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Interview

SENATOR MUSKIE
INTERVIEW W/MITCHELL KRAUSE
Channel 13, New York City
February 11, 1970

MR. KRAUSE: -- You were upstaging the President on the environment issue and others have said that he was upstaging you. How do you see it?

SENATOR MUSKIE: Well, I think really this is an understandable period of jockeying, but in the long run it is going to be results that count and when we achieve results there will be plenty of credit to go around.

(Recording interruption)

MR. KRAUSE: In the very beginning tonight you said that there was a great deal of jockeying going on in this environment issue. Do you see the environment problem becoming so political that the results are likely to be watered down in the coming two years?

SENATOR MUSKIE: No, I don't think so, I think that this competition for credit, if you will, for identification with the issue ought to result in tougher knowledge, better knowledge, the _____ of more resources because I think that all of us understand that expectations of the American people in this field are rising, they are very high, and that results are going to be required, and demanded, so that rhetoric isn't

going to be enough.

MR. KRAUSE: But how do you avoid the inevitable charge that when you respond to the President's program and, in fact, when he without saying so, perhaps responds to the programs that you put forward, that this is mere politics.

SENATOR MUSKIE: Well, it's mere politics that these things are done. We don't have a non-political way, nor I -- do I think we want a non-political way because its competition and use of the political process that achieves results. If anything is going to achieve results in this country. Now, interesting as they say, for example, the President has now submitted his environmental program to Congress, I made my proposals about two weeks ago, it is amazing to the extent in which the two overlap. In otherwords, a limited number of ideas at any given time as to what needs to be done, there can't be any preemption of them so the fact they coincide in about -- well, eighty to ninety percent of the recommendations the President made yesterday means that we have got a chance to write some good laws.

MR. KRAUSE: Well, I was making a little comparison myself of the positions that you and the President have taken. There seems to be an indication that you want to do things on a little larger scale. Is this the way you would have put it,

this is over-simplification?

SENATOR MUSKIE: Yes, because the problem's that large. Now we agree on objectives. The President says that we ought to provide for _____ of untreated municipal wastes, and that we ought to do it over a period of programs over a three year period. Incidentally, he shortened that from five under the prod of our competition. But in any case, he -- four to five years is what we are talking about is the period other than which we ought to deal with this backlog. Now his estimate is that we can do it for 10 billion dollars, 4 billion dollars of Federal money.

My estimates which go back to 1966 are that it would take over 20 billion, probably close to 25 billion dollars to do this job. And if you agree on doing this, then the question of how much to commit to get it done is a factual question that I am sure we can resolve in large part in the hearing on the bill.

MR. KRAUSE: Is there any substantial opposition in the Congress to moving strongly forward on these environmental issues.

SENATOR MUSKIE: Not on the money question. I think now last year Congress made a breakthrough here. We appropriated 800 million dollars which is about four times the President's budget for waste treatment plants last year. This is indicative

of a Congressional lead of support for this kind of financial commitment. But you now get resistance to the tougher laws, the tougher enforcement procedures, the tougher standards laws and so on, this is where you get the foot dragging, it isn't as obvious, its more subtle and it can be raised on more unpublicized fronts. This is where we are going to have to strike.

MR. KRAUSE: Can you be a little more specific? Has there been lobbying pressure from private interest groups in area on this --

SENATOR MUSKIE: Well, for example, in _____ that's now in conference between the House and the Senate, The Water Quality Improvement Act, which both houses passed last year. The tougher area is the area of responsibility to cleaning up oil spill. From tankers, from off-shore drilling and from other oil installation. The Senate has said that we ought to have absolute liability. Yet everybody who carries this hazardous substance and spills it ought to be required to clean it up.

The House, their position has been that responsibility ought to be imposed only if there is a showing of negligence. Well, there is a division here and obviously the oil industry, the shipping industry would take sides, depending upon which

side it prefers. Now, another recommendation the President made that I made two weeks ago, is that we require new plants, new industries, when they are built to incorporate in their design the latest available technology to control air or water pollution. This is a new concept. It is going to impose heavy initial costs on new industry that locates in the country, so I expect we are going to get an argument over this.

I suspect that if the Congress insists that we can get the policy adopted. That the arguments are going to come at us, not in any direct way, but two people who may feel that the economics development programs in their areas might be inhibited by this sort of thing, or people feel that prospects for job opportunities might be inhibited by this sort of thing -- that's the kind of resistance we are likely to get.

MR. KRAUSE: Do you think that ~~the automobile~~ industry is moving as rapidly as it can, or should in the areas of pollution control?

SENATOR MUSKIE: I haven't felt that it has in the past. We passed legislature in 1965 which gave the President authority to set standard and I haven't felt until recently, at least, the industry has had a very great sense of urgency about this. Now they have moved, they have established standards and tougher

standards than they did initially, but now I am beginning to feel that the industry understands the level of public expectations here and I am beginning to feel some sense of response to the feeling of urgency that Americans have.

MR. KRAUSE: In a recent industry meeting it was suggested that where a pollution device was required it would raise the product by 5%, but that 5% would normally be passed on to the public and therefore the industry should go ahead. Should the public bear the burden -- the full burden of these pollution control advances that industry must make?

SENATOR MUSKIE: Well, the cost, of course, of pollution clean up is going to be reflected in consumer prices. Now whether or not given additional cost attributable to a given technological change to clean up pollution ought to be passed on would depend upon whether there are trade-offs. In other words, I think that in today's automobile we have a lot of comforts and conveniences or even trends that we don't need to have, and that we might well trade off some of that for pollution devices.

I think that there is a great feeling that we have too much power built into the modern automobile. We might trade off some of that, and so I think this would balance the values or conveniences and comforts that people think they have to

have in the automobile. You might be able to come up with an automobile that doesn't cost any more, might have a little less power, a little less capacity to kill people, little less capacity to pollute the atmosphere. This is the sort of trade off we need. I think we've got too much power into our cars.

MR. KRAUSE: You're not concerned then that the inflationary cycle would be fueled additionally by greater effort into the anti-pollution area.

SENATOR MUSKIE: It need not be. Every automobile is this _____ we get from these manufacturers represents trade offs, compromise between what they think the consumer wants and what they think the consumer will pay. Well, let's achieve the same kind of a balance throwing in this additional element of pollution clean-up and I think we can come up with an automobile that is satisfactory and won't cost any more.

MR. KRAUSE: Senator, let's get back to the oil for a moment. There has been a very serious oil spill off Nova Scotia just this week and the beaches at Martha's Vineyard have seen oil slick. What can be done in this particular area, aside from the question of liability? What about safety, what about the regulations that now exist in regard to these large tankers?

SENATOR MUSKIES: There is the question as to size of tankers that we ought to take a good look at. Now there is no area of public policy to control that at the present time and there couldn't be without international agreement. I suspect that we ought to ask the maritime countries of the world which just recently met to work out an agreement to deal with oil spills to consider the size of tankers, the construction of tankers, the safeguards that should be built into these. Standards of operation and maintenance of tankers. These sorts of things have to be looked at. I think also we ought to look at the operation of tankers and other vessels carrying oil to the point of navigation. The navigational safeguards and protections and aids.

We also need to do something about the technology of available to clean up spills. You know, we have no effective way, once a spill is discharged into the ocean to contain it, to surround it, to pick it up. To control its spread and dispersion. I am sure there is a great deal we can do in this respect that we haven't done. Now in all of the safeguards we know there are going to be spills and the industrial world can't get along without oil and tankers do move up and down the main coast, for example, up and down Eastern Seaboard Corridor -- Coast of the United States. We are going to have

to expect spills and I think what we need to do is make sure that we use technology to minimize the possibility, develop the technology to clean up spills when they occur and further impose strick liability on those responsible so that they will have the incentive to minimize the risk.

MR. KRAUSE: In your own state, of course, there has been the proposal that oil be brought in directly in order to reduce the cost of gasoline and oil products, and Governor Curtis has outlined certain safety precautions. Are you satisfied that this will not create an additional hazard that will be counter-productive to your state and for the NorthEast?

SENATOR MUSKIE: Well, you see, as occurs in every area of the country interested in economic growth, we need oil, we need fuel to run our industries, to heat our homes and institutions, there is no way to get along without it and we have no indigneous sources of fuel of any kind. We have to import it all and it all comes by water, or most of it does. So the question is, since it all leads to us by water anyway, whether or not we ought not to refine some of it when it arrives there under conditions that will lower the cost to our people. It comes to us anyway, you see, _____ are interested in a refinery which will lower these costs and make us competitors and lower the cost of living for our people.

Now we don't want to do it without proper safeguards. The Legislature which has just met in May, for example, adopted legislation imposing a tax on all oil that moves through Maine waters, the proceeds to be used to deal with accidents which occur as a result of spills. The governor's committee is concerning itself with the location of the refinery which (inaudible), so that the actual site of the refinery would be important as a safety measure.

The safeguards which must be built into the design of the refinery would be controlled by the Governor's committee. The rules for operating, the loading and unloading of oil there would be established in the safeguards established by the Governor's committee. These are the sorts of things that we think need to be done, but there is no way for New England to operate as a modern industrial area without oil.

MR. KRAUSE: Senator, how long do you see this environment crisis existing before it's brought under control, assuming that the Congress and the people take the necessary action?

SENATOR MUSKIE: Well, it will always be with us to a degree because all the water pollution and the other pollution is the product of an industrial society. It is the product of an affluent society. Air pollution, for example, is the product of the combustion which is an inevitable part of the

operation of an automobile, or the operation of a factory, or the heating of a home or institution.

Whatever you burn, and even if we use nuclear fuel or whatever we use as a fuel radiates emissions of some kind or other that pollutes the atmosphere. What we need to do is get it under control to minimize it unless we decide that we don't want an industrial society and we are going to go back to the caveman days.

MR. KRAUSE: Is it going to take five years to get it under control?

SENATOR MUSKIE: There are a lot of things we can do in five to ten years which will make a -- which will resolve a visible and a measurable improvement. If example, without passing another law -- _____ the laws now on the books, if we were to fully use all of the technology that is now available to control air pollution we could achieve a measurable improvement. A visible improvement.

MR. KRAUSE: I raise this question because many young people are very excited about environment now and this spring there will be a number of environment days, teach-ins and so forth in March and April. Do you feel the impatience of youth will tire of this problem of the environment if the kind of results that they would expect, let us say, of the

Vietman war are not achieved with the rapidity that they think they should be achieved?

SENATOR MUSKIE: I hope not, and what they ought to concentrate on in addition, of course, to national legislation and state legislation, are specific pollution problems in the areas of their concern. The areas where they live, the areas where they go to school, because by focusing on particular rivers that are dirty, or particular industries which are bad citizens in this respect, particular municipal or local citizen practices that contribute to the problem. They can actually see the results of their efforts. This is what I would advise they concentrate on. On the specific pollution problems in the environment to which they are experienced.

If they do this, then I think they can be encouraged by the results and generate some momentum for better results.

MR. KRAUSE: Do you think, as some have speculated, that the environmental action by youth has adversely affected the protest movement on the war in Vietnam? The kind of moratorium activities?

SENATOR MUSKIE: No, I don't think so. I think that --

MR. KRAUSE: (Inaudible)

SENATOR MUSKIE: -- there will be an outgrowth. That is --

I think that the concern about the war focuses the attention

of young people on _____ policies, and they, I think quite naturally, (inaudible) are still very much concerned about the war and the fact that they are less vocal than perhaps four, five months ago doesn't mean that they have lost interest, or that they have shifted their attention, or that they are not concerned with disengaging from the war. They are still very much concerned and if -- there for a long period you will see that interest become more vocalized. But I think they recognize that there are other things wrong with this world and with this society that they ought to concern themselves with now that they are involved, and the environment scene is the natural area of concern because this is going to affect their future more directly than almost anything else that we are doing now.

MR. KRAUSE: Let me talk a moment about pollution perhaps by rhetoric. The Vice President made a statement last night, and I quote, he said, "Let Senator Fulbright so prospecting for his future party leaders in the deserter's dens of Canada and Sweden, we Republicans shall look elsewhere." and then he added in his speech to a Republican fundraising dinner in St. Louis, "Indeed as for the deserters, malcontents, radicals and sundiary, the civil and the uncivil, the disobedient among our youth, I would rather swap the whole damned zoo for a single platoon of the kind of young Americans I saw in Vietnam."

What is your reaction to a statement like that from the Vice President?

SENATOR MUSKIE: Well, the Vice President seems to be the kind of a man who is most comfortable attacking his opposition when he has first distorted his opposition's position. He has built a strawman. He is the kind of a man who is a strong man -- ah, debator. I think he would feel _____ that under his country would go to service if he would focus the greater precision and greater understanding upon the substance of the points of view of those people who disagree with President Nixon's policies; his policies in Vietnam and elsewhere. These people are not traitors, they are patriots, they are concerned with the future of this country just as much as is the Vice President and to paint them with the brush of disloyalty in order to make them more vulnerable as targets I think demeans the office of the Vice Presidency, does no service to this country and doesn't really elevate his stature as a person. I have found in dealing with critics that the best way of those who disagree with me -- the best way to do so is to first try to understand what it is that is the substance of their concern and their disagreement. Most of the time, I find, that it has as much relevance to the real interests

of our country as any position that I take.

MR. KRAUSE: Aren't you concerned, though, with regard to the polls? They seem to imply that the Vice President's own popularity and the positions that he has espoused have increased in percentages over the past year. The public is responding to them.

SENATOR MUSKIE: Well, there are people who respond positively to the Vice President's point of view, and they obviously respond to the President's point of view, but I think it's difficult to take poles six months apart that may seem to be on similar questions and, you know, and compare them with any precision on specific public attitudes on specific issues. I think that the response to Vice President Agnew is -- comes from those who believe to stabilize the country and to quiet it is to impose a discipline, to repress dissent, to force people or to inhibit people or to even to intimidate people into stillifying their discontent.

Well, that -- that gives some people comfort at some times, but I feel in the long run that most Americans understand that the genius of our system is that it permits dissent, that it permits disagreement, that it encourages a diversity not only in background and occupation of interests, but in points of view as well, and that it's this diversity that

promotes the richness of American life. I think in the long run that's the instinct that will prevail whatever may be the current or temporary response to a more repressive attitude.

MR. KRAUSE: Let me ask you for a moment about Vietnam. Are we getting anywhere in the present policy with regard to Vietnam as far as getting out of Vietnam and ending the war?

SENATOR MUSKIE: Well, I have some real doubt about some aspects of the President's policy. I hope that his policy works. It certainly is moving in the direction of withdrawal of American troupes, but the questions I have are, one, I don't know what time frame the President's policies are working in.

(Inaudible) with respect to complete withdrawal. Certainly, I don't know whether or not he needs to withdraw to some level he is prepared to sustain then for an indefinite period, that isn't clear at this point.

Now, in terms of further withdrawal, the doubts I have about the effectiveness of this policy are these: one, we seem to have forgotten that the negotiations supposedly paving the way in Paris. Our chief negotiator, Pres -- Henry Cabot Lodge, resigned some weeks ago -- months ago now -- he has not been replaced. There seems to be no interest in replacing him, so we seem to have abandoned the negotiations in Paris, yet a year ago we left it on our part to achieve a settlement. Secondly, there is very little evidence that we are undertaking to press the Saigon government to move toward a political

arrangement with which it can live after we move.

Now, assume that we continue our withdrawal of troops. At some point, if the government there doesn't have a stable political base, the instability of the political situation may make it impossible for us to continue to withdraw, or if we continue to withdraw _____ chaos. Now, if we reach that kind of a situation we are going to bring a more difficult situation, so I have questions about these, but it's not my intent to harrass the President about these point, I raise them periodically in response to questions and from time to time because I have these doubts, but I hope that my doubts are not well founded. I hope that he succeeds in total withdrawal. I hope that it is completed within the next year; year and a half, and that we can leave behind us a situation which gives the South Vietnamese a reasonable chance to shape their own future.

MR. KRAUSE: Two quick political questions, Senator. How would you vote on the Carswell nomination when it comes up?

SENATOR MUSKIE: I am going to vote against him.

MR. KRASUE: And what about the Democratic National Committee? Senator Harris' replacement. Do you have a nominee, or you yourself, would you accept it if it were

offered to you?

SENATOR MUSKIE: No, I would not accept it. I think several names are under consideration and have been brought to my attention and I think I would be happy with any one of several, but at the moment I am concentrating on what the specifications ought to be. I think that the next Chairman ought to be a man who doesn't have any immediate political ambitions of his own, because I think we ought to concentrate on the party and I think that the party, if it is to be united, ought to feel that it is working behind the Chairman, who isn't, you know, pushing himself in any way. I think that the man chosen ought to have a sense of organization, I think he ought to have an instinct and ability to motivate people and to organize them to move in the organization directions that the party must lead.

I can think of two or three people who might fill this bill, but I think that at the moment I would not do themselves -- them any service if I were to mention their names.

MR. KRAUSE: Well, thank you very much for talking with us Senator Muskie of Maine.