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Remarks by Senator Edmund S. Muskie at the Mecklenburg County Democratic Rally

Edmund S. Muskie

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REMARKS BY SENATOR EDMUND S. MUSKIE
MECKLENBURG COUNTY DEMOCRATIC RALLY -- CHARLOTTE, N.C.

8:30 P.M., THURSDAY, NOV. 18, 1971

I'M PROUD TO BE BACK IN NORTH CAROLINA TONIGHT. I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE IN RALEIGH EARLIER IN THE DAY -- AND I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO THAT. BUT I WAS FORCED TO STAY IN WASHINGTON TO VOTE ON A VERY IMPORTANT AMENDMENT. THE DEMOCRATS IN THE SENATE WERE FIGHTING TO INSURE ALL AMERICANS A CHANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS. THE REPUBLICANS DISAGREE. THEY WANT TO KEEP THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM THE PROPERTY OF THE VERY WEALTHY AND THE INFLUENCE PEDDLERS -- THE FEW WHO CAN AFFORD TO CONTRIBUTE THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS TO A CANDIDATE.

I'M AGAINST THAT. I WANT TO SEE 1972 BECOME THE YEAR OF THE PEOPLE IN POLITICS. AND BECAUSE THE ISSUE WAS DECIDED BY ONLY A FEW VOTES, I HAD TO STAY BEHIND IN WASHINGTON AND CAST MINE. I APOLOGIZE TO THE PEOPLE OF RALEIGH WHO CAME TO HEAR ME TODAY. BUT I AM DELIGHTED TO BE IN CHARLOTTE TONIGHT -- TO INVITE THE GREAT STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA TO

REJOIN THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

IT'S ALWAYS A PLEASURE TO BE WITH MY GOOD FRIEND,
YOUR GREAT GOVERNOR, BOB SCOTT. AND WITH ~~YOUR STATE CHAIRMAN,~~
~~JOE HILES, AND~~ ALL THE NORTH CAROLINIANS WHO HAVE BEEN SO
GRACIOUS WITH THEIR SUPPORT, AND THEIR HOSPITALITY AND THEIR
ENCOURAGEMENT.

THERE SHOULD BE LITTLE MYSTERY ABOUT WHY I AM HERE.
NORTH CAROLINA HAS A NEW IMPORTANCE IN THE NATION'S POLITICS.
FOR YEARS, NORTH CAROLINIANS HAVE STOOD ASIDE WHILE OTHER STATES
HAVE TESTED THE CANDIDATES AND THE ISSUES. NOW THAT DAY IS PAST.
YOU ARE NO LONGER BYSTANDERS. YOU ARE NO LONGER SPECTATORS.
YOU ARE IN THE CENTER OF THE ACTION, AND THAT IS WHERE YOU
SHOULD BE.

IN THE LAST THREE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS NORTH
CAROLINA HAS VOTED FOR THE MAN WHO WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT OF
THE UNITED STATES.

SO IF THIS IS WHERE THE ACTION IS GOING TO BE, I
WANT TO BE IN THE THICK OF IT.

BUT YOU HAVE A GREATER RESPONSIBILITY. YOU MUST PASS JUDGMENT NEXT YEAR ON OUR NATIONAL LEADERSHIP. YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER THE RECORD OF THE PAST THREE YEARS IN WASHINGTON IS GOOD ENOUGH FOR THE COUNTRY AND GOOD ENOUGH FOR THE WORLD. THREE YEARS AGO, YOU WERE TOLD THAT IF YOU VOTED THE REPUBLICAN TICKET, YOU WOULD HAVE AN END TO INFLATION, AN END TO WAR, AN END TO THE PROBLEMS OF THE FARMS AND THE PROBLEMS OF THE CITIES, AN END TO THE DIVISION IN THIS COUNTRY.

THE PEOPLE OF THIS STATE BELIEVED WHAT THEY HEARD AND GAVE A PLURALITY TO THE REPUBLICAN TICKET.

AND TODAY WE ASK OURSELVES: HAS THIS ADMINISTRATION MADE GOOD ON THESE PROMISES? HAS OUR COUNTRY MADE PROGRESS . . . OR ARE THESE PROBLEMS GREATER TODAY THAN THEY WERE THEN?

INFLATION? THERE HAS BEEN MORE INFLATION THIS YEAR, AND LAST YEAR AS WELL, THAN AT ANY TIME IN THE LAST 20 YEARS.

UNEMPLOYMENT? ALMOST TWICE AS HIGH TODAY AS IT WAS WHEN THE REPUBLICANS TOOK OFFICE. WE ARE SO FAR BEHIND, THAT EVEN IF THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY WORKS PERFECTLY, EVEN IF IT ACHIEVES ALL ITS GOALS, WE WILL STILL HAVE AN UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURE 40 PER CENT WORSE THAN WHEN THEY TOOK OVER.

WELFARE? THE ONLY WELFARE THEY HAVE PUSHED HAS BEEN FOR THE WELFARE OF THE PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD, LOCKHEED AIRCRAFT AND THE CORPORATIONS AND UTILITIES THAT BENEFIT FROM THE WHITE HOUSE TAX CREDITS.

POLLUTION? WE PASSED A TOUGH BILL IN THE SENATE THAT WILL DO THE JOB. WE PASSED IT 86 TO NOTHING, AND NOW THE WHITE HOUSE IS TRYING TO EMASCULATE IT.

CRIME? WORSE THAN IT EVER WAS. THE PRESIDENT CALLED WASHINGTON THE "CRIME CAPITOL OF THE NATION" AND SAID HE WOULD BRING SAFETY TO THAT CITY. YET THERE HAVE BEEN MORE HOMICIDES IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON SO FAR THIS YEAR THAN IN ANY YEAR IN THAT CITY'S HISTORY.

PEACE? FORTY PER CENT OF THE DEATHS IN VIET NAM
HAVE TAKEN PLACE SINCE THE REPUBLICANS TOOK OFFICE. THERE
HAS NOT BEEN A WEEK--HARDLY A SINGLE DAY--WHEN AMERICAN
SOLDIERS HAVE NOT BEEN KILLED ON FOREIGN SOIL. AFTER THREE
LONG YEARS, WE STILL DO NOT KNOW WHEN PEACE AND SECURITY WILL
COME TO VIET NAM . . . OR TO THE MIDDLE EAST . . . OR TO OUR
OWN COUNTRY.

AND THAT HURTS US AROUND THE WORLD. WHY DO YOU
THINK WE SUFFERED SUCH A BITTER DEFEAT IN THE UNITED NATIONS
ON THE QUESTION OF CHINA, WHEN EVERY ONE OF OUR EUROPEAN
ALLIES FROM WORLD WAR II VOTED AGAINST US?

WHY DO WE SEE NEW PREPARATION FOR WAR IN THE MIDDLE
EAST?

WHY DOES THE WAR IN VIET NAM GO ON AND ON, WITHOUT
AN END IN SIGHT?

AND WHY DOES THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE GO TO THE
CHANCELLOR OF GERMANY INSTEAD OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED

STATES?

I'LL TELL YOU WHY: BECAUSE AMERICA HAS LOST THE MORAL LEADERSHIP OF THE FREE NATIONS OF THE WORLD. WE HAVE LOST OUR ABILITY TO INSPIRE.

FOR WHEN THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD SEE A COUNTRY THAT IS DIVIDED, THAT IS CONFUSED ABOUT ITS DIRECTION, THAT IS SOFT ECONOMICALLY; THAT HAS THE HIGHEST WELFARE RATE, THE HIGHEST UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, THE HIGHEST CRIME RATE AND THE BIGGEST DRUG PROBLEM OF ANY INDUSTRIALIZED NATION IN THE FREE WORLD--WHY SHOULD THEY WANT TO FOLLOW OUR EXAMPLE? WHY SHOULD THEY DREAM THE AMERICAN DREAM IF IT LOOKS LIKE A NIGHTMARE TO THEM?

AND AS I TRAVEL AMERICA AND TALK TO OUR PEOPLE, AND SEE WHAT THIS IS DOING TO THE COUNTRY WE LOVE, I CANNOT HELP BUT ASK MYSELF: WHERE IS THE JOY . . . WHERE IS THE SPIRIT . . . WHERE IS THE PRIDE IN AMERICAN LIFE? WHAT CAN WE DO TO RESTORE IT? WHAT CAN WE DO TO INSPIRE AMERICANS

AND MAKE THEM BELIEVE?

WE HEAR PROMISES FROM WASHINGTON. WE HAVE HEARD THESE PROMISES FOR THREE LONG YEARS. THIS GOVERNMENT COULD BE DESCRIBED AS A PYRAMID OF PROMISES, STANDING ON ITS TIP.

THE PRESIDENT SAID LAST WEEK THAT HIS NEW ECONOMIC POLICIES WOULD CUT INFLATION IN HALF BY NEXT SUMMER. THIS WAS THE SAME KIND OF PROMISE HE MADE IN 1969 IN HIS ECONOMIC MESSAGE. IT WAS THE SAME PROMISE HE MADE IN 1970. IT WAS THE SAME PROMISE HE MADE IN HIS SPEECH TO THE U. S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE LAST APRIL. YET EACH TIME HE PROMISED STABILITY, THE PACE OF INFLATION INCREASED.

IS ANYONE REALLY LISTENING? DOES ANYONE BELIEVE WHAT THE GOVERNMENT SAYS ANYMORE? HAVE WE SO DEBASED OUR PUBLIC DIALOGUE THAT WE NO LONGER EVEN HOPE FOR THE TRUTH?

WE CANNOT FUNCTION THAT WAY. WE CANNOT RUN A COUNTRY THAT WAY. WITHOUT TRUTH THERE CAN BE NO LEADERSHIP. WITHOUT LEADERSHIP THERE CAN BE NO PROGRESS. WITHOUT PROGRESS,

AMERICA DOESN'T MEAN ANYTHING.

SO ONE OF THE REASONS WE WANT TO WIN THIS ELECTION
IS SO THE NEXT PRESIDENT CAN BE BELIEVED.

I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I WANT TO HEAR A PRESIDENT SAY:

I WANT TO HEAR HIM SAY, JUST ONCE, THAT IT WAS A
MISTAKE TO SEND AMERICAN TROOPS INTO VIETNAM.

I WANT TO HEAR HIM SAY THAT THE KIND OF BILL THE
WHITE HOUSE WILL SUPPORT IN THE FIELD OF WATER POLLUTION IS
THE KIND OF BILL THE PEOPLE WANT, NOT THE KIND THE POLLUTERS
WANT.

AND I WANT TO HEAR HIM SAY WE NO LONGER HAVE TO
PIT SECTION AGAINST SECTION AND REGION AGAINST REGION,
BECAUSE THERE IS A PLACE IN THIS LAND OF OURS FOR EVERYONE
TO LIVE AND WORK AND GROW, REGARDLESS OF RACE, REGARDLESS
OF RELIGION, REGARDLESS OF REGION.

SO OUR CHALLENGE NEXT YEAR, AND IN THE YEARS TO
COME, IS NOTHING LESS THAN TO RESTORE THE PRESTIGE OF THE

UNITED STATES AND RESTORE THE CONFIDENCE OF ITS PEOPLE.

CONFIDENCE IN THE DOLLAR. CONFIDENCE IN THE ECONOMY.

CONFIDENCE IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS. CONFIDENCE IN ONE

ANOTHER. AND ABOVE ALL, CONFIDENCE OF THE PEOPLE THAT THE

GOVERNMENT IS ON THEIR SIDE.

I LOVE THIS COUNTRY. I WANT IT TO PROSPER AND

GROW. I WANT IT TO BE CLEAN AND BEAUTIFUL AND SURE OF ITSELF.

IF I SEEK THE PRESIDENCY, AND BY THE GRACE OF GOD

I WIN IT, THERE ARE CERTAIN THINGS I WANT TO DO:

I WANT TO BRING EVERY AMERICAN BOY BACK FROM VIET

NAM, AND WHEN THEY COME HOME I WANT TO GREET THEM AT THE

DOCK AND SAY: "WELCOME HOME".

I WANT TO HELP RESTORE OUR NATIONAL PRIDE BEFORE

OUR ANNIVERSARY IN 1976.

I WANT TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR AMERICAN FAMILIES

TO PLAN AND DREAM AGAIN, ABOUT A HOME, ABOUT A FUTURE,

BECAUSE THE HARD TIMES OF INFLATION AND RECESSION ARE BEHIND

THEM.

I WANT TO BUILD A MAJORITY, NOT BY PLAYING OFF ONE GROUP OF AMERICANS AGAINST ANOTHER, NOT BY SPLITTING OFF THE SOUTH AGAINST THE NORTH; BUT BY PERSUADING ALL AMERICANS THAT THEY CAN PROSPER TOGETHER.

AND I WANT TO PROVE THERE CAN BE CONVICTION AND CONCERN AND MORAL LEADERSHIP IN THE OFFICE OF PRESIDENT ONCE AGAIN.

WE HAVE A LOT OF CATCHING UP TO DO, TO LIVE UP TO THE AMERICAN DREAM. BUT WITH YOUR HELP WE CAN DO IT. AS A GREAT AMERICAN FROM NEW ENGLAND, HENRY DAVID THOREAU ONCE SAID, "IF WE ADVANCE CONFIDENTLY IN THE DIRECTION OF OUR DREAMS, WE WILL MEET WITH SUCCESS GREATER THAN WE HAVE EVER KNOWN."