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Speeches

Edmund S. Muskie Papers

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Remarks by Senator Edmund S. Muskie in Atlanta, Georgia

Edmund S. Muskie

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**DRAFT FOR INFORMAL REMARKS
SENATOR EDMUND S. MUSKIE
ATLANTA, GEORGIA
JANUARY 23, 1970**

**YESTERDAY, PRESIDENT NIXON DELIVERED HIS FIRST STATE
OF THE UNION MESSAGE. TODAY, WE ARE GETTING TOGETHER
TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE STATE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY.
AND WHAT WE DO ABOUT THE STATE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY
MAY HAVE A GREAT DEAL TO DO WITH THE STATE OF THE UNION
SEVERAL YEARS FROM NOW.**

**THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY NEEDS MONEY. LAST YEAR'S
CAMPAIGN WAS COSTLY, AND WE HAVE ENORMOUS DEBTS. WE
FACE A TOUGH CONGRESSIONAL ELECTION, THIS YEAR, AND AN
UPHILL BATTLE FOR THE PRESIDENCY TWO YEARS FROM NOW.**

**WE MUST PAY OFF THE DEBT AND WE MUST STRENGTHEN THE
CAPACITY OF THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE TO HELP
STATE AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS IN BUILDING TOWARD VIC-
TORY IN 1970 AND 1972.**

**THOSE VICTORIES ARE ESSENTIAL TO ANY MEANINGFUL
SHIFT IN NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND ANY EFFECTIVE COMMITMENT
TO THE TASK OF MAKING OUR COUNTRY WHOLE AGAIN. IT IS A
SAD TRUTH THAT THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION IS TALKING BIG
ON PRIORITIES, AND ACTING SMALL ON IMPLEMENTING. IT IS
ALSO A SAD TRUTH THAT THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION--LED BY
VICE PRESIDENT AGNEW AND ATTORNEY GENERAL MITCHELL--
SEEMS BENT ON DIVIDING THE COUNTRY, FOR WHATEVER POLITI-
CAL ADVANTAGE IT WILL BRING THEM.**

DEMOCRATS ARE NOT ALWAYS AGREED ON SPECIFIC PROGRAMS AND ISSUES. WE ARE SOMETIMES DEEPLY DIVIDED, AS ON THE ISSUE OF CIVIL RIGHTS. BUT IN THE LONG RUN, OUR COMMITMENT TO THE PROMISE OF AMERICA--THE RIGHT OF EVERY AMERICAN TO SHARE IN THE WEALTH OF THIS LAND AND TO ACHIEVE HIS OR HER POTENTIAL--BRINGS US TOGETHER AS A GREAT AND ENDURING PARTY.

WE HAVE A PROBLEM, TODAY, BECAUSE THERE ISN'T MUCH TIME LEFT IN THE LONG-RUN TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF PEACE, OF POVERTY, OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES, OF HOUSING, OF EDUCATION, OF CIVIL RIGHTS, OF CRIME AND VIOLENCE, AND OF OUR POLLUTED ENVIRONMENT. MANY OF OUR DIFFICULTIES IN 1968 WERE THE PRODUCT OF NATIONAL FRUSTRATION BECAUSE WE HAD NOT SOLVED THESE PROBLEMS IN THE FACE OF RISING EXPECTATIONS AND BECAUSE VOTERS WERE LOSING CONFIDENCE IN OUR

ABILITY TO SOLVE THEM.

THE COUNTRY HAS BEEN PATIENT WITH PRESIDENT NIXON,
WAITING FOR HIM TO PRODUCE RESULTS ON THE WAR IN VIET-
NAM, ON INFLATION, ON CRIME, ON EQUAL RIGHTS, AND ON
THE ENVIRONMENT. I AM SURE WE ALL WANT TO SEE HIM SUC-
CEED, BECAUSE THE FATE OF OUR COUNTRY IS INVOLVED. SO
FAR, THE RECORD HAS NOT BEEN ENCOURAGING.

IN VIETNAM OUR STRATEGY IS STILL UNCERTAIN AND THE
NEGOTIATIONS IN PARIS HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO FLOAT OFF INTO
LIMBO. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF A VIGOROUS COMMITMENT
TO END THE FIGHTING AND THE KILLING WITH A NEGOTIATED
SETTLEMENT--ONE WHICH WILL PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF THE
VIETNAMESE PEOPLE TO MAKE A FREE CHOICE OF THEIR OWN
GOVERNMENT.

THE PRESIDENT HAS TALKED ABOUT THE DANGERS OF INFLATION, AND HE HAS ATTACKED THE CONGRESS FOR APPROPRIATING TOO MUCH MONEY FOR HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE. IN THREATENING TO VETO THAT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, THE PRESIDENT HAS ACCUSED US OF WANTING TO SPEND \$1.3 BILLION TOO MUCH FOR SCHOOLS, EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND HEALTH FACILITIES. HE HASN'T TOLD US WHY THAT \$1.3 BILLION IS MORE INFLATIONARY THAN THE \$7.5 BILLION THE SENATE CUT FROM THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET REQUESTS.

THE \$1.3 BILLION IN EXTRA FUNDS WE HAVE APPROPRIATED FOR EDUCATION AND HEALTH AMOUNT TO JUST 20 PERCENT OF THE SAVINGS THE CONGRESS MADE IN THE PRESIDENT'S MILI-

TARY BUDGET , AND JUST ABOUT EQUAL WHAT WE CUT FROM
FOREIGN AID .

I AM NOT CONCERNED THAT THE PRESIDENT WANTS TO
FIGHT INFLATION. I AM CONCERNED THAT THE PRESIDENT
WANTS THE POOR, THE YOUNG, THE AGED, THE SICK, AND
THOSE WHO NEED HOUSING TO PAY THE COST OF FIGHTING
INFLATION. HE HAS NOT PROVIDED ANY EVIDENCE THAT HE IS
COMMITTED TO USE THE POWER OF HIS OFFICE TO RESTRAIN
THE PRICE SPIRAL, AND HE HAS NOT SHOWN ANY DISPOSITION
TO SHIFT NATIONAL PRIORITIES TO PROTECT US ON THE EDUCA-
TION AND HEALTH FRONTS.

THIS IS TRUE IN THE FIELD OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTEC-
TION, WHERE HIS STATE OF THE UNION MESSAGE WAS LONG

ON RHETORIC AND SHORT ON SPECIFICS. HE IMPLIED THAT HE WAS RECOMMENDING A \$10 BILLION FEDERAL PROGRAM OVER FIVE YEARS, BUT THE INFORMATION I HAVE INDICATES HE WANTS TO SPEND \$4 BILLION IN NINE YEARS.

THE PRESIDENT HAS SAID THAT HE WANTS TO BE JUDGED ON HIS PERFORMANCE, AND IT IS CLEAR FROM HIS STATE OF THE UNION MESSAGE THAT HE INTENDS TO COMPARE HIS PERFORMANCE WITH THAT OF THE KENNEDY-JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION. IN ADDITION, HE WANTS TO BLAME THE CONGRESS FOR ANY DELAYS IN COMING TO GRIPS WITH SUCH PROBLEMS.

HE ATTACKED THE CONGRESS FOR NOT ENACTING HIS CRIME BILLS, BUT NEGLECTED TO MENTION THAT HIS REQUESTS

WERE NOT SUBMITTED UNTIL LATE SPRING, 1969, AND IT
WAS NOT UNTIL A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO THAT THE ADMIN-
ISTRATION RELEASED FUNDS TO THE STATES UNDER THE SAFE
STREETS ACT. ALL OF US ARE CONCERNED THAT CRIME ROSE
ELEVEN PERCENT IN 1969. ALL OF US WANT TO LICK THE PROB-
LEM OF ORGANIZED CRIME AND REDUCE THE LEVEL OF VIO-
LENCE IN OUR SOCIETY. BUT WE WILL NOT REDUCE CRIME
BY RHETORICAL FLOURISHES IN WASHINGTON. WE WILL RE-
DUCE CRIME BY PUTTING THE RESOURCES OF OUR SOCIETY TO
WORK WHERE IT COUNTS, AT THE STATE AND COMMUNITY
LEVEL. AND THAT WILL TAKE A KIND OF COMMITMENT THE
PRESIDENT HAS YET TO DISPLAY.

BUILDING A WHOLE SOCIETY AND A BETTER SOCIETY

**CALLS FOR A COMMITMENT OF HEART, MIND, ENERGY AND
RESOURCES. THIS IS THE KIND OF COMMITMENT DEMOCRATS
UNDERSTAND. THAT IS WHY YOU AND I ARE HERE, TONIGHT,
MAKING A COMMITMENT TO REBUILD THE PARTY WHICH CAN
BUILD A WHOLE COUNTRY IN WHICH ALL OUR CITIZENS CAN
ACHIEVE THEIR OWN DESTINY.**

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