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For Lewiston Sun

THE MAJOR ISSUES OF 1970

By Senator Edmund S. Muskie

In 1970, America awoke to a new level of environmental consciousness. Citizens groups had been quietly organizing for years and fighting the small skirmishes; in 1970, their efforts coalesced at the local, state and national levels to help lawmakers pass stronger measures to fight pollution.

In the Congress, we worked to enact tougher water pollution control measures, especially to deal with oil spills -- and we achieved the 1970 Federal Water Quality Improvement Act.

We worked to create tougher air pollution standards, including a 1975 deadline for a virtually emission-free automobile -- and we achieved the 1970 Clean Air Amendments.

We worked to direct greater attention toward environmental factors in the development of new technology--and we mobilized more opposition than ever to development funds for the supersonic transport plane. We may yet win that fight, for Congress has only agreed to pay for the SST program for another three months.

The environmental revolution was fostered by the rising concern of Americans that they were running out of resources. They demanded a stop to the fouling of our air and water, the pounding of our eardrums from mounting noise levels, the abuse of our land through poor planning or no planning at all. The people organized and they made concern for the

environment an issue no politician could safely overlook. Now we must remain alert to determine that these laws are enforced and that the money needed to do the job is available.

While we made strides in our fight against pollution, we took a giant step backward in international relations with the invasion of Cambodia in May.

The President said he moved into Cambodia both to destroy enemy sanctuaries and arms caches and to show Russia, China and North Vietnam that the United States is not a "pitiful, helpless giant." The widening war in Cambodia shows we met only limited success on the first score. On the second point, both Moscow and Peking agreed to step up their assistance to Hanoi after our invasion. Today Peking exerts more, not less, influence in Indochina. When the President removed--even temporarily--the limitations on U.S. military operations and invaded the Cambodian sanctuaries, North Vietnam ended its self-restraint elsewhere.

No matter how much rice and how many weapons we captured, the overall effect of the invasion remains more important. The move escalated the war at a time when we were attempting to negotiate peace. Action on the battlefields in Cambodia undermined the words at the conference table in Paris.

President Nixon has moved toward withdrawing American combat troops from Vietnam. Yet I do not believe that his Vietnamization program moves toward the goal we all share: a complete end to the war. Vietnamization changes the

army doing the fighting; it does not stop the fighting. And it will not stop the fighting unless we reach a negotiated peace settlement for all parties.

Despite the underlying concern over the war, Vietnam was not a hotly debated issue in the fall election campaigns. The status of the economy -- the need for firmer leadership in combating unemployment and controlling spiralling wages and prices -- and local questions proved the more widely discussed issues of campaign '70.

Politically, the 1970 elections showed no trend, no overwhelming victory for either party. They did confirm that, by and large, Americans are taking a closer look at their candidates and demanding far more than rhetoric in return for their votes. They will no longer view smear campaigns unquestioningly. There was name-calling and deception of almost unprecedented volume in our elections last fall. Yet generally speaking the voters recognized these moves for just what they were: lies and nonsense.

Our great tasks in the year ahead lie in two areas: healing the divisions widened by the fall political campaign and opening the way to a full life for all Americans. The delivery of medical services to all people must be improved. ^{So} must the quality and availability of housing, the laws protecting women's rights and consumers' interests, the access to jobs which pay living wages and the nature of the welfare system aiding people denied that access or unable to take advantage of it. Only by confronting these problems -- together -- can our system survive and continue to offer to all its citizens the opportunities for which our forefathers established this land.