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Press Conference - Washington, D.C. - Remarks on Peaceful Demonstrations

Edmund S. Muskie

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Muskie, Edmund S., "Press Conference - Washington, D.C. - Remarks on Peaceful Demonstrations" (1971). *Congressional Records*. 76.

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ESI News conference May 5, 1971

In the statement which I released day before yesterday, I took issue with this kind of activity which provokes violence and which in some of its manifestations may intend illegal acts. I think that the attempt to close down this city is in many of its manifestations an attempt to perform ~~an~~ illegal acts. And I deplore that. I do not agree with it. And it was for this reason in order to distinguish between this effort and the earlier effort which was peaceful that I endorsed the earlier effort because I think that we have some responsibility for trying to channel dissent into peaceful, legal channels.

That's why I endorsed the earlier one. I knew this one was coming up I knew what its projected plans were and I could not agree with this one.
and
I could not approve of this ~~one~~ do not now.

politically
Q: Do you think these illegal acts are helpful to the Republican party ?

A: Well, one is tempted to believe this is the motivation behind some of the statements that are being made.

Q: Senator, do you have any assessment of (inaudible--but about picking up bystanders)?

A: Well, I think we need to learn as much as we can about that. I think that when we have a situation like this in which it is proposed that the nation's capital be closed down, that there is an obligation on the part of appropriate authorities to keep the city open and that in the process of doing so, there will be arrests because of the great numbers of persons involved I suppose it should have been anticipated that some of those arrests may have been of people who are innocent or people who may not have been performing illegal acts at the time. My impression is that on the whole the police conducted

themselves with admirable restraint. Yet it's also clear that the legal procedures that would permit a prompt processing of people who were arrested were not available and that they should be.