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Edmund S. Muskie

Elizabeth Drew

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CHANNEL 26

"30 MINUTES WITH....."

THE HONORABLE
EDMUND S. MUSKIE

Democrat - Maine

and

ELIZABETH DREW

FOR RELEASE: BROADCAST TIME 8:30 PM EST Tuesday, Jan. 19, 1971

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Washington, D. C.

January 19, 1971

30 MINUTES WITH...

1
2 MISS DREW: Senator Muskie, did your recent trip
3 to the Soviet Union and the Middle East in any way change
4 your views on foreign policy?

5 SENATOR MUSKIE: Well, it gave new perspectives;
6 one doesn't change views instantly, but to have an oppor-
7 tunity to see first-hand the people, the attitudes, the
8 leaders, and to get a close first-hand view of their poli-
9 cies and the reasons behind them, I think, does give in-
10 sights and perspectives that have an influence beyond the
11 time-frame of the trip itself.

12 And so I do have, I think, a much better view of
13 the problems and the issues, and the personalities, than I
14 did before I went.

15 I found it a most useful and even a stimulating
16 experience.

17 MISS DREW: Well, do you feel that our government
18 is doing everything possible, or there's anything more it
19 should do, or it should not do, to reach a spirit of accomo-
20 dation with the Soviet Union?

21 SENATOR MUSKIE: Well, I don't know that I'd put
22 the question in that way.

23 I think that our view ought to be positive, in
24 the sense that we ought to be looking for those areas within
25 which the Soviet national interest and our national interest

1 coincide.

2 MISS DREW: Is that saying it's not positive
3 enough right now?

4 SENATOR MUSKIE: Well, I didn't approach it from
5 that negative point of view. When I inquired as to the
6 possibilities of meeting the Soviet leaders, for example,
7 they were interested in knowing what my view was, as to the
8 positive developments that might be possible, in the rela-
9 tionships of the two countries.

10 And so I've concentrated on those, and the three
11 areas within which I think there are possibilities are
12 rather obvious; there's nothing new about these.

13 One is the SALT talks, on nuclear disarmament.

14 Secondly is the Berlin talks, on a change of status
15 for West Berlin.

16 And third, of course, the Middle East problem.

17 I think that as we view Soviet-American relations,
18 one must be struck by the fact, which has been obvious since
19 World War II, that our problem is constantly doubt as to the
20 ultimate intentions of the other side. In other words, if
21 we believe that the ultimate intention of the other side,
22 whether we're looking at it as American citizens or Soviet
23 citizens, we see hostility, in terms of ultimate intentions,
24 and if we focus on that then we'll never work out agreements.

25 MISS DREW: Well now, on the SALT talks, which is

1 a rather critical area right now, do you feel that our
2 government is doing everything possible to reach a meaning-
3 ful agreement?

4 SENATOR MUSKIE: Well, I've had views from time
5 to time as to the initiatives that we might take, and might
6 contribute more.

7 MISS DREW: Yes. Well, you said, I think -- was
8 it earlier this year, or maybe before that -- that we should
9 have a freeze on offensive and defensive weapons. Now,
10 we've not done that; does that disturb you, or make you
11 think that we're losing a chance ^{to reach} ~~of reaching~~ an agreement?

12 SENATOR MUSKIE: Well, it's always -- well, let
13 me put it this way.

14 The attitude of both sides right now is positive.
15 I don't see that either side, either we or the Soviets, are
16 negative in their -- in attitude, nor does either side
17 regard the other as being negative. In terms of the possi-
18 bilities of moving ahead, both sides are moving forward.

19 Now, the question that I raised a year ago last
20 fall, and to which you've referred, is whether or not we
21 might not enhance the possibilities of an agreement, and a
22 broader agreement, by different kind of initiative. Now,
23 whether or not my views on that, long-range, would have been
24 constructive or not, one can't really say at this point.

25 I feel that in order to achieve an agreement, both

1 sides must believe that there's a relative balance in
2 nuclear arms.

3 MISS DREW: Are you worried that we are going ahead
4 with the deployment of the offensive missiles?

5 SENATOR MUSKIE: I am. I was -- I was concerned
6 when we moved ahead with deployment of MIRV; I've been con-
7 cerned that we've been asked to, and in effect have, gone
8 forward with the development of ABM, because what I'm con-
9 cerned about is that the balance that now makes possible an
10 agreement may be lost with the passage of time and the
11 development of new weapons by either side.

12 MISS DREW: Now, to the Middle East, where you also
13 were; now that you've seen the heads of both Egypt and Israel
14 -- you've talked with both heads of state and people through-
15 out their governments -- what do you think is necessary for
16 a settlement?

17 SENATOR MUSKIE: I don't think anybody has the
18 answer to what will make possible a settlement.

19 Now, what is necessary is a willingness on the
20 part of each side -- the Israelis and the Arabs -- to move
21 from positions they now hold. Now, the real crunch issue
22 is very easily identified.

23 The Israeli passion, their passionate belief that
24 they need a rectification of their old borders, in order to
25 achieve secure borders -- that runs right up against the

1 Egyptian determination, and it's a passionate determination
2 in turn, that they ought to recover all of the territories
3 which were occupied by Israel in the Six-Day War.

4 Now, these two come crunch against each other.

5 MISS DREW: Do you think the Israelis will just
6 have to give up that territory for a settlement, all of it?

7 SENATOR MUSKIE: If I were to have such an opinion
8 at this point it would be a disservice to enunciate it.

9 Right now the two parties are meeting in the
10 Jarring talks. We ought to focus on those talks, because
11 in the last analysis, unless they can agree with each other,
12 we will not have really the beginnings of a peace. If the
13 adjustment of borders is done from the sidelines, by the
14 United States exerting undue pressure on the Israelis, or
15 the Soviets exerting an undue pressure on the Egyptians,
16 then what we may have is simply postponement of the ultimate
17 confrontation and clash.

18 So I have not publicly expressed any opinion as
19 to what the border adjustments ought to be, but this is the
20 issue and unless each side is willing to move, we're not
21 going to get peace.

22 MISS DREW: I want to ask you about Vietnam, even
23 though it was not on your itinerary; it was certainly in
24 your mind.

25 You have called for a complete withdrawal of the

1 troops by the end of 1971. That was in an article that you
2 published last year. It's pretty clear that the President
3 isn't going to meet your deadline on that.

4 What are you going to do to press your position?

5
6 SENATOR MUSKIE: Well, it's a little difficult
7 for anyone except a President of the United States to --

8 MISS DREW: Well, as a Senator, might you lead a
9 fight in the Senate, or join with outside groups to try to
10 bring pressure on him to speed his withdrawal schedule?

11 SENATOR MUSKIE: I continue to urge the point that
12 we ought to have a definite date for withdrawal, for a
13 number of reasons that I'd be glad to get into.

14 MISS DREW: Still the end of 1971?

15 SENATOR MUSKIE: I'm not so concerned with the
16 specific date. I mean, as you move along, obviously you're
17 hard up against the realities of making an adjustment. I
18 thought that was a good date, and I think -- I thought it
19 was a particularly good date because by coincidence, it
20 -- that date would have meant that we would have been
21 involved in Vietnam with our own combat troops as long after
22 the '68 election as we were before the '68 election. It
23 seemed to me a reasonable amount of time to get out.

24 But for other very practical reasons, we ought
25 to get out by an announced deadline, and if we do not, I'm
26 terribly afraid that we're simply going to continue to drag

1 it out with the constant risk of being more deeply involved
2 in such places as Cambodia, with the result that it will
3 be always difficult for us to finally terminate our involve-
4 ment.

5 And so I hammer hard at the deadline.

6 MISS DREW: The President says that what we have
7 to do -- he wants to get out, too, but we need a settle-
8 ment "with honor", because we've made an investment there,
9 and we've made commitments. I think what he means is that
10 we can't walk out and leave a -- the chance of a Communist
11 government in the very near future.

12 Does that worry you, that that might be the result
13 of a withdrawal?

14 SENATOR MUSKIE: If we're to stay there until we
15 eliminate all risk that the character of the government
16 will change from what it is to something else, we'll be
17 there for a long, long time.

18 The question of what kind of government the people
19 of South Vietnam have -- has, in the long run must be
20 settled by their -- by them. We've contributed, I think,
21 all we can to give them military and economic viability,
22 political viability -- the economic viability question is
23 a much more difficult one. We've done all we can in terms
24 of our resources, and the requirement that we turn to
25 other areas of interest, especially here at home, to deal

1 with our own problems.

2 MISS DREW: Senator McGovern said yesterday of
3 Vietnam, and I believe he was drawing an issue with you,
4 since he is now running, "I have opposed that intervention
5 from the beginning, while our President and other Presidential
6 prospects were supporting it. "

7 What is your response to that?

8 SENATOR MUSKIE: Well, Number One, I'm not a candi-
9 date, or an announced candidate for any office. And so --

10 MISS DREW: But if he were to have been referring
11 to you, what would your response be?

12 SENATOR MUSKIE: Well, now you're again putting
13 it in the entire framework which I reject.

14 I'm a United States Senator, concerned with these
15 issues, as I should be, but I will not at this point pitch
16 them on the assumption that I'm a candidate for anything at
17 this point.

18 When I want to become a candidate for anything,
19 I think I can find the words that will make my intention,
20 clear.

21 With respect to -- you know, consistency over the
22 past few years, I doubt that we'll find much consistency in
23 the records of anyone who now speaks out on these questions.
24 For example, there is no one in the Senate today who voted
25 against the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, when it was first

1 introduced. The only two Senators who voted against it
2 are no longer in the Senate.

3 So consistency isn't necessarily a hallmark, or
4 perhaps even a desirable attribute of people in public life,
5 who ought to be willing to change our minds when we find we
6 are wrong, and if consistency becomes such-an objective that
7 we do not change our minds when circumstances call for it,
8 then we're not being as wise as we ought to be.

9 MISS DREW: I'd like to move to another area of
10 domestic policy, but I'd also like to make clear -- I haven't
11 asked you if you're running for President; I think that
12 people who do run choose to make their announcements at
13 their own time, so I'm not going to ask you if you're running.
14 But let's just say you show signs of being seriously inter-
15 ested, and if I ask questions around that, you won't deny
16 that you're seriously interested; okay?

17 SENATOR MUSKIE: Well, at the same time, whether
18 you intend it or not, I want to be sure that my answers to
19 questions are pitched on the basis that I'm not a candidate
20 for anything.

21 MISS DREW: Alright. Alright.

22 A number of people who are very concerned with the
23 civil rights -- areas of civil rights and poverty in this
24 country -- Democrats who might support you as a Senator or
25 other things -- are concerned; they say they don't understand

1 what your program is in this area, what your ideas are,
2 what you want to see get done.

3 What is your answer to that?

4 SENATOR MUSKIE: Twofold. One, I've been a
5 Senator for twelve years. I've cast, I think, over 3,000
6 votes, and those votes have to do with substantive legisla-
7 tion covering the whole range of current issues and problems,
8 including civil rights, and that record is there for anyone
9 interested enough in my views to examine. And it's very
10 clear, I think. I think it's unequivocal, and it's spelled
11 out in the most concrete way you can spell out a record in
12 American public life, by votes in the Senate.

13 MISS DREW: What about from here on out?

14 SENATOR MUSKIE: Secondly, with respect to the
15 future, obviously, as one points toward the future, whatever
16 date, it's essential to spell out positions and policies,
17 and even more specifically, programs. This is a process
18 that I take it, is about to begin. And we can't deal with
19 it as though it were ended. In other words, we're in a
20 two-year period, hopefully of creativity, and positive
21 action, and clearcut speaking, to spell out policies for
22 the future. But policies for the future are credible to the
23 extent that they're built on records of the past, and I have
24 such a record in these fields.

25 MISS DREW: One of the problems in unemployment

1 right now, one of the sub-problems, is that the black
2 unemployment is about three times that of white.

3 Do you think that the unions ought to be pressed,
4 or even forced, to admit more blacks?

5 SENATOR MUSKIE: I think they ought to be pressed.
6 And I think this is recognized by the leaders of unions.
7 For example, I was at a testimonial dinner not long ago for
8 Bayard ~~Rustin~~ ^{Rustin}, who's one of the outstanding black leaders
9 in this field, and it was a testimonial to him in which
10 union leaders put themselves squarely on the line.

11 Now, that doesn't solve the problem, because rank
12 and file union leaders, and various -- in some sections of
13 the country, are less than enthusiastic, about these object-
14 ives, because it runs counter to their feelings of economic
15 security and union integrity, or whatever they may choose
16 to describe it, but there has to be a positive effort made
17 by unions, by management, by labor and by those of us in
18 public life to break down these lines of discrimination.

19 MISS DREW: Do you think -- another area of domes-
20 tic policy -- do you think that the crime laws that were
21 passed last year, including wiretapping and other things,
22 do you think that they went too far?

23 SENATOR MUSKIE: Yes. I voted against, for example,
24 the so-called "No-Knock" and Preventive Detention provisions,
25 because I think that the risks they create with respect to

1 Constitutional guarantees were too much, were unacceptable.
2 I spoke against them, I voted against them, and I regret
3 that they're part of the law of the land.

4 MISS DREW: Would you be part of any effort to
5 have them repealed?

6 SENATOR MUSKIE: Well, I don't have legislation
7 developed, but if other occasions arose and if I were to
8 introduce legislation of this kind, yes. My position is
9 clear on this.

10 MISS DREW: Do you -- it's a word that's bandied
11 about, and yet it's important -- do you feel that there's any
12 danger of repression in this country?

13 SENATOR MUSKIE: Well, I hate to get involved in
14 cliches, but freedom is sometimes in greatest jeopardy when
15 we're least sensitive to the dangers to it. And in that
16 sense there is a possibility; there are always strains, I
17 think, of repression and authoritarianism in any society,
18 and times when society -- that is, the Establishment -- as
19 it is called in today's rhetoric, or thing among people who
20 like things as they are, without change, to put it in another
21 kind of rhetoric, when pressures for change become too
22 vocal, sometimes there's a tendency to resort to authoritar-
23 ian or repressive measures.

24 Now, I don't think that these have a great momen-
25 tum, or that there's a great tide moving in this way. But

1 there are signs of it in the provisions that you mentioned,
2 in the Crime Bill of last year, that are disturbing, and
3 there are others that crop up from time to time.

4 Yes, there are tendencies of that kind at this
5 time that we have to be alert to.

6 MISS DREW: One of the first issues that you will
7 have to vote on as a Senator when -- this week, is whether
8 or not to do away with the seniority system. What is your
9 position on that?

10 SENATOR MUSKIE: I think it ought to be changed.
11 I think that the only merit it ever has, I suppose, is to
12 provide for an orderly progression into chairmanships and
13 control of committees, and I think that there are other ways
14 of providing leadership for committees -- not necessarily
15 -- it isn't necessarily true that any other method is going
16 to provide wiser leadership or more effective chairmen, but
17 at least it would make the system more responsive to a
18 broader base of -- in the Senate, and through that broader
19 Senatorial base, to the people as a whole.

20 MISS DREW: Another reform question that's up
21 has to do with the Democratic Party; the Commission that
22 Senator McGovern did head until he resigned a couple of
23 weeks ago, has put out guidelines guaranteeing more partici-
24 pation and to guarantee that the delegations will be more
25 representative than they have been in the past.

1 Will you support credentials challenges against
2 states that have not enforced those guidelines?

3 SENATOR MUSKIE: Well, I've expressed my support
4 for the thrust of the McGovern Commission recommendations;
5 indeed, in my state we've created a Commission in Maine
6 designed to implement the McGovern objectives and have set
7 up a program for Maine. The Maine program didn't go as far
8 as I would have liked.

9 MISS DREW: Only about eight states have done
10 anything about it.

11 SENATOR MUSKIE: But it went a great distance in
12 that direction.

13 I recommended that the Party structure should be
14 established completely on an electoral base, for local chair-
15 men, local Party committees, delegates to the state conven-
16 tion, delegates to the National Convention; we didn't quite
17 go that far, but we went a great deal in that direction,
18 and I'd hope we'd go further.

19 So I'm wholly in accord with the basic thrust of
20 the Commission report.

21 MISS DREW: But I gather only about eight states
22 have implemented those recommendations.

23 SENATOR MUSKIE: Well, there's another year and a
24 half, and I would urge the others to do this.

25 MISS DREW: Speaking of the Democratic Party, a

1 question in a lot of people's minds is that it had power
2 for eight years, and I think it's fair to say that by the
3 time it pulled out of town here, this was not exactly a
4 very happy country.

5 Why should the Democrats have power again?

6 SENATOR MUSKIE: Well, I suppose that my answer
7 to that would be particularly this: that I think that the
8 Democratic Party, whatever difficulties we've had in the
9 past, over its history has demonstrated a concern for
10 values which are more clearly linked to the thrust for
11 change today than the Republican Party.

12 Indeed, the fact that we lost in 1968 perhaps puts
13 us in a better mood for change in the Party that wins. The
14 Party that wins is likely to like the status quo, be more
15 resistant to change than the Party that loses.

16 So part of my answer would be that we ought to
17 win because we lost in '68. And thus are more sensitive and
18 I think more receptive and responsive to the need for change
19 than if we'd won.

20 MISS DREW: I'd like to pick you up on that word
21 "change" because -- maybe we could define it a little bit
22 more. I think a lot of people who are -- who, again, would
23 like to see President Nixon replaced, are concerned that
24 even if they got the ideal man into the White House, that
25 not very much would change, that there are so many ways that

1 things get blocked, and there are so few ways in which the
2 government and the system is responsive even to ideal leader-
3 ship, that they'd elect their man and nothing much would
4 happen.

5 Do you worry about that? Do you think there's
6 really fundamental things that haven't been talked about
7 before that are going to have to be done?

8 SENATOR MUSKIE: Well, if one -- you know, if one
9 adopts a totally cynical or skeptical attitude, then one
10 gives up on the system, and so I suppose one must look at
11 the record, one's own experience with the system, to form a
12 judgement of that kind.

13 I mean, if you believe that -- you know, the system
14 has lost all of its elasticity, or all of its responsiveness,
15 why then, you give up on it.

16 I happen to have lived a quarter of a century,
17 in American political life, and I started this political
18 career in a situation that was almost totally one-party,
19 unresponsive to change, unresponsive to young people, un-
20 responsive to the problems -- of the people of my state. I
21 could have given up, but instead, we moved into it, and in
22 a quarter of a century we've changed the political situation,
23 the political nature of our state in Maine.

24 And this is wholly responsive to a movement that
25 was begun by a handful of young people who didn't know how

1 tough a problem they were facing, but putting that behind
2 them -- if we looked on the record, you know, of the
3 Republican Party in Maine since the Civil War, we'd have
4 said: "Well, what's the use?" One party's been in control
5 for ninety years, and probably will be for another ninety
6 years.

7 But we didn't accept that point of view; we began
8 the job of creating change, building a competitive political
9 situation, and we achieved results.

10 Well, with that kind of experience behind me,
11 nobody's going to convince me that it isn't possible to make
12 this political system do the job for which it was created,
13 which is to make possible in this country a life of promise
14 for every citizen in it.

15 Now, that doesn't mean that anybody on the
16 American political scene today has the ultimate wisdom,
17 or the ultimate skill necessary to achieve this result
18 tomorrow morning, or next week, or next month. But it does
19 mean that if people with a positive view of what is possible,
20 with some faith in other people, and their capacity for
21 responding to the best that is in them, really go to work
22 at the job, they can do it. We can break the barriers of
23 racial discrimination, we can create justice in this country,
24 we can reform the institutions which are not now adequate
25 to the task. We can frame a wiser policy for our country

1 in the world as a whole; we can do this. Because I've seen
2 it done, I believe it can be done on a national scale.

3 MISS DREW: Let me ask you a question that, again,
4 does not have to do with trying to be cute about whether
5 you're running for President. I ask it of other people who
6 are showing no signs of wanting to run.

7 Let us say you were elected, tomorrow or two years
8 from now, or whenever; what are the first things, talking
9 about change -- going towards change, that you would try
10 to do?

11 SENATOR MUSKIE: You're asking me to tell you
12 what my policies would be two years from now? That's when
13 the next President takes office.

14 Between now and two years from now, I will develop
15 programs, I will develop priorities, I ~~will~~ ^{will} develop the
16 tactical steps that I must take, the day I take office as
17 President, if that happens to be what I seek and if I'm
18 elected to it.

19 But I did not, two years ago, create a program
20 for the Presidency to take effect in January 1973, already
21 at hand and in the pigeonholes, ready to pull out and to run.

22 I have certain -- a certain philosophy that I've
23 developed over more than a quarter of a century, certain
24 ideas and objectives, sense of priorities; out of these I'll
25 develop the programs, the specific programs that I would try

1 to implement if I have the opportunity and the responsibil-
2 ity and authority.

3 MISS DREW: But as you think about this country
4 now, are there some specific things you have in mind that
5 you would most like to see changed?

6 SENATOR MUSKIE: I know the areas within which
7 we must work.

8 MISS DREW: What are they?

9 SENATOR MUSKIE: We must work in the areas of
10 race relations, above all others, here at home, because
11 unless we have trust and confidence in each other, in our
12 intentions, and I'm not talking now about words -- I'm talk-
13 ing about jobs; I'm talking about housing, I'm talking about
14 acceptance. I'm talking about dignity. I'm talking about
15 opportunity.

16 These are things about which government can do a
17 great deal. Government can't do the whole job, but we
18 can do a great deal about it. In order to do it we must
19 change our priorities with respect to the use of national
20 resources. Because unless we do that, we won't be spending
21 our great economic resources in the areas where they are
22 most needed.

23 MISS DREW: By how much do you think the Pentagon
24 budget could be cut?

25 SENATOR MUSKIE: This, you know -- this kind of a

1 question, I haven't even seen the budget document. I haven't
 2 got the budget projections, I haven't got the budget recom-
 3 mendations. For me to tell you how much -- you know, a
 4 figure that is all up in the air at this point can be cut,
 5 would be an exercise, I think, in irresponsibility.

6 I'd have to look at the budget. Then I'll have
 7 some judgements and form some judgements on whether or not
 8 the spending has been allocated in the right places, as between
 9 the military and non-military and within the military, as to
 10 whether or not it's been allocated in the right places.

11 MISS DREW: I interrupted you; you were talknig
 12 about other specific areas you would like to get some change
 13 in.

14 SENATOR MUSKIE: We have to do a great deal in the
 15 field of the environment; we have to -- I think really one
 16 of our key responsibilities in the years ahead is to define
 17 our role in the world. How we will implement it, what our
 18 responsibilities are, how we exert our influence in the
 19 world, so that we don't always have the choice, the stark
 20 choice of retreating from problem areas in the world and
 21 exerting no influence, or resorting to some form of military
 22 intervention.

23 I think this stark choice is the one that the
 24 American people want to get away from. And it isn't some-
 25 thing as to which you can form a single simplistic magic

1 formula that serves you in every area.

2 I mean, what our policy ought to be in the Middle
3 East is different than what it ought to be in Southeast
4 Asia, or our policy with respect to Western and Eastern
5 Europe, and the normalization of relations between those
6 two areas, requires another set of perspectives and poli-
7 cies.

8 We're in the process, I think, of trying to shape
9 that role.

10 MISS DREW: We're about out of time. I wanted
11 to ask you one question that does come up, as you know,
12 which is about leadership in your own style, and you your-
13 self said on television a couple of years ago that there is
14 a question of style; it's something you have to answer for
15 yourself. "I think a man who is candidate for President
16 ought to be willing to assert a 'break-the-lance' kind of
17 leadership. I don't know whether I'm adapted to it. I
18 would like to take a look at it."

19 What is your assessment of that now ?

20 SENATOR MUSKIE: I think that's an assessment that
21 others can make better than I. For me to stand on a pedestal
22 and beat my breast and say "I'm your leader; I'm the kind
23 of a guy you want," I think would be to negate the kind
24 of leadership that this country needs and wants.

25 I think the President ought to have an inspira-

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tional quality. I think the President ought to be able to identify the areas within which change is necessary.

MISS DREW: I think we're about out of time, Senator. Thank you very much.
