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## Remarks by Senator Edmund S. Muskie at St. Vincent College

Edmund S. Muskie

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MAY 1, 1970

Riverdale, NY, MT. St. Vincent College -  
Remarks

V. nam

I am reminded, when I see an audience as attractive and attentive as this one, that Rudyard Kipling once wrote a somewhat intriguing poem entitled, "The Female of the Species".

In it, he may have tried to do the others of us justice, when he said:

"Man, a bear in most relations -- worm and savage otherwise, --

"Man propounds negotiations, Man accepts the compromise.

"Very rarely will he squarely push the logic of a fact

"To its ultimate conclusion in unmitigated act."

I suggest to you, in all seriousness, that the rapid events of recent weeks...first in Laos, and then in Cambodia...reflect the logical conclusion of a very

ugly fact...the fact of military force.

I come before you this evening then, as a man,  
in order to propound negotiations.

I do so as I see young people in this country more  
concerned with the freedom to escape, than with the  
freedom to become involved...more conscious of the  
liberty to oppose, than of the liberty to support...  
more familiar with the right to despair, than with the  
right to rejoice.

I believe the following points are cardinal:

First, that Vietnamization of the war in Vietnam  
is inexorably leading toward Vietnamization in Laos and  
in Cambodia. Only this time, the Vietnamization is  
being initiated from the other direction.

Second, that because Vietnamization is basically  
a strategy for continuing the fighting, it can not bring

peace to Vietnam, and it can not bring all our young men home.

Third, that Vietnamization and the consequent long-term absence of peace are unraveling the fabric of our own society.

Fourth, that a negotiated settlement is the only answer that makes sense in Southeast Asia, for those who live there and for the United States.

Since January 20, 1969, we have recorded the deaths of over 10,000 American servicemen, the wounding of 40,000 more, and the expenditure of another \$20 billion.

I am not trying to make a party issue out of Vietnam, for none of us are blameless.

But I am trying to make us all focus on the central reality of our time...that a negotiated settlement in Vietnam is as crucial to everyone's best interests now

as it was fifteen months ago...that a negotiated settlement in Vietnam requires the reasoned voice of an insistent majority, and not its silence...that a negotiated settlement in Vietnam demands not military, but political, courage...from the Vietnamese, and from us.

I have urged two proposals to help create the necessary climate for a negotiated settlement.

First, the appointment of a new high-level negotiator to fill the post which Ambassador Lodge vacated some five and one-half months ago.

Second, the development of a set of specific proposals which make negotiating sense.

It has now been some 165 days since Ambassador Lodge returned home. Our interim representative, Ambassador Habib, was the number three man on our delegation, first under Ambassadors Harriman and Vance,

and then under Ambassadors Lodge and Walsh. He is a most able career foreign service officer. But he is not a personal confidant of the President...and he does not possess the prestige and the authority needed to deal with the other side.

Both the North Vietnamese and the Provisional Revolutionary Government delegates outrank Ambassador Habib. They also outrank any member of the present delegation representing President Thieu. And they are not indifferent to matters of general/~~international~~ <sup>diplomatic</sup> courtesy.

This breach of protocol has crucial practical consequences. Our official delegation to the Paris peace talks has no recognized authority to talk about peace. And yet, there is nothing more important to talk about.

That is why I urge the immediate appointment by the President of a respected chief negotiator to represent us, and the strong suggestion by the President that President Thieu do likewise.

I do not suggest that our chief negotiator go to Paris ill-prepared or uncertain. It seems to me that he can and should go, ready to negotiate what is, in fact, negotiable.

This means that we not require the simultaneous resolution of all the details of a political settlement... that we not refuse to discuss our complete withdrawal of armed forces from Vietnam over a definite period of time...that we not reject the concept of a significant cease-fire arrangement.

It means that we be willing to reduce the level of violence to zero...that we be willing to help fashion

political institutions broadly representative of the entire population...that we be willing to let the Vietnamese shape their own destiny in their own land.

Bear in mind that the withdrawal alone of 150,000 men by May 1971 will not stop the killing. At the present casualty rate, six to seven thousand Americans alone will lose their lives in Vietnam during the next twelve months.

Bear in mind that withdrawal alone will not stop young men from being drafted and shipped to war.

While our troop level has been reduced by                   since January 1969,                   draftees were sent to Vietnam in these same fifteen months.

Bear in mind that withdrawal alone will not stop the enormous drain on our vital resources. The cost of equipping and training the South Vietnamese army



alone is estimated at another \$ over the next twelve months.

Withdrawal alone, then, is no answer at all. Instead, it raises serious questions as to whether we can ever emerge from the jungle.

Therefore, we must reestablish the highest level of representation at the talks in Paris...and the highest level of confidence in that representation, by presenting specific initiatives for a negotiated settlement.

Only by renewing the talks, can we hope to restore the peace and to reclaim ourselves.

Some miles from Paris, another delegation of Americans faces the urgent task of preventing global disaster tragedy.

Their success or failure at the SALT talks in

Vienna will depend, in great measure, on their authority and ability to seek a negotiated conclusion to the nuclear arms race.

I think it important that we understand three fundamental points:

First, that a situation now exists in which both we and the Soviet Union have sufficient nuclear armaments to deter each other from launching a successful nuclear attack.

Second, that a situation now exists in which both we and the Soviet Union are roughly equal in nuclear technology, and in the destructive power of deliverable nuclear warheads.

Third, that the further testing and deployment of offensive and defensive strategic weapons systems, by us and the Soviet Union, may render the first two points

Some years ago, Dr. ~~R~~. Robert Oppenheimer drew the picture of two scorpions, locked in a bottle, aware that a sting by either of them would mean the death of both of them. The question before us, then, is not how to accumulate more sting, but rather how to open the bottle.

That is why I have proposed that we offer to the Soviet Union an immediate and mutual six-month freeze <sup>both</sup> on the testing of multiple warhead missiles and the deployment of strategic offensive and defensive weapons systems.

I would offer this pause as an impetus to the talks in Vienna...as a bargain which leaves our mutual security intact...and as a very available bottle opener.

It is a negotiator's pause...for both sides to determine whether a continuing freeze is verifiable...

whether it makes sense in relation to other nuclear powers...and whether it can facilitate more complex and enduring agreements.

Without this pause, the chances of banning MIRV's and ABM's from our environment will fade, and with them, perhaps, the hopes of a long future.

In Paris and in Vienna, then, we have the opportunity, as men, to negotiate.

I believe we have a solemn obligation, as free and reasonable men, to exhibit the negotiating initiative, the negotiating credibility and the negotiating sense, of which we are capable.