHEN IT IS MADE TO RESPOND.

WE MUST MAKE GOVERNMENT RESPOND AGAIN.

WE CANNOT DO SO SIMPLY BY DRAFTING NEW LAWS, OR BY SCATTERING GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES, OR BY MERGING OLD DEPARTMENTS AND GIVING THEM ALL NEW NAMES.

WE MUST DO SO BY INFUSING OUR GOVERNMENT WITH LEADERSHIP....WITH A SENSE OF PURPOSE AND DIRECTION,...
WITH MEN AND WOMEN WHO CARE ABOUT THE PEOPLE THEY SERVE.

~~X~~ THE GOVERNMENT MUST CARE ABOUT EQUALITY -- NOT ONLY EQUALITY IN LAW BUT ALSO, AS JOE RAUH SAYS, EQUALITY IN FACT.

~~X~~ THE GOVERNMENT MUST CARE ABOUT JUSTICE -- IN EDUCATION AND HOUSING AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES.

~~X~~ THE GOVERNMENT MUST CARE ABOUT FREEDOM -- FROM THE SHACKLES OF DISCRIMINATION, OF POOR HEALTH, OF INADEQUATE TRAINING -- AND FREEDOM FROM THE INVASION OF PRIVACY, BY THE GOVERNMENT OR ANYONE ELSE.

WHEN THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES CLAIMS THE POWER TO WIRETAP AND EAVESDROP ON PEOPLE WITHOUT WARRANTS, WITHOUT JUDICIAL AUTHORIZATION, WITHOUT ANY REQUIREMENT TO SHOW PROBABLE CAUSE --

WHEN THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT ASSERTS THE RIGHT TO OPEN AND INSPECT ALL FIRST-CLASS MAIL FROM ABROAD, NO MATTER TO WHOM IT IS ADDRESSED --

WHEN THE ARMY ADMITS IT HAS BEEN STOCKPILING
BACKGROUND MATERIAL ON AMERICAN CIVILIANS --

AND WHEN SOME OF THE HIGHEST OFFICIALS IN GOVERNMENT
PROCLAIM THE GUILT OF INDIVIDUALS DURING THE COURSE OF THEIR
TRIAL AND EVEN BEFORE INDICTMENT --

THEN SOMETHING IS WRONG IN AMERICA, AND WE KNOW IT.

THE WHITTLED AWAY OF PRIVACY BIT BY BIT IS WRONG --
AND THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION SHOULD KNOW IT.

MAKING JOKES ABOUT BEING OVERHEARD ON THE TELEPHONE
IS NO LAUGHING MATTER.

MAKING JOKES ABOUT BEING WATCHED AT A PEACE RALLY
IS NO LAUGHING MATTER.

IT IS NO JOKE....WHEN PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS MUST BE
CONSCIOUS OF THE POSSIBILITY -- EVEN THE ~~POSSIBILITY~~ ^{PROBABILITY} -- THAT
SOMEONE ELSE IS LISTENING TO THEIR PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS.

AFTER ALL, IT WAS MR. JUSTICE BRANDEIS WHO CALLED
PRIVACY " THE RIGHT MOST VALUED BY CIVILIZED MEN -- THE
RIGHT TO BE LEFT ALONE."

WE EXPECT THE GOVERNMENT TO RESPECT AND TO PROTECT
THAT RIGHT, AND WHEN IT DOES NOT OUR TRUST IN GOVERNMENT
ERODES -- OUR TRUST IN EACH OTHER ERODES.

THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION HAS MADE ONE THING PERFECTLY
CLEAR.

IT DOES NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT MEANT
BY THE FEAR OF FEAR ITSELF.

IT IS NO WONDER THAT THE PRESIDENT SHOULD SAY, IN
HIS STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS, THAT "AMERICANS ARE FED UP
WITH GOVERNMENT."

WHEN THE GOVERNMENT SHOWS DISTRUST IN THE PEOPLE,
THEN THE PEOPLE LOSE TRUST IN THE GOVERNMENT.

WHEN THE GOVERNMENT MAKES PEOPLE CONFUSED AND UNCERTAIN,
THEN THE PEOPLE LOSE CONFIDENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT.

WHEN THE GOVERNMENT IS LONG ON PROMISE BUT SHORT
ON PERFORMANCE, THEN THE PEOPLE LOSE FAITH IN THE GOVERNMENT.

AND WHAT ARE WE TO SAY WHEN WE HEAR THE PRESIDENT
MAY DECIDE TO CHANGE COURSE, TO RESPOND TO THE WILL OF THE
PEOPLE.

WE CAN SAY TRUTHFULLY THAT WE HOPE THE NEXT TWO YEARS
ARE DIFFERENT FROM THE LAST.

WE CAN SAY TRUTHFULLY THAT WE HOPE THIS ADMINISTRATION
CAN DO BETTER...BECAUSE THE PEOPLE OF THE COUNTRY DESERVE
BETTER.

AND WE CAN SAY WE WILL BELIEVE IT WHEN WE SEE IT.

WE WILL BELIEVE IT WHEN THIS ADMINISTRATION SHOWS
IT REALLY UNDERSTANDS WHAT FREEDOM IS ALL ABOUT IN THIS
COUNTRY.

FREEDOM FROM FEAR, FROM DISCRIMINATION, FROM POVERTY,
FROM VIOLENCE -- IS NO ONE'S PRIVILEGE.

IT IS EVERYONE'S RIGHT.

WE MUST REAFFIRM THAT RIGHT.

WE MUST GIVE SUBSTANCE TO THAT RIGHT.

WE MUST WORK TO GUARANTEE THAT RIGHT.

IN A TIME SUCH AS THIS THE WORDS OF FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT
ARE BOTH A WARNING AND A CHALLENGE: "NEVER BEFORE HAVE WE
HAD SO LITTLE TIME TO DO SO MUCH."

WE MUST TAKE THE TIME NOW -- AND FOR THE NEXT 21 MONTHS -- TO BUILD WHAT PETE FLAHERTY HAS BEEN BUILDING IN PITTSBURGH, WHAT MILTON SHAPP WILL BUILD IN PENNSYLVANIA, WHAT JOE DUFFEY HAS BEEN WORKING TO BUILD IN CONNECTICUT, WHAT FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT SHOWED US WE COULD BUILD IF WE ONLY HAVE THE WILL AND THE COURAGE TO DO SO.

WE MUST BUILD A NEW COALITION IN AMERICA TO RESTORE CONFIDENCE IN THE PROMISE OF THIS NATION AND TRUST AMONG ITS PEOPLE.

WE MUST BUILD A COALITION THAT CUTS ACROSS EVERY GEOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC AND RACIAL LINE -- A COALITION BASED ON THE HUMAN VALUES WE SHARE IN COMMON....OF OPPORTUNITY, OF THE DIGNITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL, OF FREEDOM AND OF PEACE. THESE ARE THE VALUES WHICH MUST UNITE AMERICA.

WE MUST BUILD A COALITION WHICH IS STRONG ENOUGH AND DETERMINED ENOUGH AND GREAT ENOUGH TO END THIS PERIOD OF AIMLESSNESS AND DESPAIR AND DISAPPOINTMENT -- AND TO END IT BY NOVEMBER 1972.

X THE TIMES CALL FOR LEADERSHIP, AND THERE IS NO LEADERSHIP.

X THE TIMES CALL FOR AN ADMINISTRATION WITH A SENSE OF PURPOSE, AND THERE IS NO PURPOSE.

X THE TIMES CALL FOR A POLITICS OF VISION, AND THERE IS NO VISION.

BUT IN A DEMOCRACY WHICH COULD PRODUCE A FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT, A HARRY TRUMAN, AND A JOHN KENNEDY -- WE KNOW WE ARE NEVER TOO FAR FROM THE POSSIBILITY OF A NEW BEGINNING.

THESE WORDS DEFINE WHAT I MEAN:!

"I BELIEVE WE ARE LOST HERE IN AMERICA, BUT I BELIEVE WE SHALL BE FOUND....I THINK THE TRUE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA IS BEFORE US. I THINK THE ^{TRUE} FULFILLMENT OF OUR SPIRIT, OF OUR PEOPLE, OF OUR MIGHTY AND IMMORTAL LAND, IS YET TO COME. I THINK THE TRUE DISCOVERY OF OUR OWN DEMOCRACY IS STILL BEFORE US. AND I THINK THAT ALL THESE THINGS ARE CERTAIN AS THE MORNING, AS INEVITABLE AS NOON. I THINK I SPEAK FOR MOST MEN LIVING WHEN I SAY THAT OUR AMERICA IS HERE, IS NOW, AND BECKONS ON BEFORE US, AND THAT THIS GLORIOUS ASSURANCE IS NOT ONLY OUR LIVING HOPE, BUT OUR DREAM TO BE ACCOMPLISHED.

THOMAS WOLFE EXPRESSED THE CHALLENGE MORE THAN THIRTY YEARS AGO.

IT IS A CHALLENGE WE MUST MEET WITH COMPASSION, WITH REASON, AND WITH HOPE.

AND WE MUST GO OUT TO MEET IT TOGETHER.

*****)