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Press Conference - Boston, Massachusetts - Endorsement of Tom Tessier and Hugh Gallen

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ESM

Well Gentlemen, I appreciate your interest in turning out this morning. I have called this conference primarily to introduce two young men who will be running the campaign in New Hampshire, and I'd like to present them first, before we get into anything more. First is Tom Tessier, a young lawyer from Manchester, who has been active in politics at the state-wide level for a number of years, served in Gov. King's administration, and brings with him a considerable political background from New Hampshire. And the other is Hugh Gallen, a young businessman from Littleton, New Hampshire who's also had considerable political experience. I'm delighted and proud to have both of them undertaking this very personal and very heavy political responsibility for me. If I decide to go into the.....or to seek the presidency next year, then New Hampshire is obviously important. I regard it as one of the most important primaries in the nation, first because it is the first primary. Secondly, because it has a long tradition of leading the nation in the political years, the presidential political years. And thirdly, because I'm a neighbor. And finally, because I realize that New Hampshire people are much like my people--they have to be shown that they need to support or ought to support a candidate. I've never known a candidate in my state, let alone any other state of northern New England who could take a result for granted. And so I plan to see a great deal of New Hampshire, to meet her people, and to do so in....at...sufficient, at sufficient length so they can get to know me. So I'm delighted to have Tom and Hugh here this morning and we are all available, I think, for your questions.

Q.

Senator, how well do you think you'll have to do in New Hampshire, a neighboring state and undoubtedly an odd-on favorite there anyhow, in order to come out with a victory if you do get into the New Hampshire primary. I'm....I would call it a political victory--would you have to get a majority of all those votes cast, or, or how....

ESM

Well, in every election I've ever....I've ever run in, the fellow who gets the most votes wins. I don't know of any other standard.

Q.

But if there's a....if you get a minority winner, let's say that four or five candidates who ran, Muskie only comes up with 35% of the votes.

ESM

The fellow who gets the most votes wins. You know, when I ran in Maine the first time for governor I got 54% of the vote. That was regarded as a landslide and I only had one opponent. New Hampshire--this will be my first election in New Hampshire, and I'll have not one opponent but several, so I don't oppose any rule except the necessity of getting more votes than anybody else. I think...any effort to... set any other standard is..is simply an artificial one.... that I don't think stands up against any test whatsoever

I might point out that a poll by the Manchester Union-Leader which was just reported, I think, Sunday, indicates that...I'm behind in Manchester. I think Mayor Yorty is given...what was the percentage, a little more than I was in Manchester, and Manchester is a third of the state. So the Union-Leader says that I'm behind already in Manchester.

Q. Do you believe the Union-Leader?

ESM Well, not very often.

Q. *low?* Senator, did you send word that Boston is likely to lose ten million dollars in projects for being in violation of the 1964 Civil Rights Act with regard to schools? I wonder if you could comment on the specific reasons you think, or how you feel about withholding funds for...to keep integration?

ESM Well, that's the law of the land. It was written with particular reference to, I suppose, the South, but it applies everywhere and all regions of the country are subject to it.

Q. Senator Muskie, with regard to the bill now in Washington regarding campaign deductions, I believe the President says he will veto the measure. How do you feel about this?

ESM Well, he left himself just a little bit of a loophole if I get....what he had to say correctly, and I hope he takes advantage of the loophole....for these reasons: In the first place, he has said that in his judgment this tax bill is vital to the economy of the country, and I would suppose that that is still his opinion; secondly, what is involved with respect to the dollar check-off provision is simply giving the voter and the taxpayer a choice of checking off a dollar of his tax money to finance the presidential campaign of the party of his choice. I think that if the President were to choose to veto the bill because of..of his objection to giving the taxpayer that choice, one can only conclude that he doesn't want the taxpayer to have a real choice next November. And it would seem to me that such an action on his part would demonstrate that...that he's more interested in political overkill than he is in the economic health of the country.

Q. Mr. Agnew stated that without this tax amendment the Democratic Party probably will...(unclear)

ESM Well, it'll be much more difficult, the arithmetic tells all of us that. I think it is said on fairly good authority that the Republican campaign chest is already at the level of forty million dollars. Resources.... nothing like resources of that magnitude are available to the Democratic Party. We are the party out-

of power. When the Democratic Party is in power, with a president in the White House, the tables might well be turned. So what we're talking about is not an instrument to serve the needs of one party, but a public policy to insure that in the years ahead, with the rapidly rising costs of campaigning, that exposure to the electorate, so that the electorate can have a real choice, is not wholly dependent on the relative ability of the parties to raise the necessary money. And when a party is out of power it becomes tremendously difficult to raise money in these amounts.

Q. Senator, what is the status of the.....1972 Democratic ...forces?

ESM I don't think we have one, at the moment.

Q. What's the status of Senator Muskie's forces?

ESM Well, it...it has improved in recent months so that, in terms of current operation we are, I think, running in the black, but the challenge of raising the money for the primaries is a very real one. Of course, let me make clear that the dollar check-off has nothing to do with the primary elections. Not everyone is aware of that, so I make that point. The dollar check-off applies only to the general election next fall. So whether or not its possible to put together the money to run the full primary course is an unanswered question as far as I'm concerned. We don't have that kind of a chest at this moment.

Q. To-get back to New Hampshire, Senator McGovern wants to debate the other Democratic candidates up there. What's your position ondebates in the primaries?

ESM Well, I think that's a reasonable proposition. It's something to be considered when all of the candidates have announced and become involved.

Q. Senator Muskie, do you believe a vice-presidential candidate should reflect geography, so if you're from the East should it be someone from another part of the country?

ESM I think geography will still be a factor, I'm sure, but I don't think it ought to be the kind of automatic factor it used to be in the past. I think...Americans, above all, would expect the Vice-president to represent continuity in policy and approach and philosophy, and I would think that that would be more important than geography, but if you can achieve the latter and still

achieve geographical balance, I think that can be important. There are all kinds of balances of course.

Q. Senator, were you pleased when Massachusetts retained the by gains primary vote for its delegates to the national convention?

ESM Well, it was the view of my advisors that we could live with either approach, and we didn't...we didn't get hung-up on either...either formula.

Q. What's your opinion of the Oregon system that you'll be operating under?

ESM Well, I'll tell you better after the Oregon primary, I guess. There are so many different formulas and approaches that these primaries have used that I really haven't had a chance to compare them all. We take the rules as we find them and try to live with them, and...I guess we will be in a better position to evaluate them ...when the primaries are over.

Q. Senator, do you think the President is making an error in not yet announcing that...we will provide Phantom jets to Israel?

ESM I think so. I think he made an...an error in the first instance in tying the supplying of jets...to the political and diplomatic questions because they should have been left separate. Having tied them together, then every time we propose to send another jet, we risk creating a diplomatic crisis and we should never have put ourselves in that position. And the second thing I....the second point I'd like to make is...by doing that we lifted pressure off Cairo and shifted it to Israel with respect to the territorial and border question, and undermined Israel's bargaining position. We should not have done that.

Q. Do you think summitry....might help improve relations between the United States and Cuba?

ESM It might, with proper preparation. I think that before we contemplate still a third summit we ought to wait and see what results follow from the two summits already scheduled. Well, I guess they're more than that--we have China, Moscow, Germany, Britain, France....we've got a...quite a few summits in the offing and we ought to see what comes of all of them before we venture into uncharted areas at the present time.

Q. Do you think its necessary for the President to be

holding these high-level conferences with Western allied leaders, prior to going to Red China?

ESM

Yes, he should have held a few before he took a couple of his recent initiatives, particularly his economic initiatives of....of August, when, unilaterally, the United States appeared to abandon its role of leadership in...in the free world with respect to monetary and trade matters, acted unilaterally to shift the burden of our then thirteen billion dollar balance of payments deficit to our trading partners. Their reaction was predictable....to make that shift would require that..that they absorb the impact in their internal economies. That has to do with jobs for their people, so understandably... unilateral action on our part, without any warning or advance consultation, has created diplomatic problems for us with our friends in the free world. And I think the President made a mistake there. With respect to Japan, specifically, he created problems not only in connection with his economic program of August, but also with respect to his trip to Peking. Japan is a very important friend and a great power on the edge of the Asian continent, and the President took both of these steps without consultation and created an internal political crisis for his good friend, and our good friend, Prime Minister Sato of Japan. We should not have done that, and I know of nothing in connection with the Peking initiative that couldn't have been done after consultation with Japan, let alone before. So what the President's now doing, with all these consultations, is to mend fences that he helped tear down in the last few weeks and months. I think he is to be faulted for that.

Q.

Senator, what do you think of the timing of the President's trip to China two weeks before the New Hampshire primary?

ESM

Well, it would have been worse if it had been on the day of the New Hampshire primary. I don't know whether he related the two or not. I understand that there was a leak from somewhere in the White House that the trip was going to be made early in March, and maybe because of that leak it was shifted a couple of days, I don't know. White Houses have been known to react in that way.

Q.

Senator, do you believe that a money bill that includes the campaign contribution factor--a veto of that money bill could be overcome in Congress?

ESM

Probably not if the...on the Senate--I can't speak for

the House because the House hasn't acted on it--but on the Senate side the Republicans have followed a pretty solid party line on it and they hold more than a third of the seats, so it would be difficult to override a veto. But it would seem to me that in terms of...of the President's credibility, in connection with his economic policy, that he would tend to undermine public confidence in that, and I would think he ought to hesitategreatly before he does it.

Q. Senator, columnist Joseph Kraft is a (unclear) welfare reform, revenue sharing and the economic plan (unclear) a sham. Would you agree with that appraisal?

ESM: Well, I'd put it this way, that...as with so many substantive proposals, the President advances these initiatives and then doesn't appear to follow through ...with any...real conviction or any great enthusiasm, or with adequate funding. He accepts these ideas, which seem to him to address themselves to real problems, but...so often they're half measures and there's no follow-through. That may be what Mr. Kraft had in mind... I haven't read the column. I don't miss many of his, but I don't happen to have read that column.

Q. Senator, more and more columnists are coming to the conclusion that Senator Kennedy is, in fact, holding open the option of becoming a candidate at a later date. Have you changed your mind on whether you think he might be a candidate?

ESM: No, I've known the Kennedys for a long time, and they've always struck me as men of their word and Senator Kennedy has said very clearly and plainly that he doesn't intend to be a candidate...and I take him at his word.

Q. Is it not strange to have a non-candidate so high in the polls?

ESM: Well, there are a lot of things about this business that can generate frustration...I have managed to put most of them behind me most of the time, although some mornings I get up and I can be pretty frustrated...but not about any particular thing.

Q. Senator Muskie, (unclear) now that the Manchester Union Leader has said what it has about Mayor Yorty, are you running scared?

ESM: No. It doesn't do any good to run scared...you know, when I'm tempted to feel under pressure, whether from

--more--

the Manchester Union Leader or from others who say unkind or critical things, I remind myself that I have an opportunity that's given to very few men in public life throughout American history. And even the chance, you know, to reach out for that opportunity is so unusual that I should not permit myself to be frustrated or feel under pressure. It's a great adventure, it's a great opportunity and despite the frustrations and the burdens, I...I embrace it with considerable relish and anticipation.

Q. Senator, (unclear) war powers legislation and then (unclear) to curb the President's war-making powers after a thirty-day initial (unclear). As a potential President, what do you think about having the war powers (unclear) after thirty days of (unclear)?

ESM: Well, I haven't seen any formula of words that...to which there's been agreement. I agree in principle that there ought to be a shift in the balance, from Presidential dominance that we've had in recent years to a sharing of the war powers in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of the United States. That formulation I agree with. But I don't know of any agreement...shared by any great number of Senators at least, on a new formulation, either in terms of a Constitutional amendment or...legislation.

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