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**Statement by Senator Edmund S. Muskie on Abortive P.O.W.
Rescue Mission to North Vietnam**

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Tuesday, November 24, 1970

STATEMENT BY SENATOR EDMUND S. MUSKIE
ON ABORTIVE P.O.W. RESCUE MISSION
TO NORTH VIETNAM
IN THE UNITED STATES SENATE

No one, with a shred of compassion, can remain unconcerned over the uncertain fate of American prisoners of war in North Vietnam.

No one, who believes in the humane treatment of prisoners of war, can be uncritical of the North Vietnamese government for its failure to abide by the Geneva convention.

But compassion for our men, and opposition to the policies and practices of the North Vietnamese, should not blind us to the follies of the Administration's latest military adventure. One need not question the motives of the President and the Secretary of Defense to question their judgment. One need not turn a deaf ear to the anguish of the families of American prisoners and of those missing in action to question the wisdom of the abortive raid.

I am troubled, Mr. President, that even a success in this instance would still have been a failure for hundreds of other prisoners. It would have been a failure because it would have further disrupted any chance of a negotiated settlement with North Vietnamese--the best way we can end the war, reduce the time Americans will have to fight and die in Indochina, and obtain the release of the brave Americans now held captive.

We do not need to have the President in the White House, or the Secretary of Defense in the Pentagon, trying to prove how tough they are and how ready they are to run risks, by sending courageous men on a valiant exercise in futility.

The world looks to the United States, not for sporadic demonstrations of military might and individual bravery, but for steady, firm and resolute demonstrations of the capacity to lead, to act with sound judgment, and to make a contribution to an early settlement of the war in Indochina.

That, Mr. President, is our real challenge and should be our prime objective. In my judgment, the incident which was described to us yesterday, was inconsistent with that objective.