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Speeches

Edmund S. Muskie Papers

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Remarks by Senator Edmund S. Muskie at Niles West High School

Edmund S. Muskie

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For release 8:00 P.M.

REMARKS BY SENATOR EDMUND S. MUSKIE
NILES WEST HIGH SCHOOL - SKOKIE, ILLINOIS
7:45 P.M., FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1972

I COME TO ILLINOIS AS A CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT OF
THE UNITED STATES.

AND I KNOW THIS STATE HAS A SPECIAL IMPORTANCE
IN PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS.

IT WAS ILLINOIS THAT WON THE PRESIDENCY FOR HARRY
TRUMAN IN 1948.

IT WAS ILLINOIS THAT ELECTED JOHN KENNEDY IN
1960.

AND IT WAS ILLINOIS THAT ELECTED RICHARD NIXON IN 1968.

WELL, TWO OUT OF THREE ISN'T BAD.

AND BESIDES, I HAVE A FEELING THAT ILLINOIS IS GOING
TO IMPROVE THAT RECORD. YOU MAY HAVE GIVEN RICHARD NIXON
WHITE HOUSE IN 1968, BUT YOU ARE GOING TO TAKE IT AWAY
FROM HIM IN 1972.

IT WON'T BE AN EASY ELECTION. IT NEVER IS FOR THE
DEMOCRATIC PARTY. THE REPUBLICANS HAVE THE MONEY AND MOST
OF THE NEWSPAPERS AND THE POWER OF THE WHITE HOUSE. ALL WE
HAVE IS THE ISSUES AND THE PEOPLE. BUT IF WE CAN GET THE
ISSUES TO THE PEOPLE AND THE PEOPLE TO THE POLLS, WE CAN
HAVE A GREAT VICTORY IN NOVEMBER.

MANY OF YOU, IF YOU ARE LIKE ME, HAD PARENTS WHO CAME
TO THIS COUNTRY IN PURSUIT OF THE DREAM THAT BECAME AMERICA.

THEY CAME TO FIND PEACE. THEY CAME TO FIND ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY. THEY CAME TO FIND LIBERTY.

AND THEY WORKED TO BUILD A NATION THAT WOULD MAKE
THOSE DREAMS COME TRUE. WHEN WE SUMMARIZE THE ISSUES OF
THIS CAMPAIGN, THEY ALL COME DOWN TO THESE DESIRES. TODAY
WE NEED A NEW BEGINNING ON AN OLD DREAM. A NEW BEGINNING
NOT JUST FOR OUR COUNTRY AND OUR FAMILIES BUT FOR OUR FAITH
AND TRUST IN ONE ANOTHER.

ABOVE ALL, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WANT AN END TO THE WAR
IN VIETNAM WITHOUT DELAY.

AS THEY PERCEIVE OUR NATIONAL INTEREST, IT REQUIRES
THAT WE STOP THE BOMBING AND THE KILLING AND THE DIVISION
THEY HAVE CAUSED HERE AT HOME.

OUR OVERRIDING PURPOSE TODAY MUST BE TO WITHDRAW EVERY
SOLDIER, EVERY SAILOR, AND EVERY AIRMAN FROM INDOCHINA,
DEPENDENT ONLY ON THE RELEASE OF OUR PRISONERS AND THE SAFETY
OF OUR TROOPS AS THEY LEAVE. AND WE MUST URGE THE GOVERNMENT
IN SAIGON TO MAKE A POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION WITH ALL THE
ELEMENTS OF THEIR SOCIETY. WITHOUT SUCH AN ACCOMMODATION,
THE WAR CANNOT BE ENDED. AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WILL NOT
SUPPORT AN INDEFINITE WAR.

YET THE ADMINISTRATION SUGGESTS ANOTHER WAY -- A FAR
MORE COMPLICATED AND UNCERTAIN WAY -- AND THEY HAVE ATTACKED
ME FOR RAISING MY VOICE IN CRITICISM. I HAVE BEEN ATTACKED
BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE, THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY,
THE REPUBLICAN LEADER OF THE SENATE, THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL
CHAIRMAN AND ASSORTED REPUBLICAN SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN.

THIS IS NOTHING NEW. FOR YEARS, EVERY TIME DISSENT HAS BEEN HEARD FROM THE OFFICIAL LINE, EVERY TIME AN AMERICAN SENATOR HAS SUGGESTED A WAY TO BRING THIS CONFLICT TO AN END, HE HAS BEEN ATTACKED BY THOSE IN POWER, AND FOR THE SAME REASON. SO I AM PROUD TO JOIN THE LIST -- OF SENATORS MORSE, SENATOR FULBRIGHT, SENATOR GOODELL, SENATOR STEVENSON, SENATOR COOPER AND MANY OTHERS. AS WE LOOK BACK, WE SEE THAT THE SENATORS WERE RIGHT AND OUR GOVERNMENT WAS WRONG. SO I WILL KEEP ON TALKING ABOUT VIETNAM . . . UNTIL SOMEONE IN POWER PROPOSES A PEACE PLAN THAT COULD SUCCEED INSTEAD OF REPEATING PAST PLANS THAT HAVE FAILED.

VIETNAM IS NOT AN ELECTION ISSUE. I PRAY IT IS RESOLVED LONG BEFORE THE ELECTION. ITS FINAL RESOLUTION IS VITAL TO OUR UNITY AND PROGRESS AND PURPOSE AS A NATION.

AND AMERICANS -- WHOEVER THEY ARE -- WANT TO MAKE JOBS --
FOR THE FIVE MILLION AMERICANS WHO ARE OUT OF WORK, AND THE
MILLIONS WHO ARE JOINING THE LABOR MARKET.

RICHARD NIXON PROMISED JOBS TO THOSE AMERICANS THREE
YEARS AGO. IN FACT, HE PROMISED -- AND I QUOTE HIM EXACTLY --
TO "CREATE FIFTEEN MILLION NEW JOBS."

WHAT DID HE DO TO KEEP THAT PROMISE? HE GAVE US THE
MOST INCREDIBLE LIST OF ECONOMIC FIRSTS SINCE THE INVENTION
OF NUMBERS.

HE GAVE US THE FIRST INFLATIONARY RECESSION IN AMERICAN
HISTORY. HE GAVE US THE HIGHEST UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN ELEVEN
YEARS. HE GAVE US THE HIGHEST INTEREST RATES SINCE THE
CIVIL WAR. HE GAVE US THE FIRST BALANCE OF TRADE DEFICIT
SINCE 1893. AND HE GAVE US THE LARGEST BALANCE OF PAYMENTS

IN SHORT, RICHARD NIXON HAS DONE ABOUT AS MUCH FOR THE AMERICAN ECONOMY AS MRS. O'LEARY'S COW DID FOR THE CITY OF CHICAGO.

AND ULTIMATELY, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO GIVE RICHARD NIXON CREDIT FOR ANOTHER FIRST: HE'S GOING TO BE THE FIRST INCUMBENT PRESIDENT SINCE HERBERT HOOVER DEFEATED FOR RE-ELECTION.

AFTER THIS KIND OF ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE, WHAT DOES HE OFFER IN 1972? WHAT DOES HE PROPOSE TO RELIEVE THE BURDEN OF LOCAL PROPERTY TAXES FOR THE HOMEOWNERS OF AMERICA?

HE OFFERS A NATIONAL SALES TAX OF SIXTEEN BILLION DOLLARS. IT RAISES THE PRICE OF EVERYTHING WE BUY. IT TAXES FOOD AND CLOTHES AND SHELTER AND SAYS THAT IF YOU PAY HIGHER TAXES EVERY DAY, YOU CAN PAY LOWER TAXES AT THE END OF THE YEAR.

THAT IS WHAT I CALL A REAL REPUBLICAN TAX PROGRAM.

WILLIAM MCKINLEY WOULD HAVE LOVED IT. HERBERT HOOVER WOULD HAVE BEEN PROUD OF IT. BUT WE HAVE THE CHANCE TO SAY NO, AND WE WILL STOP THAT TAX IN 1972.

I WANT TO SEE A DIFFERENT ECONOMIC PROGRAM. I WANT TO SEE AMERICANS AT WORK INSTEAD OF ON WELFARE. I WANT TO SEE AMERICANS CASHING PAYCHECKS INSTEAD OF UNEMPLOYMENT CHECKS. AND I WANT TO SEE PROGRAMS THAT WILL CREATE JOBS DIRECTLY, INSTEAD OF AN EIGHTY BILLION DOLLAR TAX GIVEAWAY TO BIG BUSINESS.

THE PRESIDENT REFUSES TO ADOPT SUCH PROGRAMS. HE HAS VETOED FIVE DIFFERENT EMPLOYMENT BILLS SINCE 1969. WITH THAT KIND OF RECORD, THE BEST WAY THE WORKERS OF THIS COUNTRY CAN PROTECT THEIR JOBS IS TO VOTE RICHARD NIXON OUT OF HIS.

I DO NOT BELIEVE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WANT THIS COUNTRY
TO BE BACKWARDS, IN EMPLOYMENT OR TAXES OR PEACE. THEY WANT
US TO MOVE AHEAD . . . GUIDED BY THE RIGHTS AND THE PRINCIPLES
THAT ARE AT THE HEART OF AMERICA'S HERITAGE.

THOSE RIGHTS ARE IN DANGER TODAY. THEY ARE THREATENED
BY OFFICIALS WHO TRY TO MUZZLE THE PRESS. BY OFFICIALS WHO
INVESTIGATE INNOCENT CITIZENS BECAUSE THEY DISSENT FROM
ADMINISTRATION POLICY. AND BY OFFICIALS WHO HAVE NOT LEARNED
THE MEANING OR THE IMPORTANCE OF INDIVIDUAL PRIVACY.

WE CAN RESTORE THOSE PRINCIPLES IN 1972.

WE CAN BUILD A NATION WORTHY OF THE MEN AND WOMEN --
YOUR PARENTS AND MINE -- WHO CROSSED THE SEA TO GIVE LIFE
TO THEIR CAREERS AND THEIR CHILDREN AND THEIR COUNTRY.

AND OUR FIRST TASK -- YOURS AND MINE -- IS TO ELECT A

YOU CAN HELP TO DO THAT. YOU CAN HELP ME BY HELPING
THE ILLINOIS DELEGATES WHO ARE RUNNING IN YOUR DISTRICT
PLEDGED TO ED MUSKIE.

I BELIEVE WE CAN MAKE A NEW BEGINNING FOR AMERICA.

IT WILL NOT BE EASY OR WITHOUT DISAPPOINTMENT.

BUT AS JOHN F. KENNEDY SAID IN THIS CITY TWELVE YEARS
AGO: "IF IT IS A JOURNEY OF A THOUSAND MILES OR EVEN MORE,
LET HISTORY RECORD THAT WE, IN THIS GENERATION, TOOK THE
FIRST STEP.

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