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Remarks by Senator Edmund S. Muskie at Testimonial Dinner for Senator Walter Mondale

Edmund S. Muskie

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REMARKS BY SENATOR EDMUND S. MUSKIE
AT TESTIMONIAL DINNER FOR SENATOR WALTER MONDALE

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA - JUNE 5, 1971

For Release Upon Delivery

I WAS HONORED TO RECEIVE AND HAPPY TO ACCEPT YOUR INVITATION TO PAY TRIBUTE TO SENATOR MONDALE. I HAVE THE GREATEST ADMIRATION AND RESPECT FOR HIM. SENATOR MONDALE IS ONE OF THE FEW PROMINENT AND POWERFUL DEMOCRATIC SENATORS WHO HAVE DISPLAYED THE COURAGE, THE BRILLIANCE, AND THE FORTITUDE NOT TO RUN FOR PRESIDENT.

SO I HAD TO BE HERE TONIGHT. AFTER ALL, SENATOR MONDALE IS ALSO ONE OF THE MEN OF REAL STATURE MINNESOTA HAS GIVEN TO THE NATION. AND WHEN I THINK OF GREATNESS AND MINNESOTA, THERE COMES TO MIND IMMEDIATELY ANOTHER MAN WHOSE NAME IS KNOWN FROM COAST TO COAST BY YOUNG AND OLD ALIKE. A MAN WHOSE CAREER HAS WON HIM THE LOYALTY AND APPLAUSE OF MILLIONS. A MAN WHO CAN ALWAYS BE COUNTED ON TO PLAY THE GAME FAIRLY AND SQUARELY AND WHO IS A CREDIT TO THE SOVEREIGN STATE OF MINNESOTA -- HARMON KILLEBREW.

FOURTH

A ~~THIRD~~ MINNESOTAN, BUT NOT NECESSARILY IN THAT ORDER, IS THE MAN WHO IS YOUR JUNIOR SENATOR -- HUBERT HUMPHREY. ONLY A YEAR AGO, THIS YOUNG MAN WAS A COLLEGE PROFESSOR AND NOW HE HAS RISEN TO THE UNITED STATES SENATE.....YET IT IS ALREADY CLEAR THAT HUBERT WILL BECOME A VOICE TO BE RECKONED WITH -- IF HE CAN OVERCOME HIS SHYNESS.

ESPECIALLY IN THESE DAYS OF DIPLOMATIC DETENTE, WHEN CHINA IS TALKING TO AMERICA, WHEN KOSYGIN IS TALKING TO TRUDEAU, WHEN HEATH IS TALKING TO POMPIDOU, WHEN EVERYONE SEEMS TO BE TALKING TO EVERYONE ELSE, WE NEED MEN LIKE HUBERT WHO CAN TALK . . . AND TALK . . . AND TALK . . . AND TALK.

IN 1968, HUBERT AND I SHARED THE SAME POLITICAL FATE. WE HAVE SINCE SHARED ROLES IN THE UNITED STATES SENATE. TONIGHT WE SHARE THE SAME PLATFORM. NOW IF HUBERT WOULD ONLY BE WILLING TO SHARE SOME OF HIS POLITICAL FINANCES . . .

IF HE DOESN'T, I MAY HAVE TO RUN FOR A DIFFERENT OFFICE. I THOUGHT ABOUT GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA. ^{IT IS A} ~~BUT THEN~~
~~I FOUND OUT I WASN'T ELIGIBLE. I WOULD BE~~
CHALLENGING IF NOT A TAXING JOB.

WHENEVER I SPEAK FROM THE SAME PLATFORM WITH SENATOR HUMPHREY -- AND I'VE LEARNED THIS FROM LONG EXPERIENCE -- I HAVE THE GNAWING FEELING THAT I SHOULD ASK FOR EQUAL TIME . . . I DID ASK THE GOVERNOR ABOUT THAT DURING DINNER. HE SAID IT JUST WASN'T POSSIBLE TO GIVE ME AS MUCH TIME AS HUBERT MIGHT TAKE -- BUT I COULD HAVE FORTY-FIVE MINUTES.

I PROMISE TO FINISH LONG BEFORE THAT.

AND I WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN BY TELLING YOU A LITTLE BIT ABOUT FRITZ MONDALE FROM THE PRESPECTIVE OF A SENATOR AND A FRIEND WHO SEES HIM EVERYDAY.

FRITZ MONDALE IS A THOUGHTFUL MAN, A TOUGH MAN, A MAN OF PRINCIPLE. HE KNOWS WHAT THE PEOPLE OF MINNESOTA REALLY WANT -- A SENATOR WITH THE COURAGE TO SPEAK AND VOTE HIS CONSCIENCE, A SENATOR TO LEAD AND NOT TO FOLLOW PUBLIC OPINION.

LIKE HIS COLLEAGUE HUBERT HUMPHREY, FRITZ MONDALE HAS BEEN THAT KIND OF SENATOR. HIS VOICE HAS CHALLENGED US TO MAKE AMERICA'S REALITY EQUAL TO AMERICA'S RHETORIC. AND NO VOICE HAS SPOKEN MORE HONESTLY AND FRANKLY THAN HIS IN THE STRUGGLE FOR RACIAL EQUALITY, NATIONAL PROSPERITY, AND NEW PRIORITIES.

TIME AND AGAIN, ~~FRITZ MONDALE~~^{HE} HAS STOOD ON THE FRONTIER OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REFORM IN AMERICA. TIME AND AGAIN, THE SENATE AND THE COUNTRY HAVE RUSHED TO CATCH UP WITH HIM.

MINNESOTA SHOULD BE PROUD OF FRITZ MONDALE -- PROUD OF WHAT HE HAS SAID AND DONE AND PROUD OF THE CHANCE TO SEND HIM BACK TO THE SENATE NEXT YEAR.

THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY NEEDS LEADERS LIKE HIM -- AND SO DOES THE COUNTRY. FOR BEYOND ALL THE SPECIFIC BILLS AND PROGRAMS HE CAN CLAIM, BEHIND HIS WORDS AND HIS VOTES, FRITZ MONDALE UNDERSTANDS A SIMPLE BUT VITAL TRUTH ABOUT AMERICA'S PASSAGE THROUGH THE 1970s. THE ONLY WAY TO BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER IN OUR NATION IS TO BRING PEOPLE FULLY INTO OUR NATIONAL LIFE.

IN THESE LAST, DIFFICULT YEARS, AMERICANS EVERYWHERE HAVE WORRIED ABOUT THE FUTURE AND THE FATE OF AMERICA. JUST OVER A DECADE AGO, IT SEEMS, WE REALLY WERE ONE PEOPLE AND ONE COUNTRY. BUT UNDER THE SURFACE CALM, THE CRISIS WAS ALREADY BUILDING. JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH CALLED OURS AN AFFLUENT SOCIETY -- BUT HE WARNED US THAT TENS OF MILLIONS WERE STILL TRAPPED IN POVERTY. PRESIDENT EISENHOWER TALKED ABOUT A JUST SOCIETY -- BUT HE CONCEDED THAT MILLIONS MORE SUFFERED PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION. COLLEGE STUDENTS WERE LABELLED THE SILENT GENERATION -- BUT YOU COULD HEAR THE FIRST MURMURS OF DISSENT ON CAMPUS AND AMONG THE YOUNG.

BY THE MIDDLE AND THE END OF THE 1960s, NO ONE NEEDED ANYONE'S HELP TO SEE AN IMPENDING CRISIS. THE CRISIS WAS COMPLETELY UPON US -- IN YOUR TOWN AND IN MINE -- AND EVEN WITH OUR OWN SONS AND DAUGHTERS.

THERE IS NO WAY TO GO BACK. THERE IS NO WAY TO RECAPTURE THE EARLIER TIME WHEN NATIONAL QUIET WAS MISTAKEN FOR NATIONAL UNITY, WHEN THE FAULTS AND FAILINGS OF THE AMERICAN CONDITION WERE SUBMERGED, VISIBLE ONLY TO THEIR VICTIMS AND MORE OR LESS TOLERATED BY THE REST OF US. THE BLACK AND THE YOUNG, THE POOR AND THE NEAR POOR SIMPLY WILL NOT ACCEPT A NEW ERA OF NEGLECT AND INSENSITIVITY. THEY KNOW IT WOULD BE WRONG FOR THEM -- AND WE SHOULD KNOW THAT IT WOULD BE WRONG FOR AMERICA.

IF WE CARE ABOUT OUR COUNTRY'S SURVIVAL AND ITS SOUL, OUR ONLY CHOICE IS A DIFFERENT KIND OF UNITY -- A UNITY OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE AN EQUAL VOICE AND A TRUE STAKE IN THE SYSTEM. OUR REAL AND URGENT TASK IS TO REFORM OUR SOCIETY IN ORDER TO LIVE TOGETHER THROUGH ALL THE YEARS TO COME.

WE MUST RESTORE OUR ECONOMY -- SO WORKERS WILL NO LONGER HAVE TO LOSE THEIR HOPE AND THEIR SELF-RESPECT IN WELFARE AND RELIEF LINES. YESTERDAY, WE ALL READ THAT UNEMPLOYMENT NOW EQUALS THE HIGHEST LEVEL IN THE LAST NINE YEARS. AND BEHIND THE NUMBERS AND THE PERCENTAGES, THERE ARE PEOPLE -- PEOPLE WHO MAY NOT MEET NEXT MONTH'S MORTGAGE PAYMENT AND PROBABLY HAVE NOTHING LEFT OF LAST YEAR'S SAVINGS.

THEIR FLIGHT REQUIRES IMMEDIATE AND SPECIFIC ACTION IN WASHINGTON. IT REQUIRES A TEMPORARY TAX CUT FOR LOWER AND MIDDLE INCOME AMERICANS AND TEMPORARY EXPENDITURE INCREASES IN MAJOR SOCIAL PROGRAMS. THE ADMINISTRATION'S ECONOMIC GAME PLAN HAS FAILED. IT HAS GIVEN US FEWER JOBS AND HIGHER PRICES. AND THE ANSWER IS NOT THE RECENT FEDERAL TAX BREAK FOR GIANT CORPORATIONS. THE ANSWER IS NOT THE "TRICKLE DOWN" THEORY OF ECONOMICS -- THAT IF ENOUGH WEALTHY PEOPLE BUY LIMOUSINES, THERE WILL BE MORE JOBS FOR CHAUFFEURS.

AND AFTER WE REBUILD PROSPERITY, THERE WILL STILL BE SO MUCH WORK TO DO. WE MUST MAKE OUR PROSPERITY EQUITABLE. DETERIORATED HOUSING AND DECLINING CITIES AND DEFICIENT SCHOOLS HAVE HURT AMERICANS OF EVERY RACE IN EVERY SECTION. THE SKYROCKETING COSTS OF MEDICAL CARE HAVE CONSIGNED THE POOR TO OFTEN INEFFICIENT AND INHUMAN PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES -- AND THEY HAVE LEFT THE MIDDLE CLASS CAUGHT SQUARELY IN THE MIDDLE -- TOO WELL-OFF TO QUALIFY FOR GOVERNMENT HELP -- TOO PRESSURED TO PAY FOR COMPREHENSIVE INSURANCE.

WE CANNOT SOLVE SUCH INJUSTICES MERELY BY TELLING AMERICANS TO SETTLE FOR THEM. WE MUST MAKE FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES -- REVENUE SHARING, WELFARE REFORM, GUARANTEED PUBLIC SERVICE JOBS, AND NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE. WE MUST PROTECT THE RIGHT OF MINORITIES TO SHARE IN THE RESOURCES OF OUR COUNTRY.

IT WILL TAKE TIME -- AND IT WILL COST MONEY. IT WILL DEPEND ON OUR WILLINGNESS TO DEFEND RACIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE AGAINST ENTRENCHED INTERESTS. AND IT WILL FAIL WITHOUT TAX REFORMS TO PUT THE BURDENS OF CHANGE WHERE THEY BELONG -- ON THE INDIVIDUALS AND INSTITUTIONS WHICH CAN AFFORD TO PAY THE BILL. PROGRESS FOR THE POOR FINANCED ON THE BACKS OF THE NEAR POOR WOULD DEFEAT ITS OWN PURPOSE.

WE CAN BEGIN TO REUNIFY AMERICA BY CREATING A SOCIETY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR AMERICANS OF EVERY RACE. BUT THERE IS A FINAL CRUCIAL STEP. WE MUST TURN OUR ENERGIES FROM THE TASKS OF DEATH ABROAD TO THE TASKS OF LIFE AT HOME. WE MUST END THE WAR IN VIETNAM BY THE END OF THE YEAR.

ONLY THEN, WILL THE YOUNG AND MILLIONS OF OTHERS BELIEVE AGAIN IN THE ABILITY OF OUR NATION TO RESPOND TO THE WILL OF OUR PEOPLE. ONLY THEN, CAN WE MUSTER THE WEALTH TO DO WHAT MUST BE DONE IN OUR OWN CITIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS. AND THE SAVINGS OF PEACE MUST GO TO THE WORK OF PEACE -- NOT TO PREPARATIONS FOR MORE WAR. A DEFENSE BUDGET BILLIONS OF DOLLARS TOO HIGH WILL NOT ENHANCE OUR SECURITY IN THE WORLD -- AND IT WILL SLOW OUR PROGRESS IN AMERICA.

IN THE LAST TWO YEARS, I HAVE TRAVELLED THIS COUNTRY AND TALKED TO ITS PEOPLE. AND IN A THOUSAND DIFFERENT WAYS, THEY HAVE BEEN TELLING ME WHAT FRITZ MONDALE HAS BEEN TELLING THE SENATE.

WE MUST GIVE EVERY CITIZEN OF AMERICA A CHANCE TO LIVE IN A PROSPEROUS ECONOMY AND A FAIR SOCIETY.

WE MUST CARE ABOUT THE DESPAIR AND THE FRUSTRATION WHICH STRETCHES FROM HARLEN TO ST. PAUL TO SEATTLE.

WE MUST HEAL OUR DIVISIONS AND UNIFY OUR PEOPLE.

THERE IS A THIN MARGIN BETWEEN THE FUTURE OF AMERICA AND THE FAILURE OF AMERICA. FRITZ MONDALE HAS BEEN FIGHTING TO WIDEN THAT MARGIN. HE HAS BEEN FIGHTING TO STRENGTHEN THE FRAGILE COMMON ENTERPRISE WE CALL OUR OWN COUNTRY.

I THINK HE WILL SUCCEED -- AND I THINK WE WILL SUCCEED.

I THINK WE WILL MAKE AMERICA GOOD ENOUGH TO REMAIN GREAT.

IN MINNESOTA AND IN THE NATION, WHATEVER WE CAN DO, AND WHATEVER WE DREAM WE CAN DO, WE MUST BEGIN NOW.

All Americans want America to be a place of hope. It cannot be a place of hope for any of us unless we make it a place of hope for each of us.