VIETNAM MORATORIUM ADDRESS
BY SENATOR MUSKIE

Mr. HART. Mr. President, the distinguished Senator from Maine (Mr. Muskie) participated in yesterday's Vietnam moratorium—as did a number of us in this body—by going home and talking with and listening to his own constituents.

Because the remarks of the Senator from Maine at Bates College are exceptionally to the point, and instructive for all who will heed them, I ask unanimous consent that his address be printed in the Record.

There being no objection, the address was ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

Address by Senator Edmund S. Muskie
I have been asked why I chose to speak at Bates College tonight.

I came to Bates because I believe today's moratorium can be a time for learning. For me it is a chance to continue an education started on this campus many years ago.

Today's protest is a sign of concern and frustration. It is a sign of broken communications.

There are those who say there is nothing to learn from the moratorium. There are those who downgrade the right to petition.

I say that on the issues of Vietnam we have much to learn from each other, and we can only learn if we are willing to listen to each other and to reason with each other.

This applies to the president and to those who protest. Only in this way can we develop policies on Vietnam which can meet our national interests and end the ugly divisions caused by our involvement there. I regret that the President has not seen this day as an opportunity to unite rather than divide the country. His participation, in a forum of his choosing, could have added a constructive dimension to this national dialogue.

We are engaged in a unique and sorrowful experiment. We are engaged in an effort to change a major aspect of our foreign policy in public view, while our country is involved in a war and in diplomatic negotiations to end that war.

Our national debate over the wisdom of past policies, the validity of present policies, and our alternatives for future policies is open for world-wide inspection. The magnitude of today's moratorium, for example, transmitted almost instantaneously by radio and television, will have a significant impact in Washington, in Paris, in Moscow, in Hanoi, and in Saigon.

We cannot predict either the nature or the precise direction of the changes we shall cause. We may never be able to measure our impact, but we can be sure our voices will be heard.

That fact is one which should not be ignored. If we mean to be heard—If we mean to change the course of events—then we must be conscious of the responsibility we have accepted.

The right to have a voice in the development of public policy carries with it a responsibility for the results of that policy. Our proposals may be sound, but how we say them, and how we say it will help shape what happens at the negotiating table and on the battlefield.

A sense of responsibility for what we say and do should induce some caution, but it should not impose silence. One of the most dangerous assumptions in a democratic society is to conclude that only the President, the Cabinet and his generals are competent to make judgments on the national interest. Their judgment and their actions, which are fallible, must be subjected to constant scrutiny, tempered by the knowledge of our own, individual fallibility. As the President may be wrong, so may we be wrong.

If we want to make constructive proposals about our policies in Vietnam and Southeast Asia, we must understand how we got where we are, what our objectives now are or should be, and what alternatives are available to us.

Our involvement in Vietnam did not happen overnight or through the decision of one man. It was the product of past World War II policies directed against Communist expansionism and threats of expansion in Europe, Asia and elsewhere. It was stimulated by our fear that Communist support for "wars of liberation" would topple the struggling countries of Southeast Asia and disrupt the balance of power in that part of the world.

It was encouraged by the concern expressed by governments in that area which felt threatened by Communist China and North Vietnam.

We were persuaded that an aggressive policy threatened to exploit the emergent drive toward nationalism and self-determination which characterized that area. In the uncertain conditions following the withdrawal of Great Britain and France from Southeast Asia, American power seemed to hold a promise of security and support for those who lived in that area.

Although we followed a policy of "limited" involvement, our participation growing from technical assistance, money and weapons to massive armed intervention, we sought to buy time for the South Vietnamese against the combined onslaught of the Vietcong and the North Vietnamese, but in the process we made the struggle even more terrible burdens on ourselves at home and abroad.

We are engaged in an effort to end the fighting and the killing, to give the Vietnamese people the opportunity to work out their own political destiny, and to lay the groundwork for a more appropriate United States policy in Southeast Asia.

Each of us has engaged in that search in his or her own way.

In the process I have made two visits to that part of the world—one as a member of the Mansfield Mission in 1965 and one as a member of the 1967 election observers group. I have read extensively and consulted with the men who know the problems of Vietnam intimately.

I have reached some conclusions on what may be the best alternative strategies and policies, conscious of Clark Clifford's observation that "to reach a conclusion and to implement it are not the same, especially when one does not have the ultimate power of decision."

I offer my conclusions, not as one who has an absolute conviction of his own infallibility, but as one who seeks to contribute to a constructive policy for ourselves and for the people of Southeast Asia.

First, I believe our primary objective for the Vietnamese as well as for American soldiers—should be to end the fighting and killing in Vietnam.

Second, I believe we should do what we can to advance the prospects for a political settlement in Vietnam. We should not design or impose that settlement, but we should do what we can to make it possible.

Third, I believe we should recognize the nature of our interests in Southeast Asia and the kinds of efforts we can prudently make to help Asian nations achieve the economic, social and political stability they want and need.

It is clearly the deepening conviction of the American people that we must end our present involvement in Vietnam. That conviction cannot control our policy.
The kind of withdrawal proposal advanced by former Defense Secretary Clark Clifford—of those which have been proposed—illustrates one way to serve this objective. It is based on the assumption that we should continue to phase out our logistical and air support. We would move our ground combat troops out by the end of 1970 and which would provide air and logistical support for somewhat longer. Such a plan, while cutting American casualties, could provide an incentive for the South Vietnamese Government, the North Vietnamese, and the National Liberation Front to reach a negotiated settlement, hopefully even before our withdrawal is complete.

As I have considered all of these, and the questions they raise, I have reached certain conclusions. First, I believe we must disengage our forces—"in an orderly way"—as soon as possible. Second, that we implement that commitment by means of a phased plan of withdrawal, geared to a timetable. Third, that either course could make less likely a negotiated settlement. If the standstill cease-fire plan succeeded, the withdrawal forces could be accelerated as international peace-keeping forces stepped in to assure observance of the cease-fire. The standstill cease-fire offer did not lead to an early end to the fighting, a steady and methodical withdrawal plan would offer an effective way of reducing United States involvement and combat losses, while creating the conditions which favor a political settlement.

A standstill cease-fire and a staged withdrawal plan do not rise or fall on the success of the other, but they could reinforce each other. Each recognizes that our commitment and our obligations in Vietnam are to the Vietnamese, and to a particular regime. Each provides an opportunity for a reasonable political solution. Each reduces the risk of political reprisals at the end of the war.

What I have said, up to this point, is the following:

1. That we commit ourselves to disengagement.
2. That we implement that commitment by means of a phased plan of withdrawal, geared to a timetable.
3. That either course could make less likely a negotiated settlement.

There are additional steps which might open the way for a negotiated settlement. An abrupt and hasty in South Vietnam?

The American people are in a position to play a constructive role in South Vietnam. Our power to influence the shape of post-war Vietnam seems limited to the way in which we decide to withdraw our forces. We should make it clear to the Government in Saigon and to the Vietnamese people that our withdrawal is geared to a specific time frame to which they must adjust.

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