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Edmund S. Muskie

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Muskie, Edmund S., "Press Conference - Manchester, New Hampshire - Questions on Foreign Aid Vote" (1971). *Congressional Records*. 138.
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(First question apparently was asked before recorder was turned on)

A. Well, the result was a great shock and surprise to me--I hadn't realized that sentiment against the foreign aid program had crystallized in this way so quickly. And I think it's very unfortunate and yet I understand it. Foreign aid has always been a difficult program to sell, in part because its purposes have been misunderstood, in part because of the frustrations over some of its failures and shortcomings, and yet I think that basically we recognize that we have some responsibility for dealing with the poverty and the lack of development and opportunity that is a fact in so much of the world. And I think that I would say with respect to this vote that I'd be surprised if it was not changed in some way. And I think that the effect of the vote may be to begin a restructuring of the aid program, to conform to what many senators and others think should be new directions in this whole field. I would hope so. I hate to think that this means an end to any effort on our part as the world's richest country, to deal with the conditions of poverty and undevelopment in other parts of the world.

Q. Do you feel it was a direct result of the United Nations action earlier this week?

A. Oh, that was an aggravating circumstance that, you know, may have stimulated some senators to cast a protest vote. The whole

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atmosphere, you see, is negative with respect to foreign aid. For example, there's such a heavy emphasis in this bill on military assistance, and there are so many senators and others who feel that military assistance can lead to the kind of involvement that has bogged us down in South Vietnam. So they tend to resist that. And the military assistance program, I think, has done a great deal to undermine support for the foreign aid bill. The situation in India and Pakistan, where American arms are being used by the Pakistani authorities in East Pakistan to purposes of political repression control--that has undermined support for military assistance, and indirectly support for the entire foreign aid bill. So the whole(unclear) the U. N. vote is just one--another aggravating circumstance that was added.

(End of Conference)