

Bates College

SCARAB

Speeches

Edmund S. Muskie Papers

11-5-1971

Remarks by Senator Edmund S. Muskie at the Four Key State Party Dinner

Edmund S. Muskie

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scarab.bates.edu/msp>

Recommended Citation

Muskie, Edmund S., "Remarks by Senator Edmund S. Muskie at the Four Key State Party Dinner" (1971). *Speeches*. 179.

<https://scarab.bates.edu/msp/179>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Edmund S. Muskie Papers at SCARAB. It has been accepted for inclusion in Speeches by an authorized administrator of SCARAB. For more information, please contact batesscarab@bates.edu.

REMARKS BY SENATOR EDMUND S. MUSKIE

FOUR KEY STATE PARTY DINNER - CAMELBACK INN - PHOENIX, ARIZONA

8:30 P.M., FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1972

22

I'm delighted to be back in Arizona, where the air is so clear you can see for miles. In fact, from the top of Pine Mountain, I could almost see all the way to Miami Beach.

I am deeply grateful for the support that I have received here -- from my good friend and your great Congressman Mo Udall -- and from so many of your state legislators. I'm honored that they've made their commitment even before I've decided to announce. It reminds me of a story I heard long ago in Maine.

A chicken and a pig were walking down the road one day, and they saw some poor people sitting on a fence. "We really should try to do something to help those people," said the chicken, and the pig agreed. They had walked a little farther when the chicken suddenly stopped and turned to the pig: "I've got it!" he said. "I'll supply them with eggs and you supply them with bacon."

"Wait a minute," the pig declared. "You're talking about making a contribution, and you want me to make a total commitment."

To the Democrats of Arizona who have already made a total commitment, I promise that you won't get fried.

I always feel at home in a state which cares about natural beauty -- the secluded beauty of a forest lake in Maine. . . or the rugged beauty of the Grand Canyon here in Arizona.

And I believe it's important to protect the ecology of every state. . . from land developers who scar the sides of mountains, from copper mines which cough tons of filth into the air each year, and from all the other agents of environmental decline.

But I would like to speak with you now on another subject which is as important as any question we must face. And that subject is America's role in the world.

Some people say that Arizona is not the place for a foreign policy speech. You know better than that. You know that Arizona has a direct and personal stake in what America does abroad. You have sent your sons to fight and sometimes to die in rice fields half a world away. You have seen America divided by doubt and frustration. And you pay a tragic price -- in lives and dollars -- when foreign policy goes wrong.

It is our job to help our country put it right. . . and that is why we should talk about foreign policy tonight.

All of us believe that our country should be a leader on this planet. We are proud that world leadership is America's heritage. Of course, we could argue about what that means. But none of us could deny that by any definition, we are not living up to our hopes or our boasts. And we are not leading.

Look at the events of recent weeks.

Think about the U.N. decision on the representation of China. Not just because we lost -- though different tactics might have won. But because petty threats to retaliate have cost us so much more than a single vote ever could.

Think about the President's decision to explode a nuclear bomb tomorrow under the Alaskan island of Amchitka. Not just because we are wasting money on a senseless atomic test. But because we are risking environmental disaster and driving the people of Canada and Japan to question our sense and our judgment.

Think about the Senate's rejection of the foreign aid program. Not just because the vote surprised almost everyone. But because that decision, and the Administration's role in it, will lead other nations to question America's stability and maturity.

And think about the President's willingness to let our weapons enforce cruel repression in East Pakistan. Not just because we have seen the pictures of human tragedy. But because the richest country in the history of man -- the America every President has called decent and humane -- still stands silent in the face of continuing atrocity.

~~Finally, think about the 10% surcharge on imports. Not just because our trade balance is still headed for the first deficit in forty years. But because our friends in other nations are no longer certain that we are in the forefront of the fight for a prosperous world order.~~

In all of these decisions, and in so many more, our government has brought us more distrust and less respect.

Why have we come to this? Why is our leadership in jeopardy? Because the President acts in fits and starts. He plays for tomorrow's headlines and next year's election. And he is making American foreign policy the stepchild of American domestic politics.

That's what happened when the President announced his decision to visit Peking. I welcomed the news -- and I will support any attempt to seek new agreements with a traditional adversary. But I cannot support the political calculus behind his sudden revelation, which so deeply offended traditional allies and friends. By his failure to give Japan advance notice, the President humiliated the Japanese government in the eyes of the world and its own people. A passion for secrecy and the

theatrics of surprise may have turned a political profit here at home. But they have also inflicted terrible damage on our closest friend in Asia. And any President who can make such judgments deserves to be called a one-term President.

When he announced his decision to visit China, Richard Nixon took the right step in the wrong way. And he knows that he may have angered some of the people who elected him. He knows that there are people in this country who oppose negotiation with Communist nations -- the same people Senator Richard Nixon spoke for in the early years of the 1950's. Now the President is seeking to satisfy them by demonstrating his toughness in other areas.

We hear tough talk from the White House about the United Nations. We hear veiled threats to withdraw foreign aid from the countries who chose to exercise their sovereign right to make up their own minds about the China question. And so aid becomes a bargaining device. Food for Peace becomes a wedge to win votes in the U.N., instead of the way to feed a hungry child. And economic assistance becomes a clause in a diplomatic deal, instead of the means to build a better school.

No wonder foreign aid was voted down in the Senate -- by those who never supported aid and by those who refused to tolerate its further misuse.

I do not endorse that action-- and I have proposed steps to keep the best parts of the program moving. And at least we now have a chance to start using our aid the way we should have been using it all along. . . . to help nations grow and people prosper.

Has the Administration taken that chance? Not when the White House Press Secretary tells newsmen that the real reason for reviving a "balanced foreign aid program" is to strengthen the President's ability to negotiate with China and the Soviet Union. And not when the Secretary of State talks of aid in terms of American strategic interests in Asia.

Of course our strategic interests are important -- but did our leaders ever mention that we give aid to heal sickness, to feed children, and to build prosperity? That's the real purpose of foreign aid:

-- Not to lend America's name to torture and political imprisonment in Greece and in Brazil

-- Not to offer aircraft to South Africa's apartheid state. . . .

-- And not to supply the weapons to ravage East Pakistan.

And it is people who pay the price when we go wrong --

200,000 Bengalis, killed by forces armed with American weapons. . .

68,000 Pakistani refugees dead of cholera because India lacked the resources to save them. . .

The two million Pakistani children who face death, blindness, and retardation from malnutrition and vitamin A deficiencies.

Leadership means caring about people. It means the strength and the chance to make the world better than it is. How many countries have that chance?

We have work to do in this world. We must begin by ending our mistakes. And we must begin in Indochina.

Not by Vietnamization -- not by lifting the spectre of death from black and white shoulders, and placing it on yellow shoulders -- as if that could somehow bring more good, or more morality, to this war. To some officials, it does not seem to matter that the war will go on after we have left -- that other human beings will still die.

But it matters to the people who live there.

It matters to the men and women who struggle to find the words to make a peace in Paris.

It matters to the American people.

And I guarantee that it will matter to the government we elect in November of 1972.

We must end the killing in Vietnam. . . now.

We must free ourselves from the war in Indochina. . . and we must free the people of Indochina from that war.

And we must do more.

We must not cut one penny of our contribution to the United Nations.

We must give immediate assistance to the government of India to help the Pakistani refugees -- and we must cut off the military and economic assistance which supports West Pakistan's purge of the East.

We must bolster our alliance with Japan.

We must create new economic relationships to bring stability and prosperity to all nations.

And we must show the world what is right about freedom by ~~the power~~ of example, and not merely the weight of our arms.

But we can do nothing without the kind of leadership which will stand for policies because they are right, not just because they win votes. . . abroad or at home.

In the campaign ahead, our opportunity and our obligation is to remind our people of a few simple truths. . .

-- That America's proper role in the world is leadership, not gamesmanship. . .

-- That we shouldn't blame others for the economic problems which our own government has created. . .

-- And that people come first in foreign policy.

These are some of the things we must tell Americans. And we can start by telling ^{a certain} ~~some of the~~ newspaper here in Arizona.

We cannot accept more years of the foreign policy we have already seen --

More television film of starving Bengali children. . .

More reports of torture by governments propped up by our military aid. . .

More pictures of newly made graves in Arlington National Cemetery.

We are tired of what we see.

*We must make sure that is wrong right.
We must end the war in Vietnam for everyone...
and make a personal peace with ourselves.*

Existing in a world of nations is a difficult thing, given the distrust and animosity that pervades foreign relationships. Leading in that world is even harder -- because it imposes on the strongest nations the obligation to rise above national differences and to see and pursue the larger, less recognizable visions that should bind nations together. We are all, ultimately, trying to build a better world. We are all seeking to make this planet a decent place for every human being. And as we rethink our values in the months and years ahead, we should keep in mind why we have a foreign policy, why we pursue it, and why we care so much that other nations live in peace and freedom.

If we remember those things, then I believe we can regain our position as a leader in this world. . . a leader in what we do and what we symbolize, as well as in what we say.

In the end, whether we do that may make all the difference.

In tomorrow's world, peace and understanding will more than ever depend on wise and compassionate leadership -- the kind of leadership that pursues the goals of foreign policy by treating all nations -- not just the super powers -- as sovereign, independent states -- the kind of " leadership that puts principle above politics.

America can provide that leadership. In the end, whether we do may make all the difference.

#####