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Edmund S. Muskie Papers

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**Remarks by Senator Edmund S. Muskie at a Rally at Winona Park,  
Bay City, Michigan**

Edmund S. Muskie

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Remarks by Senator Edmund S. Muskie  
of Maine at a Rally at Winona Park  
Bay City, Michigan  
September 27, 1968

I rather unexpectedly and thoroughly enjoyed this morning in this part of Michigan, and I have been trying to figure out why. There is the blue sky, of course, which is as clear a blue as I would see in my own state. There the fresh breeze and the crisp weather, which I would expect to find in Maine. There are also the friendly faces that I would expect to see in my own state, so I guess I feel good this morning because I feel at home.

That is the way any American ought to feel in any other part of America at any time. I think if we can really feel that way, we will have an America that will be safe and secure and harmonious and peaceful.

The fact that this isn't the case today is one of the reasons why we have unrest in our country. Not all Americans trust each other today. Too many Americans fear other Americans, and unfortunately some Americans hate other Americans.

The way to the future for me is to try to stimulate the growth of trust and confidence and to stop the growth of fear and hatred. At least that is what I think a lot of those who came to this country were searching for when they came to make it possible for us to be here. They undertook to flee from fear and hatred and oppression, and they hoped that they were fleeing to a country where they could feel safe among people who had the same values they did, who loved freedom as they

did, who loved freedom as they did, who wanted opportunity as they did.

I begin in this way this morning because I know that our country is torn by emotion and by problems that tug deeply at our emotions--the war, law and order, unrest, poverty, discrimination. All of these things are reflections of the fact that mankind has never yet found a way to live together in harmony under all conditions and with all of the things that make people different from each other.

The war stems basically from the fact that disadvantaged people were being oppressed, first in a colonial regime. Secondly they had desires for improvement exploited by selfish people and forces.

As a matter of fact, most of the wars that have plagued mankind--at least in this century--have arisen out of the unacceptable conditions in which people are forced to live. As they tried to escape from those conditions, either they themselves generated violence or those who sought to exploit them for their own selfish purpose stimulated violence.

The unrest in our own country has the same basis.

There are a lot of positive things that we need to do, even when we understand this basic cause of so many of our problems here at home. We do need law and order, and law enforcement agencies, which are not only effective and adequately trained and equipped, but law enforcement agencies which are also compassionate and understanding human.

We also need to have freedom. We need order to build justice for those who do not now have justice.

The first responsibility of an organized society is to protect its people, their lives, their families, their homes, their property, their streets, their communities. Order is a must in a civilized society, but order is something more than a club. Order is also justice -- justice to those who do not have it, justice for those who have no hope of improving their lives, justice for those who live in unacceptable conditions.

The American story is filled with struggles of people who have sought to escape unacceptable conditions. The Revolutionary War was such a struggle; the Civil War was such a struggle. When the immigrants from Europe came here, they struggled to achieve equality and acceptance and opportunity. The laboring men and women of America in the Thirties struggled to receive acceptance and the right to bargain for themselves and the right to organize in order to win a fair share of the fruits of our resources and industry.

Now there are other Americans who are struggling to achieve the same thing. Certainly that struggle ought to get a sympathetic ear in an America whose history has been replete with such struggles,

and from whose present belief in the traditions of freedom stems the success of such struggles.

We can run this election campaign either by stimulating each other's fears or by working at developing trust and confidence; by making disadvantaged Americans believe that the rest of us truly desire to help them; by making restless young people believe that we trust them as truly part of ourselves, and by making all Americans believe that the future of our country belongs to all of us and that we must adjust from a time when too many of us do not share in what America means to a time when all Americans will share.

That adjustment period is going to mean some disorder, some protest, some violence, some injuries, imposed by some Americans on other Americans, just as harmony in a family is the product, not only of wise guidance, but also of unwise guidance by parents who are fallible human beings and by children who yield to their own weaknesses instead of guidance by wisdom.

That is the nature of the human animal, that in order to build trust and confidence we have to risk injury at the hands even of loved ones. In the long run it is worth the struggle.

Why do I dwell on this kind of a message in a political campaign? People tell me it is not the kind of political speech they come to hear.

I dwell on it because too many Americans have forgotten that this is the way we made this a great country. Too many Americans have forgotten that this is the direction in which America has been moving, the direction in which it will continue to move if we will simply have the assurance of our own national experience. I think if we consider the candidates who are available for the Presidency and the Vice Presidency and make our choices on the basis of our understanding of that tradition, then America will make the right decision on November 5.

I don't know what it will be and really, although I would like to win as much as anybody, I am not so much concerned with that as with the other objective. I hope that when November 5 is over, the vast majority of Americans will be determined not to divide our country, but to unite it behind a common purpose to develop trust and confidence among all of our people.

If we do that on November 5, we will have won this election no matter who has been elected.

May I say to these young people here, I know you have come here today to cheer and make noises, and it is great. But in the future, come to these meetings to think, to become part of the process, to become persuasive leaders, to become hard working followers, in order to take America forward along this great road

to peace and justice, not only for the people of our own country, but eventually, if others will follow our good example rather than our bad example, toward peace and justice for all mankind.