

Bates College

SCARAB

---

Speeches

Edmund S. Muskie Papers

---

4-5-1971

## Floor Statement on Expected Protest Demonstrations Against the War

Edmund S. Muskie

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scarab.bates.edu/msp>

---

### Recommended Citation

Muskie, Edmund S., "Floor Statement on Expected Protest Demonstrations Against the War" (1971). *Speeches*. 44.

<https://scarab.bates.edu/msp/44>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Edmund S. Muskie Papers at SCARAB. It has been accepted for inclusion in Speeches by an authorized administrator of SCARAB. For more information, please contact [batesscarab@bates.edu](mailto:batesscarab@bates.edu).



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 92<sup>d</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 117

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, APRIL 5, 1971

No. 48

## EXPECTED PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST THE WAR THIS SPRING

Mr. MUSKIE. Mr. President, on April 24 this city will again be the site for a demonstration against our military involvement in Indochina. Its planners intend that it be a peaceful and constructive expression of concern.

The right of citizens to gather and petition their Government is one which derives from the earliest years of our Nation's history.

It is a right which we, as Members of the Senate, must afford the greatest respect.

It is also a right which carries with it concurrent obligations:

For the demonstrators, to dissent peacefully and responsibly;

For us, as members of the Government to listen without prejudice to the voices of dissent.

These are minimal ground rules for democratic decisionmaking, and within the framework they provide, I endorse the efforts of those who are coming to Washington on April 24.

There is, this spring, much to cry out against:

The invasion of Laos;

The renewed and strengthened bombing of North Viet Nam;

Neglect of the talks in Paris;

A confusing and shifting rationale for developments in Indochina.

The result is a frustration that has now cut across divisions of age and occupation, region and party. Emotions run high, at times erupting in ways that are uncomfortable or dangerous.

But while such emotion can be deeply unsettling, it also has the potential for productive activity, for challenging the

best that is within our people to find solutions to such problems as the spreading war in Indochina.

This is what I hope for in the coming weeks:

That the demonstrators commit themselves to ending this war not just with words but with responsible political activism;

That they recognize the opportunity they have for influencing the course of our Nation, with reason as well as emotion;

And that they not be satisfied with a single day of dissent, but rather return to their communities and campuses to mobilize the political support for ending American involvement in the war political support waiting there to be expressed.

We must work for effective legislation requiring total withdrawal of our troops by the end of this year.

And this can be done, not in a day of protest, but in making constant and persistent efforts, all over the country to change our Indochina policies.

Mr. President, I welcome these expressions of concern for the opportunities they offer for citizen participation in the decisions of our Government.

I endorse and support this meeting on April 24 for it represents a commitment to an effective, impassioned, and peaceful protest against the war.

And I urge those who participate to carry their arguments on, beyond the days of demonstrations, into the political processes and institutions of our Government. For the success of their cause lies there.