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Press Release - Muskie Joins Fight to Save Fort Detrick

Edmund S. Muskie

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MUSKIE

Maine

(202) 225-5344

FOR RELEASE

IMMEDIATELY
January 4, 1971

MUSKIE JOINS FIGHT TO SAVE FORT DETRICK

Senator Edmund S. Muskie (D-Maine) has written Health, Education and Welfare Secretary Elliot L. Richardson urging his support for a proposal to convert Fort Detrick, Maryland, into a health research center.

In a letter mailed today, Senator Muskie asked Mr. Richardson "not to overlook the rare opportunity presented by the situation at Fort Detrick," where extensive facilities had been used for biological warfare research and development.

Senator Muskie cited two favorable arguments for the conversion plan:

"First -- the cost of such a conversion is quite small in comparison to the investment which will be lost if Fort Detrick is closed permanently." The National Institutes of Health has estimated that converting Fort Detrick would cost \$15 million. The equipment at Fort Detrick which would be mothballed is worth \$200 million.

"Second," Mr. Muskie said, "as you are well aware, we are rapidly approaching a crisis in all areas of our health system -- delivery, financing and research. Many noted members of the medical community have voiced the concern that if we continue to cut back in spending in health research, progress in the prevention and treatment of disease will come to a standstill.

"To allow this excellent and valuable facility to close in mid-1971, with no further plan for its use in the future," Senator Muskie added, "is to ignore both the staggering demands on the Federal budget and the serious need for ongoing study of medical problems which continue to plague us."

Mr. Muskie urged that HEW give serious consideration to this proposal as it completes work on its 1972 fiscal year budget request. He writes Secretary Richardson in support of a plan primarily backed by Senator Charles McC. Mathias (R-Maryland) and former Senator Joseph D. Tydings (D-Maryland).
