

THE NATURE OF THE RHETORICAL SITUATION IN SENATOR  
EDMUND S. MUSKIE'S ELECTION EVE BROADCAST,  
NOVEMBER 2, 1970

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## CHAPTER I

### AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEM

Chapter one will be divided into six sections: (1) background of the study; (2) statement of the problem; (3) justification of the study; (4) review of literature; (5) methodology; and (6) organizational plan for dealing with the hypothesis.

#### I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

An analysis of the 1970 political campaign soon revealed several observable contrasts. President Nixon clearly assumed leadership of the Republican party, while the Democrats were without an acknowledged leader. The G.O.P. desperately sought to secure congressional seats and gubernatorial positions from a large group of Democratic incumbents. Perhaps the American public witnessed the most vivid and apparent contrast between the campaign tactics of the two major parties when, on the evening of November 2, 1970, President Nixon and Senator Edmund S. Muskie of Maine appeared in two separate fifteen-minute political advertisements.

The Republican broadcast consisted of excerpts from a campaign address delivered in Phoenix, Arizona, by President Nixon. Senator Muskie, acting as a spokesman for the Democratic party, delivered a speech written by Richard Goodwin and Jack Sando,<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Theo Lippman, Jr. and Donald C. Hansen, Muskie (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1971), p. 230.

Washington speechwriters, and produced by Robert Squier, a communications consultant for Hubert Humphrey in the 1968 Presidential duel.<sup>2</sup>

Republican leaders expressed mild disappointment when their candidates fared worse than had originally been anticipated by party officials. The election of November 3, 1970, yielded only 6 Republican governors, while 11 other Republicans lost to Democratic gubernatorial candidates; 8 Republicans won Senate seats, although 13 other Senate positions went to Democratic contenders; finally, 114 Republicans were elected to the House of Representatives, while 122 lost to Democrats.<sup>3</sup>

Some Republicans indicated that the Republican broadcast of November 2 may have been a serious campaign error for the Republican party; California Governor Ronald Reagan insisted that President Nixon's speech "did not have its desired impact due to technical difficulties."<sup>4</sup> President Nixon himself confessed that the broadcast of his Phoenix speech on the eve of the election was a mistake; when asked by representatives of the three major television networks in a January 14, 1971, interview whether the election eve broadcast of the Phoenix speech was a regrettable campaign error, President Nixon said:

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<sup>2</sup>Editorial, "Democratic Unity," The New Republic, CLXIII (November 21, 1970), 9.

<sup>3</sup>Editorial, "The Faking of a President--1970," The New Republic, CLXIII (November 14, 1970), 7.

<sup>4</sup>Letter from Governor Ronald Reagan of California, September 29, 1971. Governor Reagan's letter appears in the appendixes.

Yes, I think that was a mistake. As a matter of fact, we apparently felt at the time that the speech said some of the things that needed to be said, but having the rebroadcast the night before the election is not something that I would have perhaps planned had I been, shall we say, running the campaign. . . . I think it was technically bad [the recording of the speech], and I do not think it was the right speech to make the night before the election. . . . And if I am in another campaign, that is the way it will be the night before the election. We wouldn't run that type of tape again.<sup>5</sup>

Admittedly, the direct impact of the technically superior Muskie broadcast upon the voting habits of the American people is far beyond the scope of this more limited study. Senator Muskie, in a statement given to reporters on the day immediately following the 1970 election, accurately described the problem faced by the rhetorical critic who is interested in judging the effectiveness of the Muskie broadcast:

I doubt very much that a single speech can have any effect that the election result itself doesn't have . . . . Whether or not it affected the outcome of the races would be difficult to say.<sup>6</sup>

No available methodology can infer a precise relationship between either political broadcast of November 2 and the results of the 1970 election.

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<sup>5</sup>Statement by President Richard Nixon, television interview, January 4, 1971. A full text of the interview with President Nixon can be found in "Nixon Sizes Up the Future," U.S. News and World Report, LXX (January 18, 1971), 62-70.

<sup>6</sup>Statement by Senator Edmund S. Muskie, interview with the press at Washington National Airport, November 4, 1970. Portions of the interview can be found in "Election '70," U.S. News and World Report, LXIX (November 16, 1970), 33-34.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although a study involving the relationship of the two political broadcasts to the results of the election is not within the confines of this study, a critic can examine the manner in which Senator Muskie responded to a television broadcast of President Nixon's Phoenix address. Such an analysis is warranted by the contrasting tactics employed by the Republican and Democratic parties during the 1970 campaign. Hence, for the rhetorical critic, one question merits attention: How did the nature of the rhetorical situation faced by Senator Muskie affect his response? One hypothetical answer to the question is that the situation generated by the political campaign of 1970 demanded a rhetoric of reassurance-- a type of rhetoric which emphasized the reestablishment of a favorable image of the Democratic party in the eyes of the American voter.

## III. JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

A rhetorical analysis of Senator Muskie's speech is important for two reasons: (1) Senator Muskie is a contender for the 1972 Democratic Presidential nomination; and the election eve speech gave many Americans an opportunity to see Muskie acting as a spokesman for the country as well as the Democratic party; and (2) the speech followed a political message delivered by the President of the United States and represented, in a very real sense, a formal response from the Democratic party to the campaign allegations of the Republican party. The appropriateness of Senator Muskie's

response to the rhetorical situation with which he was faced merits consideration, because "the fact that the Nixon speech was the perfect example of what Senator Muskie was talking about might almost be called a quirk of fate."<sup>7</sup> In any event, an overview of the 1970 political campaign as "rhetorical situation"<sup>8</sup> suggests the hypothesis that the circumstances of the campaign demanded that Senator Muskie reestablish a favorable image of the Democratic party.

#### IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Various types of material were employed in preliminary investigation. A copy of Senator Muskie's election eve address was available from The Communications Company, Senator Muskie's speech consultants. A videotape of selected excerpts from President Nixon's Phoenix speech was unavailable, although an audiotape of the broadcast was to be secured, ironically, from Senator Muskie's speech consultants.

##### Sources of Material

Because the television broadcasts of President Nixon and

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<sup>7</sup>Letter from Mrs. Jane Squier, Assistant Director of The Communications Company (Senator Muskie's speech consultants), October 8, 1971. Mrs. Squier is the wife of Robert Squier, producer of Senator Muskie's election eve broadcast. Mrs. Squier's letter appears in the appendixes.

<sup>8</sup>Lloyd F. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," Rhetoric and Philosophy, I (January, 1968), 8. The term "rhetorical situation," as used by Bitzer, includes three constituents--exigence, audience, constraints--and will be discussed in greater depth in chapter two.

Senator Muskie were presented less than two years ago, much of the information which pertained to the political campaign of 1970 was taken from popular news magazines such as Newsweek, Time, U.S. News and World Report, and The New Republic. In addition, The New York Times was consulted in order to achieve a more exact account of the events of the political campaign that led to the broadcasts of both major parties on the evening of November 2, 1970. A final source of material was personal correspondence.

#### Previous Research

An analysis of previous research included an examination of two sources: (1) journal articles which involved Senator Muskie's speech and the appropriateness of the election eve address for the rhetorical situation, and (2) dissertations in speech and political science as they related to the election eve address and Senator Muskie.

Examination of The Quarterly Journal of Speech, the Southern Speech Journal, Speech Monographs, Speech Teacher, and Western Speech revealed that no previous research on the subject had been undertaken. However, the Fall, 1971, issue of the Central States Speech Journal did contain one article, "The Rhetorical Situation Is the Message: Muskie's Election Eve Television Broadcast," by Robert Wayne Norton, which was a brief analysis of the rhetorical situation faced by Senator Muskie on the eve of the election. Norton's article, however, did not satisfactorily answer the question which this study proposes to answer. One general deficiency may be noted: although

Norton argues that the rhetorical situation which faced Senator Muskie demanded a particular kind of response, the writer of the article did not attempt to suggest just what kind of rhetoric Muskie was forced to use, thus avoiding the question as to why, how, and to what degree Senator Muskie sought to improve the image of the Democratic party.

Examination of Dissertation Abstracts indicated that no previous studies which concern either Senator Muskie's political career or his public speaking have been undertaken. In the field of speech, no dissertations or theses involving an application of Bitzer's "The Rhetorical Situation" to Muskie's election eve address have yet been written. Based on the information available in Dissertation Abstracts, one cannot determine whether any study which involves an application of Bitzer's article has been written.

## V. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this section is to familiarize the reader with the methodology to be used in the analysis of Senator Muskie's November 2 election eve speech. A more thorough description of the methodology to be used will appear in chapter two.

Preliminary examination of the hypothesis led to the question: Why did the situation generated by the campaign demand a rhetoric of reassurance? In order to answer that question, the 1970 political campaign had to be analyzed in light of some rhetorical theory which emphasizes the relationship between the situation which precedes discourse and the resultant discourse itself.

Many rhetorical theorists have avoided a direct examination of rhetorical situation as the phenomenon which leads to discourse.<sup>9</sup> As a result, Bitzer argued, theorists have generally maintained that discourse is by nature rhetorical and have overlooked rhetorical situation "as a distinct subject in rhetorical theory; many ignore it."<sup>10</sup>

Bitzer's theory of rhetorical situation, however, stressed the role of the situation in the creation of discourse:

. . . What characteristics, then, are implied when one refers to "the rhetorical situation"--the context in which speakers or writers create rhetorical discourse? Perhaps the question is puzzling because "situation" is not a standard term in the vocabulary of rhetorical theory. "Audience" is standard; so are "speaker," "subject," "occasion," and "speech." If I were to ask, "What is a rhetorical audience?" or "What is a rhetorical subject?"--the reader would catch the meaning of my question.

When I ask, What is a rhetorical situation?, I want to know the nature of those contexts in which speakers and writers create discourse. How should they be described? What are their characteristics? Why and how do they result in the creation of rhetoric?<sup>11</sup>

Since Bitzer emphasized the relationship between the situation from which a speech emerges and the speech itself, his theory of rhetorical situation was interpreted as an appropriate means by which the 1970 campaign and Senator Muskie's speech might be examined.

## VI. ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN

The purpose of this section is to describe briefly the

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<sup>9</sup>Bitzer, 2.

<sup>10</sup>Bitzer, 2.

<sup>11</sup>Bitzer, 1.



contents of the five succeeding chapters.

## Chapter II

Chapter two provides a more comprehensive description of Bitzer's theory of rhetorical situation and examines the role of the rhetorical situation in the creation of discourse and the parts of the rhetorical situation.

## Chapter III

Chapter three examines the 1970 political campaign from a historical perspective. Background information which concerns the 1968 Presidential campaign and the overriding objectives of the Nixon Administration, the position of the Democratic party prior to the 1970 elections, and the importance of the 1970 elections to both the Republican and Democratic parties will be presented in the attempt to provide an accurate account of the complex of "persons, events, objects, and relations"<sup>12</sup> from which a rhetorical situation emerged.

## Chapter IV

Chapter four, perhaps the chapter around which the thesis centers, examines the nature of the rhetorical situation faced by Senator Muskie on the eve of the 1970 election. The chapter is developed in light of three constituents of the rhetorical situation--exigence, audience, constraints--in an attempt to define the nature

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<sup>12</sup>Bitzer, 6.

of the situation which invited election eve discourse from the Democratic party.

#### Chapter V

Chapter five considers the appropriateness of the Muskie speech and determines whether Senator Muskie's election eve address represented a fitting response to the rhetorical situation with which he was faced.

#### Chapter VI

Chapter six summarizes the findings and conclusions of the thesis and suggests the implications for future research.

## CHAPTER II

### A THEORY OF RHETORICAL SITUATION

Chapter two provides a more detailed description of Bitzer's theory of rhetorical situation. The purposes of this chapter are (1) to describe "rhetorical situation" and its relevance to rhetorical theory, and (2) to identify and describe the parts of the rhetorical situation.

#### I. THE ROLE OF THE RHETORICAL SITUATION IN THE CREATION OF DISCOURSE

Bitzer defined the rhetorical situation as follows:

. . . a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence.<sup>1</sup>

The thesis of Bitzer's argument distinguished his theory of rhetorical situation from more prominent and traditional theories of persuasion: Rhetorical situation--exigence, audience, constraints--is the source of all rhetorical activity. The suggestion that rhetoric is situational had the following implications:

. . . (1) rhetorical discourse comes into existence as a response to a situation. . . ; (2) a speech is given rhetorical significance by the situation. . . ; (3) a rhetorical situation must

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<sup>1</sup>Lloyd F. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," Rhetoric and Philosophy, I (January, 1968), 6.

exist as a necessary condition of rhetorical discourse. . . ; (4) . . . many rhetorical situations mature and decay without giving birth to rhetorical utterance; (5) a situation is rhetorical insofar as it needs and invites discourse capable of participating with the situation and thereby altering its reality; (6) discourse is rhetorical insofar as it functions, or seeks to function, as a fitting response to a situation which needs and invites it. (7) Finally, the situation controls the rhetorical response in the same sense that the question controls the answer and the problem controls the solution. Not the rhetor and not persuasive intent, but the situation is the source and ground of rhetorical activity--and, I should add, of rhetorical criticism.<sup>2</sup>

Having presented Bitzer's argument that the rhetorical situation gives discourse its "character-as-rhetorical,"<sup>3</sup> attention can now be devoted to the constituents of the rhetorical situation.

## II. PARTS OF THE RHETORICAL SITUATION

Bitzer argued that a rhetorical situation consists of three elements: (1) exigence; (2) audience; and (3) constraints. In addition, he charged that the three constituents "comprise everything relevant in a rhetorical situation."<sup>4</sup>

### Exigence

Before one can examine the 1970 political campaign in light of the theory of rhetorical situation, one must first determine what Bitzer meant when he claimed that exigence serves as the "organizing

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<sup>2</sup>Bitzer, 5-6.

<sup>3</sup>Bitzer, 3.

<sup>4</sup>Bitzer, 8.

principle"<sup>5</sup> in any given rhetorical situation. Three questions merit consideration: (1) What is exigence? (2) How did Bitzer's association of the term with the rhetorical situation affect the meaning of exigence? and (3) What criteria did Bitzer establish for the identification of the controlling exigence in any given rhetorical situation?

That which is exigent, according to Webster's Third New International Dictionary, is that which is "exacting or requiring immediate aid or action; pressing, critical."<sup>6</sup> Bitzer offered his own definition of exigence:

. . . Any exigence is an imperfection marked by urgency; it is a defect, an obstacle, something waiting to be done, a thing which is other than it should be.<sup>7</sup>

Implicit within Bitzer's definition is the notion that exigence takes the form of some urgent or pressing problem.

Bitzer was careful to note the distinction between those exigencies which are a part of the rhetorical situation and those which are not. He wrote:

. . . In almost any sort of context, there will be numerous exigencies, but not all are elements of a rhetorical situation--not all are rhetorical exigencies. An exigence which cannot be modified is not rhetorical; thus, whatever comes about of necessity and cannot be changed--death, winter, and some natural disasters, for instance--are exigencies to be sure, but they

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<sup>5</sup>Bitzer, 7.

<sup>6</sup>Philip B. Gove (ed.), Webster's Third New International Dictionary (Springfield, Massachusetts: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1967).

<sup>7</sup>Bitzer, 6.

are not rhetorical.<sup>8</sup>

Ordinarily, the term exigence implies some urgent or critical problem; when the rhetorical critic uses the term in reference to some rhetorical situation, Bitzer argued, the term assumes a different meaning. An exigence which can be modified "only by means other than discourse is not rhetorical."<sup>9</sup> Thus, a rhetorical critic interested in the application of Bitzer's theory of rhetorical situation must note the distinction between a non-rhetorical exigence--an urgency which "neither requires nor invites the assistance of discourse"<sup>10</sup>--and rhetorical exigence.

Two items concerning the relationship of exigence to the rhetorical situation may be noted. First, an exigency must be capable of modification through discourse in order to be rhetorical. Second, an exigency which is capable of modification through discourse is "at the heart of" the rhetorical situation; not the mere existence of oral discourse, but the response of discourse to a rhetorical situation originating from a state of exigence gives a speech its rhetorical character.<sup>11</sup>

Although Bitzer failed to identify with precision a specific formula for the determination of exigence in a rhetorical situation,

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<sup>8</sup>Bitzer, 6. Bitzer distinguished between "exigency" and exigence; numerous "exigencies" contribute to a state of exigence (a complex of "exigencies") which, in turn, may lead to discourse.

<sup>9</sup>Bitzer, 7.

<sup>10</sup>Bitzer, 7.

<sup>11</sup>Bitzer, 3.

he did indicate several standards or guidelines for the determination of exigence. The critic's utilization of Bitzer's guidelines for the determination of exigence may be of assistance in the attempt to answer the question, What urgency figured most heavily in creating the need for discourse?

First, Bitzer indicated that not all of the elements of a rhetorical situation are rhetorical exigencies; any exigency which can be modified by means other than discourse is non-rhetorical.<sup>12</sup> Thus, those elements of the situation which cannot be modified through discourse warrant the attention of the critic only insofar as they determine the degree to which the larger exigence is rhetorical.

Second, Bitzer contended, the exigence in a given situation must require or invite the assistance of discourse.<sup>13</sup> Bitzer explained:

. . . An exigence is rhetorical when it is capable of positive modification and when positive modification requires discourse or can be assisted by discourse. For example, suppose that a man's acts are injurious to others and that the quality of his acts can be changed only if discourse is addressed to him; the exigence--his injurious acts--is then unmistakably rhetorical. The pollution of our air is also rhetorical because its positive modification--reduction of pollution--strongly invites the assistance of discourse producing public awareness, indignation, and action of the right kind. . . . the rhetor's decision to speak is based mainly upon the urgency of the exigence and the probability that the exigence is rhetorical.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Bitzer, 6-7.

<sup>13</sup>Bitzer, 7.

<sup>14</sup>Bitzer, 7.

Finally, Bitzer commented, the urgency which figures most heavily in the rhetorical situation will serve as the organizing principle for the producer of discourse. Bitzer wrote the following:

In any rhetorical situation there will be at least one controlling exigence which functions as the organizing principle: it specifies the audience to be addressed and the change to be effected. The exigence may or may not be perceived clearly by the rhetor or other persons in the situation; it may be strong or weak depending upon the clarity of their perception and the degree of interest in it; it may be real or unreal depending on the facts of the case; it may be important or trivial; it may be such that discourse can completely remove it, or it may persist in spite of repeated modifications; it may be completely familiar . . . or it may be totally new, unique. When it is perceived and when it is strong and important, then it constrains the thought and action of the perceiver who may respond rhetorically if he is in a position to do so.<sup>15</sup>

In any rhetorical situation, numerous exigencies form a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations that strongly invites discourse; such a complex dictates the audience that is to be addressed and constrains the thought and action of the person who is in a position to offer a rhetorical response. Essential to an understanding of audience and constraints--two additional elements of the rhetorical situation--is the notion that the orator's perception of exigence includes his perception of audience and constraints; exigence, Bitzer maintained, by nature defines audience and constraints for the orator.

### Audience

A second element of the rhetorical situation is audience.

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<sup>15</sup>Bitzer, 7.



Bitzer wrote the following:

. . . Since rhetorical discourse produces change by influencing the decision and action of persons who function as mediators of change, it follows that rhetoric always requires an audience--even in those cases where a person engages himself or ideal mind as audience. It is also clear that a rhetorical audience must be distinguished from a body of mere hearers or readers; properly speaking, a rhetorical audience consists only of those persons who are capable of being influenced by discourse and of being mediators of change.<sup>16</sup>

Bitzer's explanation of the relationship of audience to the rhetorical situation meant: (1) as an element of the rhetorical situation, audience refers to a group of persons capable of serving as mediators of the change which discourse functions to produce; and (2) an audience is a part of the situation which precedes the creation of discourse and not merely the audience which is later assembled to witness the speech. The exigence in a given rhetorical situation, according to the theory, dictates the audience to whom a speaker should direct his comments.

### Constraints

Finally, Bitzer contended, no analysis of a rhetorical situation would be complete without a consideration of constraints. A set of constraints was defined as "persons, events, objects, and relations which are parts of the situation because they have the power to modify the exigence."<sup>17</sup>

Sources of constraints include the following:

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<sup>16</sup>Bitzer, 7-8.

<sup>17</sup>Bitzer, 8.

. . . beliefs, attitudes, documents, facts, traditions, images, interests, motives, and the like; and when the orator enters the situation, his discourse not only harnesses constraints given by the situation but provides additional important constraints-- for example his personal character, his logical proofs, and his style.<sup>18</sup>

Bitzer's argument that the rhetorical situation prescribes the response which is offered to fit the situation stemmed from his contention that constraints have the power to restrict the thought and action of the orator.

#### Summary

Every rhetorical situation includes three elements: (1) exigence, a state of urgency which strongly invites utterance; (2) audience, a group of persons who serve as mediators of change; and (3) constraints, a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations which limits the orator's response to the situation.

### III. CONCLUSION

Bitzer's contention that the rhetorical situation from which discourse emerges gives discourse its rhetorical character distinguished his theory of rhetorical situation from other theories of persuasion. The theory of rhetorical situation provides a method by which the critic can examine the relationship between the situation which precedes discourse and the resultant discourse itself. Having

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<sup>18</sup>Bitzer, 8.

described Bitzer's theory, it is now appropriate to examine the 1970 political campaign, the complex of persons, events, objects, and relations from which Senator Muskie's rhetorical situation emerged.

## CHAPTER III

### AN OVERVIEW OF THE 1970 CAMPAIGN

Before one can examine the events of the 1970 political campaign in light of Bitzer's theory of rhetorical situation, the campaign must be analyzed from a historical perspective. Such an inquiry will permit a more accurate description of the 1970 political campaign as a rhetorical situation which demanded a response from Senator Muskie on the evening of November 2, 1970. This chapter will focus upon: (1) the 1968 Presidential campaign and the overriding objectives of the Nixon Administration; (2) the position of the Democratic party prior to the 1970 congressional and senatorial campaign; and (3) the importance of the 1970 elections to both the Republican and Democratic parties.

#### I. THE 1968 REPUBLICAN CAMPAIGN AND NIXON ASCENDANCY

Richard Nixon entered the Presidency at a time when the nation lacked unity. President Lyndon B. Johnson acknowledged the dissonance within American society when he informed the American people of his decision not to seek another term of office:

. . . I shall not seek, and I will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as your President.

For 37 years in the service of our nation, first as a Congressman, as a Senator and Vice President, and now as your President, I have put the unity of the people first.

. . . In these times, as in times before, . . . it is

true that a house divided against itself . . . is a house that cannot stand.<sup>1</sup>

### The Johnson Administration

Lyndon Johnson's Administration was unable to cope with the dissent voiced by different elements of American society--particularly, the attitudes of certain factions concerning United States involvement in Vietnam--and therein was Mr. Johnson's tragedy.<sup>2</sup> The dissension among various factions of America's citizenry, however, was not to cease once President Johnson had announced that he would not seek another term as President, despite the intention of Mr. Johnson's successor to make "national unity" a dominant theme of the new Republican Administration.

### Nixon's 1968 Campaign Effort

Richard Nixon's 1968 Presidential campaign effort, not unlike the campaign efforts of most Presidential candidates, was characterized by his desire to preside over a united America. The subject of Vietnam, an issue which had contributed to the division of American society,<sup>3</sup> became extremely important during the Presidential campaign. Candidate Nixon promised a swift and honorable end to the war. In his speech accepting the Presidential nomination

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<sup>1</sup>The New York Times, April 1, 1968, p. 1, col. 6.

<sup>2</sup>Theodore H. White, The Making of the President--1968 (New York: Pocket Books, 1970), pp. 86-87.

<sup>3</sup>Robert Macneil, The People Machine (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 69.

of the Republican party, Mr. Nixon said, "I pledge to you tonight that the first priority foreign policy objective of our next administration will be to bring an honorable end to the Vietnam war."<sup>4</sup> Nixon continued to condemn the Democrats' handling of the war throughout the fall of 1968, and he claimed that "only new leadership not tied to the mistakes of the past could bring about an honorable end to the conflict."<sup>5</sup>

Although Nixon discussed additional issues which seemed less critical than an end to the war which had promoted disharmony among the country's citizens, the desire of the American people for a united nation became the theme--the most important issue--of Mr. Nixon's 1968 Presidential campaign. Nixon announced at the Republican National Convention:

We're going to win because at a time that America cries out for the unity that this Administration has destroyed, the Republican party . . . stands united before the nation tonight. And a party that can unite itself will unite America.<sup>6</sup>

The Republican candidate sought to make the disintegration that was driving America apart a major issue throughout the campaign months that followed the convention. In a speech delivered on the NBC and CBS radio networks on September 19, 1968, Mr. Nixon stated:

The next President must unite America. He must calm its angers, ease its terrible frictions, and bring its people together once again in peace and mutual respect. He has to

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<sup>4</sup>The New York Times, August 9, 1968, p. 20, col. 1.

<sup>5</sup>The New York Times, September 7, 1968, p. 1, col. 7.

<sup>6</sup>The New York Times, August 9, 1968, p. 20, col. 1.

take hold of America before he can move it forward.

. . . I made a point of conducting my campaign for the nomination in a way that would make it possible to unite the party after the convention. That was successful. I intend now to conduct my election campaign in a way that will make it possible to unite the nation after November. It is not my intention to preside over the disintegration of America or the dissolution of America's force for good in the world. Rather, I want the Presidency to be a force for pulling our people back together once again, and for making our nation whole by making our people one. We have had enough of discord and division, and what we need now is a time of healing, of renewal, and of realistic hope.<sup>7</sup>

One cannot overemphasize how instrumental to the Republican campaign effort this drive for unity became. Chester, Hodgson, and Page remarked upon the intensity of Nixon's desire to unite the country;<sup>8</sup> Wills made a similar observation.<sup>9</sup>

### The Nixon Ascendancy

During a stop in Deshler, Ohio, Nixon delivered what had come to be known as "the standard speech."<sup>10</sup> An event that had occurred during the speech was later to be remembered by the President-elect as he made his victory remarks acknowledging Hubert Humphrey's concession.<sup>11</sup> As is the case in most Presidential campaigns, the

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<sup>7</sup>Richard M. Nixon, "The Nature of the Presidency," Vital Speeches of the Day, XXXV (October 15, 1968), 6, 8.

<sup>8</sup>Lewis Chester, Godfrey Hodgson, and Bruce Page, An American Melodrama: The Presidential Campaign of 1968 (New York: The Viking Press, 1969), p. 629.

<sup>9</sup>Gary Wills, Nixon Agonistes (New York: The New American Library, 1971), pp. 426-429.

<sup>10</sup>White, p. 464.

<sup>11</sup>White, p. 465.

newly elected President routinely called for unity in his "victory speech" of November 7, 1968:

And then one final thought that I would like to leave with regard to the character of the new Administration. I saw many signs in this campaign. Some of them were not friendly, and some were very friendly. But the one that touched me the most was one that I saw in Deshler, Ohio, at the end of a long day of whistle-stopping, a little town, I suppose, five times the population was there in the dusk, almost impossible to see-- but a teenager held up a sign, "Bring us together."

And that will be the great objective of this Administration at the outset, to bring the American people together.<sup>12</sup>

The plea for national unity--as well as the President's commitment to that goal--also provided a dominant theme for the Inaugural Address of January 30, 1969.<sup>13</sup>

#### Summary

Disharmony among the American people--a lack of unity which had in part resulted from disagreement over United States involvement in Vietnam--encouraged Lyndon Johnson not to seek another term as President of the United States.<sup>14</sup> Richard Nixon had inherited the Presidency from one who could no longer continue in the office; even more important, Richard Nixon had inherited the problems faced by the Johnson Administration: the war in Vietnam, an economy suffering from inflation, and an electorate marred by its dissenting

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<sup>12</sup>The New York Times, November 7, 1968, p. 21, col. 3.

<sup>13</sup>Richard M. Nixon, "Inaugural Address: Search for Peace," Vital Speeches of the Day, XXXV (February 1, 1969), 226-228. It should be noted that a newly elected President's tendency to plea for national unity in an inaugural address is a common occurrence in American political argument.

<sup>14</sup>Eric F. Goldman, The Tragedy of Lyndon Johnson (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), pp. 520-531.



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## II. THE POSITION OF THE DEMOCRATS BEFORE THE 1970 CAMPAIGN

Another serious problem--perhaps the greatest problem of all--was to be found in the form of the Democratic Congress that Richard Nixon would have to face during his first two years as President. Not just Richard Nixon himself, but the President and the Congress would ultimately determine whether the overriding objective of the new Administration--a united America--could be achieved.

The challenge that the Democrats would pose in the election campaign of 1970 is best explained in terms of the unique position that the Democratic party could assume once Nixon had been elected to the White House. This section will focus upon: (1) the position of the Democratic party during the 1968 Presidential campaign; (2) the Democratic Congress faced by President Nixon in his first two years as President; and (3) the reversal of the Democratic role in national politics during Richard Nixon's tenure as President.

### The Democrats and the 1968 Campaign

The 1968 Democratic convention held in Chicago had been a disaster for the Democratic party.<sup>15</sup> The peculiar situation in which party members found themselves--disagreement among various factions

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<sup>15</sup>White, p. 321.

of the party concerning the war in Vietnam--did not permit the nomination of a single candidate who could unite and represent his party in 1968. There was no way, at the outset, that Hubert Humphrey's candidacy could comfortably accommodate the supporters of Eugene McCarthy, George McGovern, George Wallace, or Edward Kennedy.<sup>16</sup>

The choice for many Democrats in 1968 was clear: either Johnson policy symbolized by Hubert Humphrey was to be supported, or it was not to be supported, in which case dissension among party members would threaten party unity and diminish the chances of sending a Democrat to the White House in 1969. Leading Democrats could either support the party by remaining silent or speak out against the war and destroy party unity. The Chicago convention saw the latter,<sup>17</sup> and Richard Nixon was elected President.

#### The Democratic Congress of 1969

In the Congress of the United States, however, Democrats did not need to agree on national policy so much as disagree with Mr. Nixon's national policy; the outcome of the relationship between the Democratic Congress and President Nixon might easily determine who would sit in the White House after the 1972 Presidential election.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Chester, Hodgson, and Page, pp. 577-591.

<sup>17</sup>White, p. 321.

<sup>18</sup>The New York Times, November 4, 1970, p. 47, col. 1.

The Congress faced by President Nixon in January of 1969 was composed largely of Democrats; 58 and 243 Democrats had been elected to serve in the Senate and House of Representatives respectively, while 41 Republicans assumed Senate seats and 192 Republicans had been elected to the House of Representatives.<sup>19</sup> Although the Democrats were without a single, acknowledged national spokesman, they were nevertheless in a formidable position, and they could be counted on to provide stiff opposition for the Republican party.<sup>20</sup>

### Role Reversal

No longer did all of the factions within the Democratic party have to tolerate a Democratic Administration strongly committed to a war in Vietnam in order to remain united. Whereas the Republican party had during the Johnson years attempted to disassociate itself from a national policy which had strongly committed the United States to continue a strategy of limited warfare, the Democrats could now assume this role, and the Republicans were forced to support a President who--as time would later tell--could only end the war gradually.<sup>21</sup> Role reversal among the two major political parties had suddenly taken place.

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<sup>19</sup>Dan Golenpaul Associates (eds.), Information Please Almanac: Atlas and Yearbook--1969 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1969), p. 45.

<sup>20</sup>White, p. 532.

<sup>21</sup>Richard M. Nixon, "Cambodia: A Difficult Decision," Vital Speeches of the Day, XXXVI (May 15, 1970), 450-452.

On the subject of Vietnam, Richard Nixon's election to the Presidency meant that the Democrats were no longer confronted with an inescapable dilemma faced during the Johnson years. Lyndon Johnson had time after time asserted his belief in the necessity of United States involvement in Vietnam:

. . . He intervened militarily in South Vietnam because he believed that move was the only alternative to a major threat to the security of the United States. Without America in the fighting, South Vietnam would have come under Communist control, he was convinced.<sup>22</sup>

Johnson had committed the United States and had similarly tried to commit his political party to a policy of United States involvement in Vietnam.

When Richard Nixon assumed the Presidency, however, the Democratic party was relieved of its burdensome dilemma. No longer did leading Democrats have to support a pro-Vietnam policy in order to maintain party unity. Nixon had announced in a March 5, 1968, speech that he had a "plan" to end the war.<sup>23</sup> Nixon's pronouncement of a solution to the war would later haunt him during the 1970 campaign:

. . . the President was elected after announcing that he had a plan to end the war. Twenty-one months after he entered the office, the war grinds on. Thirteen-thousand men have been killed and tens of thousands wounded in those months. . . .<sup>24</sup>

Just as the Vietnam war had provided the Republican party with an

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<sup>22</sup>Goldman, p. 516.

<sup>23</sup>The New York Times, March 6, 1968, p. 1, col. 5.

<sup>24</sup>Editorial, The New York Times, November 1, 1970, IV, p. 14, col. 1.

issue in 1968, President Nixon's failure to find an immediate solution to the war was to provide the Democratic party with valuable ammunition during the 1970 political campaign. A clear reversal of party roles had taken place.

On the subject of the economy, the situation was similar for the Democratic party. Under a Democratic President, the country had suffered from sky-rocketing inflation. Republican President Nixon, moreover, had inherited the problem.<sup>25</sup> Inflation, the Democrats could claim, was no longer their problem, for the nation's economic problems had become worse:

By last spring, it became obvious to all post-Keynesians, monetarists, and practical men that the Washington game plan had gone awry. Inflation had been more stubborn than realized. . . . Unemployment is worse than expected by everyone's calculations, including those of the Administration itself. . . .<sup>26</sup>

Whereas Republican leaders had challenged President Johnson's economic shrewdness, the Democratic party could easily reverse the role and charge Richard Nixon with incompetence in economic matters.

Notable too was the opportunity for the Democrats to charge President Nixon with failure to live up to the great objective of his Administration--national unity. Concern over national discord had been instrumental, according to President Johnson, in Mr. Johnson's

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<sup>25</sup>Paul A. Samuelson, "Economic Policy is an Art," The New York Times, October 30, 1970, p. 41, col. 4.

<sup>26</sup>Samuelson, The New York Times, October 30, 1970, p. 41, col. 4. Professor Samuelson's interpretation is admittedly somewhat biased; Samuelson himself is an acknowledged liberal. Nevertheless, the sluggish economy provided the Democrats with a valuable campaign weapon.

decision to leave the Presidency.<sup>27</sup> Mr. Nixon had inherited the problem of national disunity from his predecessor, and again the roles could be reversed. The President's decision to send American troops to Cambodia, the subsequent tragedy which occurred at Kent State University, and Mr. Nixon's failure to find an immediate solution to the war in Indo-China could be interpreted by the Democrats as firm evidence that Richard Nixon was no closer toward his goal of national unity than was his predecessor.

### Summary

Immediately prior to the campaign of 1970, the Democratic party assumed a role held by the Republicans when Mr. Johnson was President--a group of "anti-heroes" functioning within the American political system. The reversal of roles did not cease as the campaign of 1970 got underway.

### III. THE 1970 CAMPAIGN AND ELECTIONS

Ordinarily, off-year elections do not provide much excitement for the American voter. Governors, congressmen, and senators emerge, after the votes are counted, from campaigns noted for their lack of zeal. The 1970 political campaign, however, will not be remembered for its lack of excitement.

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<sup>27</sup>The New York Times, April 1, 1968, p. 1, col. 5.

## The Importance of the Elections

The importance of the 1970 election results was summarized on the day following the election:

The main thing about the 1970 American election is what it means for the Presidential election of 1972. All this scuffling over the last few weeks was merely spring practice for the opening of the real battle for the White House two years from now.

This week's votes . . . could easily determine who sits in the White House after the Presidential election of 1972.<sup>28</sup>

One might legitimately question why the elections of 1970 were of such importance; every off-year election has at least minimal capacity to improve or weaken a Presidential incumbent's chances for re-election.<sup>29</sup> What, then, made the elections of 1970 unique? Perhaps Chester, Hodgson, and Page have suggested one plausible explanation:

. . . With the Democrats in the wildest array which even such a turbulent party is likely to fall into in a generation, the Republicans still almost lost the election [of 1968]. They failed to win control of the House of Representatives or even substantially to improve their position there. In the Senate, they may be bailed out on some issues by the Southern conservatives, but, inevitably, there are going to be times when Nixon pulls the levers and finds there is nothing at the end of the wires. Nixon is a minority President in several senses. He was elected by roughly a quarter of all Americans of voting age. He was the first choice of an even smaller proportion of the American people, if the preference polls are anything to go by.<sup>30</sup>

An election result which gave the Republicans a substantial number of senators and congressmen might in turn have led to the passage of more

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<sup>28</sup>Editorial, The New York Times, November 4, 1970, p. 47, col. 1.

<sup>29</sup>V. O. Key, Jr., Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1958), pp. 599-602.

<sup>30</sup>Chester, Hodgson, and Page, p. 788.

Republican legislation; hence, President Nixon's chances for a second term of office might have been improved. An increase in the Congressional majority already held by the Democrats might likewise have improved the chances for the 1972 Democratic Presidential candidate and have suggested that Nixon was defeatable.<sup>31</sup>

### "Buck-Passing" During the 1970 Campaign

In the political campaign of 1970, both the Republican and Democratic parties aimed not to unite the country, but rather to divide the nation. Analysis of the campaign tactics of both political parties revealed a considerable amount of "buck-passing." Each of the two parties quite openly charged the other with the responsibility for the nation's problems.

Among the tactics employed by the Republican leaders and candidates at the national and state level was the attempt to associate the Democratic party with the problems of "crime, drugs, smut, and permissiveness"<sup>32</sup> in order to create "a new conservative political majority in America."<sup>33</sup> An editorial which appeared in The New York Times of November 2, 1970, indicated the following:

. . . Carl Shipley, Republican National Committeeman for the District of Columbia, has placed vicious advertisements in 61

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<sup>31</sup>Stewart Alsop, "A Defeatable President," Newsweek, LXXVI (November 16, 1970), 124.

<sup>32</sup>Editorial, The New York Times, October 30, 1970, p. 41, col. 1.

<sup>33</sup>Editorial, The New York Times, October 30, 1970, p. 41, col. 1.



newspapers around the country, attacking five Democratic Senators and one Democratic senatorial candidate. . . .

These three-quarter-page advertisements assert that these Democrats believe in "excusing crime, forgiving rioting and looting, and accepting the use of marijuana and heroin by our young people."<sup>34</sup>

The effort to associate Democratic politicians and candidates with the nation's problems was not limited to attacks at the national level:

. . . Republican candidates across the country . . . have sought to whip up emotions about crime, campus disorder, and pornography. A cynical, coolly calculated effort has been made to distract attention from the Administration's record in economic affairs and foreign policy--a deliberate attempt to create scapegoats and identify the Democrats with them.<sup>35</sup>

Some Republicans did not approve of the way the campaign was handled. The New York Times reported on Oregon Senator Mark Hatfield's reaction to the 1970 campaign:

. . . Senator Hatfield contended that the kind of campaign waged by the Republicans this year was not only counterproductive in terms of votes, but also eroded the country's faith in the President's leadership.

At the behest of Mr. Nixon and Vice President Agnew, Senator Hatfield said, Republican candidates relied on "guilt-by-association," "manipulated the fears and prejudices" of the electorate, and attempted to capitalize on social divisions in an attempt to prove that Democrats were "soft" on law and order.<sup>36</sup>

Not only the Republicans, but the Democrats as well were guilty of "buck-passing."

The position of the Democratic party, described in an earlier

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<sup>34</sup>Editorial, The New York Times, October 30, 1970, p. 41, col. 1.

<sup>35</sup>Editorial, The New York Times, November 2, 1970, p. 46, col. 1.

<sup>36</sup>Editorial, The New York Times, November 8, 1970, IV, p. 14, col. 1.

section, was much more subtle than personal invective and vicious attacks but was nevertheless much the same--guilt-by-association. The problems of Lyndon Johnson's Administration became the problems of Richard Nixon's Administration. If the war in Vietnam had not ended and if the economy was experiencing rising inflation and unemployment, Republican leadership could have been responsible, in the eyes of leading Democrats, for the nation's problems.<sup>37</sup> President Nixon inherited a number of problems from Lyndon Johnson, but the Democrats indicated Nixon as the cause of those problems. Again, role reversal can be seen. The Democratic party was in a position similar to that of the Republican party in 1968. Blame the Republicans and pass the buck--that seems to have been the Democratic campaign philosophy in 1970.

#### Summary

The 1970 elections assumed great importance at the national level. From a Republican viewpoint, the result of the congressional and senatorial elections might foreshadow Richard Nixon's ability to be elected to a second term of office. Conversely, for the Democrats, the election results might reveal whether Richard Nixon could be beaten in the 1972 Presidential race.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The purpose of any election campaign--whether single candidates

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<sup>37</sup>James Reston, "Roorbach the Smear Artist," The New York Times, October 30, 1970, p. 41, col. 1.

or whole parties are involved--is to win the election,<sup>38</sup> and in the elections of 1970, both parties sought to gain strength in the House of Representatives and the Senate in order to boost the 1972 Presidential campaign effort. Unfortunately, neither party seemed to employ positive, constructive means in the effort to accomplish that goal. In a campaign that was to foreshadow President Nixon's ability to stand re-election, the merits of individual candidates seemed of little importance. "The real issue of the 1970 Congressional elections," wrote columnist James Reston, "is not the candidates but the tactics."<sup>39</sup>

Having established the importance of the 1970 elections to both the Republican and Democratic parties, attention can now be devoted to the more specific elements of the rhetorical situation which preceded Senator Muskie's election eve address.

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<sup>38</sup>William J. Gore and Robert L. Peabody, "The Function of the Political Campaign: A Case Study," Western Political Quarterly, XI (Fall, 1958), 56.

<sup>39</sup>Reston, "Roorbach the Smear Artist," p. 41, col. 1.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE RHETORICAL SITUATION

The creation and presentation of discourse, Bitzer argued, is preceded by a rhetorical situation--an ordered complex of persons, events, objects, and relations that strongly invites utterance. Chapter four examines the 1970 political campaign in light of Bitzer's theory of situation and seeks to determine the nature of the rhetorical situation which preceded the creation and presentation of Senator Muskie's election eve address.

#### I. A STATE OF EXIGENCE

If Bitzer was correct when he maintained that all rhetorical situations originate from a state of urgency, what persons, events, objects, and relations created a state of exigence which demanded close attention from the leaders of the Democratic party? An examination of the late developments of the 1970 campaign may suggest an answer to the question.

#### Last-Minute Campaigning

Richard Nixon and his campaign staff have on various occasions engaged in massive last-minute campaign efforts. Nimmo remarked:

. . . Richard Nixon's efforts have always relied on a last-minute television "blitz" or saturation. In 1960, for example, he finished with a four-hour telethon on the ABC television network (at a cost of \$200,000) which ranged from discussing complex issues to a chat with Ginger Rogers. In 1968 he closed

his campaign on election eve with several showings of a sentimental documentary combined with a live telethon . . . .<sup>1</sup>

In the 1970 political campaign, leaders of and consultants for the Democratic party had anticipated a massive last-minute campaign effort by Richard Nixon on behalf of Republican congressional, senatorial, and gubernatorial candidates. One of Senator Edmund S. Muskie's speech consultants indicated the following:

. . . Knowing that the President would be on the air, we designed in our own mind what we expected him to do. Let me try and describe it to you: The camera opens on a window outside the White House. It zooms in to find the President all alone behind his desk in the Oval Room. He looks into the camera and says something to this effect: "Good evening, my fellow Americans. Two years ago you sent me to this lonely and awesome office. Tonight across this land there are many capable and outstanding men of my party who are running for the opportunity to join me here in Washington where together we can get about the business of solving the enormous problems which confront this nation. I need those men here to help me and I urge you to go to the polls tomorrow and . . . etc., etc."<sup>2</sup>

This somewhat less than objective analysis is important only because it indicates what had originally been anticipated of the Republican party by leading Democrats and Democratic speech consultants. The imagined presentation described above did not take place on the eve of the 1970 election. The Republicans had chosen a different tactic by late October.

#### The San Jose Incident

An event that occurred only a few days before the election

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<sup>1</sup>Dan Nimmo, The Political Persuaders: The Techniques of Modern Election Campaigns (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Letter from Mrs. Jane Squier, October 8, 1971.

gave the Republicans additional campaign ammunition. Late in the 1970 campaign, when President Nixon was traveling throughout various parts of the country, attempting to lend his support to Republican candidates, Mr. Nixon "ran into repeated heckling and, in the last few days, his motorcade was stoned in San Jose [California]."<sup>3</sup>

The President had just delivered a campaign speech at San Jose Municipal Auditorium.<sup>4</sup> Following that October 29, 1970, speech by Mr. Nixon,

. . . demonstrators threw eggs, rocks, and placards at Nixon's limousine as he left the auditorium. Eyewitnesses said he narrowly escaped being hit by 4 or 5 eggs. He had seen the anti-war demonstrators, estimated at more than 1,000, before he entered the hall and had attacked them as a "violent, radical few" in his speech. After the speech, he jumped on top of an automobile and waved to the crowd.<sup>5</sup>

Some reporters have acknowledged the occasional tendency of a few members of the Nixon staff to "leak out a few hecklers into the halls in order to dramatize Nixon's counterattacks on student radicals."<sup>6</sup> The evidence, however, suggested that the San Jose incident was not a maneuver of the President or his campaign staff.

#### The Phoenix Speech

Apparently the President did not feel that the San Jose

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<sup>3</sup>"Election '70: The Democrats Shape Up," Newsweek, LXXVI (November 16, 1970), 31.

<sup>4</sup>The New York Times, October 30, 1970, p. 1, col. 3.

<sup>5</sup>The New York Times, October 30, 1970, p. 1, col. 3.

<sup>6</sup>The New York Times, October 30, 1970, p. 41, col. 1.

incident could harm the efforts of Republican candidates; Mr. Nixon clearly seized the incident and used it for political purposes. In a speech delivered at Sky Harbor Airport in Phoenix, Arizona, on October 31, Mr. Nixon chose violence and dissent as his topics.<sup>7</sup> The President's most important remarks were as follows:

. . . It is time for the President of the United States to speak out clearly to the American people, . . . because all of America is affected by what happened a couple of days ago in my home state of California, in San Jose. . . .

. . . Violence in America today is not caused by the war, it is not caused by repression. There is no romantic ideal involved. Let's recognize these people for what they are. . . . They are the same thugs and hoodlums that have always plagued the good people.

And now the reason . . . that they have reached such prominence in our national life . . . can be summed up in a single word: appeasement. When you permit an imbalance to exist that favors the accused over the victim, you are inviting more violence and breeding more bullies.

For too long, and this needs to be said now and said here, the strength of freedom in our society has been eroded by a creeping permissiveness in our legislatures, in our courts, in our family life, and in our colleges and universities.

. . . The time has come to draw the line. The time has come for the great silent majority of Americans of all ages, of every political persuasion, to stand up and be counted against the appeasement of the rock throwers and obscenity shouters in America.<sup>8</sup>

Mr. Nixon also outlined an approach to deal with the problems of violence and dissent in American society, but he claimed that the failure of the Democratic Congress to pass needed legislation had impeded his efforts:

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<sup>7</sup>Richard M. Nixon, "Remarks Delivered at Sky Harbor Airport," Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, VI (November 9, 1970), 1522-1525.

<sup>8</sup>Nixon, "Remarks Delivered at Sky Harbor Airport," 1523-1524.

. . . because we have not had enough support in the House and the Senate, Congress has dilly-dallied; Congress has bottled them up in committee; Congress has passed only part of the program I asked for; and then they waited until just before the election.

The new approach to violence requires men in Congress who will work and fight for laws that will put the terrorists where they belong . . . .<sup>9</sup>

On Saturday, October 31, the Republicans "decided to buy a half-hour on each of the three networks to rebroadcast the speech against violence that President Nixon gave . . . in Phoenix, Arizona."<sup>10</sup> The half-hour of prime-time television, originally purchased by the Republican National Committee on Saturday, October 31, at a cost of \$300,000, was later "cut back to fifteen minutes by the networks"<sup>11</sup> at a cost of \$150,000.<sup>12</sup>

Upon hearing of the Republican decision to have the President address the nation on election eve, Lawrence O'Brien, Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, unsuccessfully appealed to the three major television networks to make fifteen minutes of free broadcast time available to the Democratic party.<sup>13</sup> Leading Democrats realized that the importance of the elections warranted a Democratic response to the President's election eve comments, and \$150,000 was later

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<sup>9</sup>Nixon, "Remarks Delivered at Sky Harbor Airport," 1524.

<sup>10</sup>The New York Times, November 2, 1970, p. 57, col. 1.

<sup>11</sup>The New York Times, November 3, 1970, p. 40, col. 6.

<sup>12</sup>The New York Times, November 3, 1970, p. 40, col. 6.

<sup>13</sup>The New York Times, November 2, 1960, p. 57, col. 1.



raised in order to pay for a Democratic broadcast.<sup>14</sup> The Ad Hoc Committee for National Unity was quickly organized under the chairmanship of W. Averell Harriman.<sup>15</sup> Members of the committee responsible for raising the \$150,000 necessary for a Democratic response included: Mrs. Martin Luther King, Jr.; I. W. Abel, President of the United Steelworkers Union; Leonard Woodcock, President of United Auto Workers; John D. Rockefeller, IV, Secretary of State of West Virginia; and Sargent Shriver, former Ambassador to France and Director of the Peace Corps under President Kennedy.<sup>16</sup>

The suggestion that Senator Edmund S. Muskie of Maine be allowed to respond to the President<sup>17</sup> was made by Geoffrey Cowan, a Washington attorney who was active in Senator Eugene McCarthy's 1968 campaign.<sup>18</sup> The New Republic reported on the selection of Muskie as party spokesman:

. . . Learning that Mr. Nixon would try to squeeze political juice from the San Jose stoning incident, Cowan called Joseph Califano--a former top aide to President Johnson--to suggest

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<sup>14</sup>The New York Times, November 3, 1970, p. 40, col. 6.

<sup>15</sup>Editorial, "Democratic Unity," The New Republic, CLXIII (November 21, 1970), 8.

<sup>16</sup>The New York Times, November 3, 1970, p. 40, col. 6.

<sup>17</sup>Letter from Mrs. Jane Squier, October 8, 1971. Although Mrs. Squier reported that Muskie "did not know anything of the content of the [Republican] broadcast beforehand," the evidence suggested that Muskie was indeed aware that he would be responding to a "law and order" speech by the President and that the Republicans would capitalize upon the violence that had occurred in San Jose.

<sup>18</sup>Theo Lippman, Jr. and Donald C. Hansen, Muskie (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1971), p. 230.

that Senator Edmund Muskie be engaged to rebut Nixon on election eve. Califano got in touch with Sam Brown, McCarthy's youth coordinator in 1968, who in turn contacted W. Averell Harriman. More Democrats were enlisted. . . .

All were convinced Muskie was the man.<sup>19</sup>

Muskie, the 1968 Democratic Vice Presidential candidate, was a unanimous choice of leading Democrats. Cowan himself reported that Muskie was possibly the only Democrat with enough stature to oppose the President on the eve of the election.<sup>20</sup> The decision to allow Muskie to represent the Democratic party was entirely appropriate, as the circumstances suggested that a possible Democratic Presidential contender be given the opportunity for national exposure. Norton wrote:

. . . except for Muskie, Humphrey and Kennedy were the only other strong choices for the role of national spokesman. The Chappaquidick incident eliminated Kennedy. Humphrey's comeback race in Minnesota . . . kept him from the role. These constraints thrust Muskie into the spokesman position for the Democratic party.<sup>21</sup>

### Summary

Throughout the 1970 political campaign, the Republican party sought to create an image of the Democratic party that many voters would find unacceptable. If the integrity of the Democratic party were left in question, attempts by Democratic leaders to reaffirm

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<sup>19</sup>Editorial, "Democratic Unity," 8-9.

<sup>20</sup>Lippman and Hansen, p. 230.

<sup>21</sup>Robert Wayne Norton, "The Rhetorical Situation Is the Message: Muskie's Election Eve Television Broadcast," Central States Speech Journal, XXII (Fall, 1971), 175.

prior attitudes among party members and Democratic voters might be seriously impaired; Democratic candidates might stand to do poorly at the polls.

An announcement of the Republican decision to allow President Nixon to address the nation on election eve created a state of exigence and urgently demanded a response from the Democratic party. A spokesman was chosen to represent the Democratic party on the eve of the election because leading Democrats were convinced that national exposure to a possible 1972 Presidential candidate might erase a weakened image of the party. Muskie was thrust into a leadership role because Hubert Humphrey, after losing the Presidency in 1968, was engaged in a tight battle for the United States Senate and Edward Kennedy, another possibility, had deliberately avoided national exposure since the Chappaquidick incident.

The exigence indicated the audience that was to be addressed-- a mass audience who might be urged to reconsider the Democratic image. Moreover, the exigence indicated the change to be effected--the reestablishment of a Democratic party image which many American voters might find acceptable.

## II. THE MEDIATORS OF CHANGE

Bitzer characterized audience as those persons capable of serving as mediators of the change which discourse functions to produce. Assuming that the exigence in the rhetorical situation was the image of the Democratic party that had been created by

Republican campaign tactics--an unfavorable image that was to be reinforced by the Republican party on election eve--what was the nature of the audience?

#### Voting by Party Affiliation

Wyckoff reported that most adults "who are aware enough to vote consistently tend to vote consistently for the candidates of one political party."<sup>22</sup> Voting studies conducted since 1952 affirm the proposition that approximately three of four American voters are committed to one of the two major political parties.<sup>23</sup> Of the total number of voters leaning toward either party, nearly 60% classify themselves as Democrats, while the remaining 40% classify themselves as Republicans.<sup>24</sup>

Loyalty to one of the two major political parties has persisted among most Americans through a number of elections.<sup>25</sup> Obviously, "the stronger the voter's party loyalty, the more likely

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<sup>22</sup>Gene Wyckoff, The Image Candidates (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968), p. 3.

<sup>23</sup>Nimmo, p. 22; Angus Campbell and others, The American Voter: An Abridgement (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1964), p. 69.

<sup>24</sup>Nimmo, p. 22. Nimmo's source was the Survey Research Center, The University of Michigan. An interesting statistic was present in the information cited by Nimmo: of the 57 of 100 American voters who are (strongly, weakly, independently) committed to the Democratic party, approximately 22 of the 57--about 38 %--are strongly committed to the party; moreover, of the 34 of 100 American voters who are (strongly, weakly, independently) committed to the Republican party, 13 of the 34--about 38%--are strongly committed to the party.

<sup>25</sup>Campbell and others, p. 67.

he is to remain true to his party's candidates."<sup>26</sup> Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes explained the tendency of most American voters to vote consistently for the candidates of one political party:

. . . In a survey interview most of our citizens freely classify themselves as Republicans or Democrats . . . . Few factors are of greater importance than the lasting attachment of tens of millions of Americans to one of the parties . . . .

Only in the exceptional case does the sense of individual attachment to party reflect a formal membership or an active connection with a party apparatus. Nor does it simply denote a voting record . . . . Generally this tie is a psychological identification, which can persist without legal recognition or evidence of formal membership and even without a consistent record of party support. Most Americans have this sense of attachment with one party or the other. And for the individual who does, the strength and direction of party identification are facts of central importance in accounting for attitude and behavior.<sup>27</sup>

The notion that many American voters reflect an attachment to one of the two major political parties led to the question: Do political campaigns significantly affect a voter's party affiliation?

#### The Effects of Political Campaigns

Each election year, politicians and candidates "are willing to spend extravagant sums because of their strong belief that campaigns can make or break political careers, parties, and programs."<sup>28</sup> In practice, however, political campaigns are less crucial to the outcome of an election than most politicians and candidates believe.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Nimmo, p. 3.

<sup>27</sup>Campbell and others, pp. 67-68.

<sup>28</sup>Nimmo, p. 3.

<sup>29</sup>Nimmo, p. 5.

Nimmo reported the following:

. . . students of politics . . . dispute the politicians' notion that political campaigns make a substantial difference in the outcome of electoral contests. Relying on evidence gathered by systematic studies of voting behavior, they point out that factors shaping voting choices are affected only marginally by campaign appeals. The principal factor consistently related to voting decisions is the party loyalty of the voter.<sup>30</sup>

Lang and Lang, suggesting that political campaigns have less effect upon voting behavior than politicians often have suspected, offered the following example from the 1960 Presidential campaign:

. . . the impact of these debates on the persons studied appears to have favored Kennedy more than Nixon. But when viewed against the background of voters, the majority of whom had identified themselves with or voted for the Democratic party in the past, Kennedy's gain does not appear to have entailed a large-scale crossing of party lines. Most of the undecided were Democrats-in-conflict, who were won over because Kennedy succeeded in identifying himself with the tradition of the Democratic party.<sup>31</sup>

The conclusion to be drawn is that "very little actual change in political attitudes occurs among voters as a direct consequence of exposure to political information alone.<sup>32</sup>

#### Campaigns as Reinforcement

The notion that political campaigns do not appear to have the substantial effect upon voting behavior imagined by political candidates

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<sup>30</sup>Nimmo, p. 3.

<sup>31</sup>Kurt Lang and Gladys Engel Lang, Politics and Television (rev. ed.; Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970), p. 247.

<sup>32</sup>Harold Mendelsohn and Irving Crespi, Polls, Television, and the New Politics (Scranton, Pennsylvania: Chandler Publishing Company, 1970), p. 248.

suggested that a political campaign "would seem to be less a period of potential change than a period of political enrichment, a period in which prior attitudes are reinforced."<sup>33</sup> Thus, the purpose of a political campaign is "not so much to convert opinion as to reactivate and reinforce past loyalties."<sup>34</sup> Typical of most voters is the tendency to "sift out . . . only that particular information which will bolster or reinforce their own objectives and already held attitudes."<sup>35</sup>

#### Summary

Leaders and candidates of the Republican party had attempted to create an unfavorable image of the Democratic party in order to reestablish and reinforce Republican strength at the polls. Although the audience for Muskie's election eve address was a mass audience of American voters, Republican allegations suggested to the Democrats the importance of a last-minute appeal aimed at the Democratic voter. Senator Muskie, in a statement given to reporters on November 4, 1970, described his audience when he said, "I hope that what I had to say at least hardened the Democratic party, the Democratic voters, and the Democratic candidates . . . ."<sup>36</sup> Reinforcement of voter attitudes

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<sup>33</sup>Kurt Lang and Gladys Engel Lang, "The Mass Media and Voting," in Bernard Berelson and Morris Janowitz (eds.), Reader in Public Opinion and Communication (2d ed.; New York: The Free Press, 1966), p. 457.

<sup>34</sup>Lang and Lang, Politics and Television, p. 305.

<sup>35</sup>Mendelsohn and Crespi, p. 248.

<sup>36</sup>Statement by Senator Edmund S. Muskie, interview with the press at Washington National Airport, November 4, 1970.

and party loyalties was to become paramount for the Democratic party as election eve approached.

### III. THE MAJOR CONSTRAINTS

In the rhetorical situation which precedes the creation and presentation of discourse, Bitzer maintained, constraints which limit the nature of the orator's response exist and must be perceived and later employed by the orator in the attempt to persuade. The purpose of this section is to identify the major constraints which existed in the rhetorical situation faced by Senator Muskie.

#### Law and Order

Obviously, numerous constraints defined the nature of the response that Muskie was "forced" to offer. For example, the Republican decision to broadcast an address delivered by President Nixon on election eve challenged the Democratic party to offer a formal response from a party spokesman. More important, however, the tactics employed by the Republican party to emphasize the apathy of Democratic candidates toward violence and unrest demanded that Senator Muskie speak to the law and order issue, an issue which had been avoided by the Democrats during the campaign. Norton wrote the following:

. . . the issue of law and order in 1970 involved too much truth to be dismissed as a catch-all issue. Consequently, healing

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<sup>37</sup>James Reston, "Roorbach the Smear Artist," The New York Times, p. 41, col. 1.



rhetoric was demanded more than ever for a nation that seems to be split along so many lines.<sup>38</sup>

Despite the ambiguity of the complex of "beliefs, attitudes, traditions, facts . . ." that defined the nature of Muskie's response, three additional constraints seemed of particular importance.

### Republican Ethics

Most American voters believe that the tactics employed by political candidates and parties should not exceed "the rules of the campaign game."<sup>39</sup> For example, most campaigns are waged "with the understanding that demagogic appeals to class warfare, racial conflict, religious antagonisms, and the like are not legitimate."<sup>40</sup>

Nimmo reported on voter reactions to violations of campaign ethics:

. . . Research concerned with voters' reactions to violations of campaign ethics has been sparse. The scattered evidence we do have, however, clearly indicates that voters detect violations of campaign norms and react against the violator. A study undertaken after the elections of 1968 . . . uncovered reasons why a certain Republican congressional candidate had lost in a predominantly Republican district, even though Richard Nixon and a Republican candidate for the Senate had won easily. The majority of respondents, both those supporting and those opposing the Republican, had reacted negatively to what they described as his "mud-slinging" (particularly the candidate's unsubstantiated charges that his opponent was pro-Communist, wanted to register guns instead of Communists, and wished to finance student rioters on college campuses). Given the negative impact of these attacks, it is probable that the Republican's close loss (the winner had 52% of the vote) can be attributed to an overly aggressive campaign interpreted by voters as beyond the limits of fair campaigning.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Norton, 172.

<sup>39</sup>Nimmo, p. 17.

<sup>40</sup>Nimmo, p. 17.

<sup>41</sup>Nimmo, p. 18.

Republican "mud-slinging" was particularly provoking to the Democrats; a number of Democrats "felt their party beleaguered unfairly"<sup>42</sup> and were convinced that the Republican campaign effort had exceeded the "rules" of legitimate campaigning. That the American voter, especially the Democratic voter, detected what he thought were ethical violations on the part of Republican leaders and candidates during the 1970 campaign is quite possible. The Democratic purchase of television-time gave the party the opportunity to make such violations of campaign ethics seem even more apparent to the American voter.<sup>43</sup>

#### Positive Leadership

"The longing of the American people for constructive and positive leadership as opposed to the tone of harsh negative ranting"<sup>44</sup> of the 1970 campaign challenged the Democratic party to set a positive tone in a final election eve appeal. In the 1970 political campaign, both parties sought to disassociate themselves from the nation's problems. The result of that attempt by both parties was a situation which encouraged dissension between the parties, the candidates, and the American people. The need for constructive suggestions toward the solution of the country's problems demanded that Muskie

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<sup>42</sup>Statement by Senator Edmund S. Muskie, interview with the press at Washington National Airport, November 4, 1970.

<sup>43</sup>Letter from Mrs. Jane Squier, March 29, 1972. Mrs. Squier's letter appears in the appendixes.

<sup>44</sup>Letter from Mrs. Jane Squier, October 8, 1971.

set a positive tone in an address that was to follow the President's Phoenix speech on national television.

### Democratic Reinforcement

Finally, the tendency of most American voters to vote consistently for the candidates of one political party, described earlier, demanded that Muskie reestablish the image of his party in order to guarantee independent and Democratic turnout and solidarity at the polls. Muskie spoke to "the voters of this country but primarily to the Democratic voters."<sup>45</sup> Democratic reinforcement was a primary constraint in the rhetorical situation faced by Muskie.

### Summary

Various elements within the rhetorical situation limited the nature of the Democratic response to the Republican election eve broadcast. The constraints provided by the situation demanded that Muskie (1) speak to the issue of law and order, (2) repudiate Republican campaign tactics, (3) express a positive approach toward the settlement of the nation's problems, and (4) reestablish the image of the Democratic party in order to guarantee Democratic turnout and solidarity at the polls.

## IV. CONCLUSION

Prior to the creation and presentation of Senator Muskie's

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<sup>45</sup>Letter from Mrs. Jane Squier, March 29, 1972.

election eve telecast, a rhetorical situation existed and invited a Democratic response. The Republican campaign effort attempted to foster an image of the Democratic party that independent and moderately Democratic voters might find unacceptable, and the Republican campaign effort was to culminate with the broadcast of President Nixon's Phoenix speech. A state of exigence urgently demanded a Democratic broadcast. The rhetorical situation included an audience--a mass audience of independent and Democratic voters. Constraints provided by the situation demanded that Muskie reestablish the image of his party.

Chapter five examines the Democratic response which was offered to "fit" the situation.

## CHAPTER V

### THE RESPONSE

Bitzer argued that discourse which is offered as a response to a rhetorical situation must "fit" the situation:

. . . The situation dictates the sorts of observations to be made; it dictates the significant . . . verbal responses; and, we must admit, it constraints the words which are uttered.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter does not propose to isolate and examine Senator Muskie's speech as the crucial variable which led to the results of the 1970 election. In light of the theory of rhetorical situation which has guided the nature of this study, the question that remains to be answered is, Was Muskie's election eve address an appropriate response in light of the rhetorical situation established by the 1970 political campaign?

#### I. REQUIREMENTS OF THE SITUATION

The rhetorical situation which is described in chapter four established certain requirements of a "fitting" response. The situation required that Muskie (1) articulate the Democratic position toward the issue of law and order, (2) challenge the ethics of the Republican campaign effort, (3) express a positive approach toward the settlement of the nation's problems, and (4) reestablish the image of the Demo-

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<sup>1</sup>Lloyd F. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," Rhetoric and Philosophy, I (January, 1968), 5.

cratic party. Section two provides an analysis of the election eve address in light of the requirements established by the rhetorical situation.

## II. ELECTION EVE RHETORIC

Once Senator Muskie had been notified that he was to be given the opportunity to respond to the President on election eve, speechwriters Richard Goodwin and Jack Sando, at Muskie's request, began preparation of the election eve address.<sup>2</sup> Muskie himself later revised the text of the speech given to him by his speechwriters.<sup>3</sup> The taping of the speech was handled by Robert Squier, a television consultant with whom Muskie had become acquainted during the 1970 campaign.<sup>4</sup> The fifteen-minute Democratic telecast was presented over national television on November 2, 1970, and it immediately followed the Republican broadcast of excerpts from President Nixon's Phoenix speech.

### Law and Order

Muskie attempted to clarify the Democratic position toward the issue of law and order early in the speech. He explained:

. . . Let me begin with those issues of law and order, of violence and unrest, which have pervaded the rhetoric of this campaign. I believe that any person who violates the law should be

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<sup>2</sup>Theo Lippman, Jr. and Donald C. Hansen, Muskie (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1971), p. 230.

<sup>3</sup>The New York Times, November 3, 1970, p. 40, col. 7.

<sup>4</sup>Lippman and Hansen, pp. 225-226.

apprehended, prosecuted and punished, if found guilty. So does every candidate for office of both parties. And nearly all Americans agree.

I believe everyone has a right to feel secure on the streets of his city and in buildings where he works or studies. So does every candidate for office of both parties. And nearly all Americans agree.

Therefore, there is no issue of law and order or of violence. There is only a problem. There is no disagreement about what we want. There are only different approaches to getting it.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, Muskie sought to diminish the notions that the issue of law and order was a partisan issue and that Democrats were "softer on crime" than the Republicans:

And the harsh and uncomfortable fact is that no one--in either party--has the final answer. For four years, a conservative Republican has been governor of California. Yet there is no more law and order in California today than when he took office. President Nixon--like President Johnson before him--has taken a firm stand. A Democratic Congress has passed sweeping legislation. Yet America is no more orderly or lawful--nor its streets more safe--than was the case two years ago of four or six.<sup>6</sup>

In arguing that the law and order issue was non-partisan, Muskie quickly dismissed the Republican notion that Democrats were "soft" on crime; the speech provided a "fitting" response to one requirement of the situation.

### Republican Ethics

In addition, the Republican campaign effort to disrupt the unity and weaken the image of the Democratic party was overshadowed when Muskie retaliated and challenged the ethics of the Republican

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<sup>5</sup>Opinion expressed by Edmund S. Muskie in an address delivered over the CBS, NBC, and ABC television networks, November 2, 1970. A text of Senator Muskie's speech was provided by Doris Ullman of the Muskie Election Committee and appears in the appendixes.

<sup>6</sup>Muskie, "Election Eve Address."

campaign effort:

. . . in these elections of 1970, something has gone wrong. There has been name-calling and deception of almost unprecedented volume. Honorable men have been slandered. Faithful servants of the country have had their motives questioned and their patriotism doubted. This attack is not simply the over-zealousness of a few local leaders. It has been led, inspired, and guided from the highest offices in the land.

. . . there are those who seek to turn our common distress to partisan advantage . . . . They imply that Democratic candidates . . . actually favor violence and champion the wrongdoer. That is a lie.  
And the American people know it is a lie.

. . . They really believe that if they can make you afraid enough or angry enough, you can be tricked into voting against yourself.

It is all part of the same contempt . . . .<sup>7</sup>

Muskie's response was constrained by an attitude on the part of many American voters that political campaigns must not exceed certain ethical boundaries. Muskie's speech made Republican allegations and violations of campaign ethics seem even more apparent to the American voter, especially the Democratic voter.

The contrast between a technically weak telecast of Mr. Nixon's Phoenix speech and Muskie's election eve address "precluded any [Republican] advantage which might otherwise have been obtained"<sup>8</sup> had the Democratic broadcast not been presented over national television. Muskie's speech minimized the possibility that Republican "scare" tactics would discourage Democratic voters from going to the polls to vote for Democratic candidates.

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<sup>7</sup>Muskie, "Election Eve Address."

<sup>8</sup>Letter from Governor Ronald Reagan of California, September 29, 1971.



### Positive and Constructive Leadership

In addition, Muskie challenged the "negative ranting" of the Republicans by advocating a firm and positive approach for the settlement of the nation's problems:

We must deal with symptoms--strive to prevent crime; halt violence; and punish the wrongdoer.

But we must also look for the deeper causes in the structure of society. . . .

These attacks are dangerous in a more important sense--for they keep us from dealing with our problems. Names and threats will not end the shame of ghettos and racial injustice, restore a degraded environment or end a long and bloody war. Slogans and television commercials will not bring the working man that assurance--of a constantly rising standard of life--which was his only a few years ago . . . .

. . . We can bring back the belief--not only in a better and more noble future--but in our own power to make it so.

Our country is wounded and confused--but it is charged with greatness and with the possibility of greatness. We cannot realize that possibility if we are afraid or if we consume our energies in hostility or accusation. We must maintain justice--but we must also believe in ourselves and each other--and we must get about the work of the future.<sup>9</sup>

Whereas the Republican broadcast of the Phoenix speech dealt primarily with law and order, the rhetorical situation required that Muskie speak to a more important issue--the longing of the American people for positive and constructive leadership.

The product of the efforts of Muskie, Goodwin, Sando, and Squier "juxtaposed Muskie's calm appeal . . . with Mr. Nixon's [election eve broadcast]."<sup>10</sup> Minnesota Senator Hubert Humphrey,

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<sup>9</sup>Muskie, "Election Eve Address."

<sup>10</sup>Editorial, "Democratic Unity," The New Republic, CLXIII (November 21, 1970), 9.

describing Muskie's speech as "an effective contrast"<sup>11</sup> to the Republican broadcast, indicated that a good many voters "were 'turned off' and did not respond with the feeling of confidence to the President's broadcast."<sup>12</sup> Muskie's response was constrained by the rhetorical situation which had preceded the creation and presentation of the speech.

### Democratic Reinforcement

Ogden and Peterson have acknowledged the importance of the political image in shaping voting behavior.<sup>13</sup> The campaign speaker, rather than attempt to change the minds of voters or even to present an in-depth view of his position,<sup>14</sup> must instead endeavor to present an image that is consistent with the predispositions of the voters who belong to or lean toward his party.<sup>15</sup>

Republican campaign rhetoric neglected positive voter reinforcement and instead emphasized attacks upon the competence and

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<sup>11</sup>Letter from Minnesota Senator Hubert Humphrey, September 21, 1971. Senator Humphrey's letter appears in the appendixes.

<sup>12</sup>Letter from Hubert Humphrey, September 21, 1971.

<sup>13</sup>Daniel M. Ogden, Jr. and Arthur L. Peterson, Electing the President (rev. ed.; San Francisco, California: Chandler Publishing Company, 1968), pp. 190-195.

<sup>14</sup>Dan Nimmo, The Political Persuaders: The Techniques of Modern Election Campaigns (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), pp. 119-120.

<sup>15</sup>Angus Campbell and others, The American Voter: An Abridgement (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1954), pp. 66-85.

integrity of many Democratic candidates. Muskie, however, arguing from the premise that the Democratic party is a party of the working man, identified himself with the Democratic voter in his attempt to reestablish the image of his party:

Now I do not think they [the Republican Administration] will ever control inflation this way. But even if their policy was sound, the money had to come from someone.

And who did they pick to pay? It was the working man, the consumer, and the middle class American.

In other fields the story is the same. They have cut back on health and education for the many while expanding subsidies and special favors for the few. They call upon you--the working majority of Americans--to support them while they oppose your interests.<sup>16</sup>

The rhetorical situation demanded that Muskie attempt to polarize Democratic voters, and his speech was constrained by the need to reinforce past party loyalties and to reestablish a favorable party image.

#### Summary

An analysis of Senator Muskie's election eve address in light of the requirements established by the rhetorical situation revealed that the response was constrained by (1) the importance of the law and order issue, (2) the ethics of the Republican campaign, (3) the desire of the American people for a positive approach to government, and (4) the need to reestablish the image of the Democratic party. Muskie's speech was an appropriate response to the Republican broadcast because the election eve address met the requirements established

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<sup>16</sup>Muskie, "Election Eve Address."

by a rhetorical situation.

### III. CONCLUSION

The results of the 1970 election, described in chapter one, did not substantially weaken Democratic strength in either the Senate or the House of Representatives. Had the Republicans chosen a more appropriate election eve broadcast, the outcome of the election might have been different. The broadcast of portions of the President's Phoenix speech on the eve of the election was an error in Republican campaign strategy, an error for which no Republican nor Republican consultant would assume responsibility.<sup>17</sup>

The opportunity that was presented to Muskie clearly established the Maine senator as a leading Presidential candidate<sup>18</sup> and proved that Mr. Nixon was capable of being defeated in the 1972 Presidential election.<sup>19</sup> Lippman and Hansen wrote the following:

Nothing more clearly underscored Muskie's position as the frontrunner for the Presidential nomination in 1972 than his being selected as the voice to answer President Nixon . . . on nation-wide television on the eve of the 1970 election.<sup>20</sup>

The rhetorical situation established by the 1970 political campaign demanded a rhetoric of reassurance--a type of rhetoric which

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<sup>17</sup>Letter from Mrs. Jane Squier, October 8, 1971.

<sup>18</sup>"Election '70: The Democrats Shape Up," Newsweek, LXXVI (November 16, 1970), 31.

<sup>19</sup>Stewart Alsop, "A Defeatable President," Newsweek, LXXVI (November 16, 1970), 124.

<sup>20</sup>Lippman and Hansen, p. 229.

emphasized the reestablishment of a favorable image of the Democratic party. Muskie's election eve address "fit" the situation established by the campaign and provided a rhetoric of reassurance. Norton suggested the following:

Neither the orator nor the speech provides the most interesting ground for critical analysis of Muskie's election eve television broadcast, rather the rhetorical situation dictates the primary message.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Robert Wayne Norton, "The Rhetorical Situation Is the Message: Muskie's Election Eve Television Broadcast," Central States Speech Journal, XXII (Fall, 1971), 171.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

Chapter six summarizes the thesis and suggests the implications for future research concerning Muskie's election eve television broadcast and Bitzer's theory of rhetorical situation. The chapter is divided into six sections: (1) summary of chapter one; (2) summary of chapter two; (3) summary of chapter three; (4) summary of chapter four; (5) summary of chapter five; and (6) suggestions for future research.

#### I. CHAPTER ONE

Chapter one indicated that the purpose of the study was to determine the nature of the rhetorical situation faced by Senator Edmund S. Muskie on the eve of the 1970 election. The chapter advanced the hypothesis that the situation generated by the 1970 political campaign demanded a rhetoric of reassurance--a type of rhetoric which emphasized the reestablishment of a favorable image of the Democratic party in the eyes of the American voter.

The methodology to be used in the treatment of the hypothesis was provided by an article by Lloyd Bitzer entitled "The Rhetorical Situation." Bitzer's theory emphasized the relationship between the situation from which discourse emerges and the resultant discourse itself, and his theory of rhetorical situation was

interpreted as an appropriate instrument by which the hypothesis might be examined.

## II. CHAPTER TWO

Chapter two provided a more comprehensive analysis of Bitzer's theory of rhetorical situation. Bitzer argued that the presence of a rhetorical situation--not merely the presence of discourse itself--gives a speech its rhetorical character. The rhetorical situation was described as having three parts: (1) exigence--a state of urgency; (2) audience--a group of persons capable of serving as mediators of change; and (3) constraints--various attitudes, beliefs, facts, traditions, and motives, that severely limit the orator's response.

## III. CHAPTER THREE

Chapter three included a historical analysis of the 1970 political campaign. Section one described Richard Nixon's 1968 Presidential campaign and his election to the White House and concluded that Nixon entered the Presidency with one overriding objective--the promotion of national unity.

Section two described the position of the Democratic party prior to the 1970 campaign and included: (1) the Democrats and the 1968 Presidential campaign; (2) the Democratic Congress of 1969; and (3) role reversal among the Republican and Democratic parties

during Mr. Nixon's first two years as President. Mr. Nixon inherited a number of problems from his Democratic predecessor, but the Democrats indicated Nixon to be the cause of those problems as the 1970 elections approached.

Section three established the importance of the 1970 elections to both the Republican and Democratic parties. Richard Nixon was elected to the Presidency, it was reported, by a small margin of votes, and the results of the 1970 elections would give an indication of Republican and Democratic party strength prior to the 1972 Presidential election. Both parties were guilty of "buck-passing" during the 1970 political campaign and openly charged one another with the responsibility for the nation's problems.

#### IV. CHAPTER FOUR

Chapter four described the rhetorical situation--the complex of persons, events, objects, and relations--which strongly invited an election eve broadcast by the Democratic party.

##### A State of Exigence

Section one described the nature of the exigence which invited Democratic rhetoric on the eve of the 1970 election. Throughout the campaign, the Republicans sought to create an image of the Democratic party that many American voters would find unacceptable. The Republican party purchased fifteen-minutes of prime-time television on the eve of the election in order to present excerpts from a



"law and order speech" delivered by President Nixon in Phoenix, Arizona. Leading Democrats, realizing that the Republican broadcast would only serve to reinforce the Democratic image that had been created by the Republican campaign effort, were convinced of the need to repudiate Republican campaign tactics and to reestablish the image of the Democratic party. Senator Edmund S. Muskie of Maine was chosen by leaders of the Democratic party to represent the party over national television on election eve.

#### The Mediators of Change

Section two examined the nature of the audience capable of serving as mediators of change. Evidence was presented to suggest that most Americans have a tendency to vote consistently for the candidates on one political party. Moreover, it was reported that political campaigns have less effect upon actual voting behavior than most political candidates believe. The purpose of a political campaign was therefore described as "a period of political enrichment, a period in which prior attitudes are reinforced."

#### The Major Constraints

Although numerous constraints in the rhetorical situation defined the nature of Senator Muskie's speech, four constraints were described as being of special importance. First, the tactics employed by the Republican party in order to emphasize the apathy of Democratic candidates toward violence and unrest demanded that Muskie speak to the issue of law and order. Second, the belief of most American

voters that political campaigns must be conducted within certain "rules of the campaign game" demanded a repudiation of the Republican campaign tactics by Senator Muskie. Third, "the longing of the American people for constructive and positive leadership" challenged the Democratic spokesman to set a positive tone in the election eve broadcast. Finally, in light of the tendency of the American voter to vote consistently for the candidates of one political party, Muskie had to reestablish the image of the party in order to guarantee a Democratic turnout at the polls.

#### V. CHAPTER FIVE

Chapter five examined the nature of Senator Muskie's election eve address in view of the requirements established by the rhetorical situation. An analysis of the speech in light of the constraints provided by the situation revealed the speech to be an appropriate, "fitting" response to the rhetorical situation; Senator Muskie attempted to reestablish the image of the Democratic party and provided a rhetoric of reassurance.

#### VI. IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH

The nature and conclusions of this study have generated additional questions concerning Edmund S. Muskie's election eve telecast and Bitzer's theory of rhetorical situation.

The Muskie speech cannot be analyzed critically without a consideration of the Republican broadcast which preceded the Muskie

address. Originally, the Republican party had purchased thirty minutes of prime-time television in order to broadcast the entire Phoenix speech. Once the Democratic party had announced its intention to purchase fifteen minutes of prime-time, the Republicans were cut back to fifteen minutes of broadcast-time by the networks.

Jane Squier reported:

There is only one copy of the Nixon broadcast that we know of, and we have it. Actually, we were able to obtain it only by some very intricate negotiations and from a source which we can't disclose. I know that sounds mysterious but from what we have heard, there are absolutely no copies available to anyone. Some of the people we have talked with have contacted the Republican National Committee . . . but they have not provided a copy of the speech that I know of . . . .

As to who produced it, that is a classical case of buck-passing. None of the President's consultants is willing to assume the responsibility for the telecast. The tape itself was made by a local station in Phoenix and provided to the Republicans when they requested it.<sup>1</sup>

Leaders of both political parties have conceded the technical weaknesses of the Republican broadcast. The Washington Post reported that a Washington television station received some 800 telephone calls shortly after the Nixon-Muskie broadcasts; many callers accused the station of sabotaging the President and favoring Muskie.<sup>2</sup> Even the President himself admitted that the broadcast of excerpts from the Phoenix speech was a mistake.

An interesting and worthwhile study might attempt to determine

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<sup>1</sup>Letter from Mrs. Jane Squier, October 8, 1971.

<sup>2</sup>Washington Post, November 5, 1970, p. A18, col. 5.

why the Republicans selected such a poorly edited tape of the Phoenix address for an election eve telecast. Such a study might be descriptive of the role of television in the Republican and Democratic party images that were presented to the American people on the evening of November 2, 1970.

A second implication concerns the usefulness of Bitzer's theory of rhetorical situation as an instrument of criticism. In arguing that a situation prescribes a certain "fitting" response, Bitzer negated the orator's ability to create his own situations. The orator is controlled by a state of exigence, the audience, and the constraints--three distinct parts of a theoretical framework that become blurred in the real world of orators and their speeches. The notion that rhetoric is nothing more than the proper response to a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations that acts as a stimulus becomes difficult for even the most liberal student of rhetoric to accept.

The value of a paper such as this one is derived not from the discovery of historical information which concerns either the orator or his speech, but from the application of the model used to examine the rhetorical event. The model, to paraphrase McLuhan, becomes the message.<sup>3</sup> Only if additional criticisms which utilize Bitzer's theory of rhetorical situation are undertaken will the value of the theory be firmly demonstrated.

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<sup>3</sup>Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man (New York: The New American Library, 1964).

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## APPENDIXES

September 13, 1971

Mr. Daniel T. Hayes  
Humanities Building, Room 204E  
Kansas State Teachers College  
Emporia, Kansas 66801

Dear Mr. Hayes:

Thank you for your letter of September 7 and your very kind comments on the Election Eve Address by Senator Muskie on November 2, 1970.

I am enclosing a copy of the speech for your use. I have referred your letter to another office in the hopes that they may be able to help you locate a videotape of the speech.

Please contact us if there is any further information you need.

Sincerely,

Doris Ullman  
Public Information  
Press Section

## ELECTION EVE ADDRESS<sup>1</sup>

I am speaking from Cape Elizabeth, Maine--to discuss with you the election campaign which is coming to a close.

In the heat of our campaigns, we have all become accustomed to a little anger and exaggeration. Yet--on the whole--our political process has served us well, presenting for your judgement a range of answers to the country's problems and a choice between men who seek the honor of public service.

That is our system. It has worked for almost two-hundred years--longer than any other political system in the world. And it still works. But in these elections of 1970, something has gone wrong. There has been name-calling and deception of almost unprecedented volume. Honorable men have been slandered. Faithful servants of the country have had their motives questioned and their patriotism doubted. This attack is not simply the overzealousness of a few local leaders. It has been led, inspired and guided from the highest offices in the land.

The danger from this assault is not that a few more Democrats might be defeated--the country can survive that. The true danger is that the American people will have been deprived of that public debate--that opportunity for fair judgement--which is the heartbeat of the Democratic process. And that is something the country cannot afford.

Let me try to bring some clarity to this deliberate confusion. Let me begin with those issues of law and order, of violence and unrest, which have pervaded the rhetoric of this campaign.

I believe that any person who violates the law should be apprehended, prosecuted and punished, if found guilty. So does every candidate for office of both parties. And nearly all Americans agree.

I believe everyone has a right to feel secure on the streets of his city and in buildings where he works or studies. So does every candidate for office of both parties. And nearly all Americans agree.

Therefore, there is no issue of law and order or of violence. There is only a problem. There is no disagreement about what we want. There are only different approaches to getting it.

---

<sup>1</sup>The text of the speech was provided by Doris Ullman of the Muskie Election Committee.

And the harsh and uncomfortable fact is that no one--in either party--has the final answer. For four years, a conservative Republican has been Governor of California. Yet there is no more law and order in California today than when he took office. President Nixon--like President Johnson before him--has taken a firm stand. A Democratic Congress has passed sweeping legislation. Yet America is no more orderly or lawful--nor its streets more safe--than was the case two years ago or four or six.

We must deal with symptoms--strive to prevent crime; halt violence; and punish the wrongdoer.

But we must also look for the deeper causes in the structure of society. If one of your loved ones is sick, you do not think it is soft or undisciplined of a doctor to try and discover the agents of illness. But you would soon discard a doctor who thought it enough to stand by the bed and righteously curse the disease.

Yet, there are those who seek to turn our common distress to partisan advantage--not by offering better solutions--but with empty threat and malicious slander. They imply that Democratic candidates for high office in Texas and California, in Illinois and Tennessee, in Utah and Maryland, and among my New England neighbors from Vermont and Connecticut--men who have courageously pursued their convictions in the service of the republic in war and in peace--that these men actually favor violence and champion the wrongdoer.

That is a lie.

And the American people know it is a lie.

And what are we to think when men in positions of public trust openly declare--

That the party of Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman which led us out of depression and to victory over international barbarism;

The party of John Kennedy who was slain in the service of the country he inspired;

The party of Lyndon Johnson who withstood the fury of countless demonstrations in order to pursue a course he believed in;

The party of Robert Kennedy, murdered on the eve of his greatest triumphs--

How dare they tell us that this party is less devoted or less courageous in maintaining American principles and values than are they themselves. This is nonsense. And we all know it is nonsense.

And what contempt they must have for the decency and sense of the American people to talk to them this way--and to think they can make them believe.

There is not time tonight to analyze and expose the torrent of falsehood and insinuation which has flooded this unfortunate campaign. There is a parallel--in the campaigns of the early fifties--when the turbulent difficulties of the post-war world were attributed to the softness and lack of patriotism of a few, including some of our most respected leaders such as General George Marshall. It was the same technique.

These attacks are dangerous in a more important sense--for they keep us from dealing with our problems. Names and threats will not end the shame of ghettos and racial injustice, restore a degraded environment or end a long and bloody war. Slogans and television commercials will not bring the working man that assurance--of a constantly rising standard of life--which was his only a few years ago and which has been cruelly snatched away.

No administration can be expected to solve the difficulties of America in two years. But we can fairly ask two things: that a start be made--and that the nation be instilled with a sense of forward movement.

This has not been done.

Let us look, for example, at the effort to halt inflation. We all agree that inflation must be arrested. This Administration has decided it could keep prices down by withdrawing money from the economy.

Now I do not think they will ever control inflation this way. But even if their policy was sound, the money had to come from someone.

And who did they pick to pay? It was the working man, the consumer, the middle class American.

For example, high interest rates are a part of this policy. Yet they do not damage the banks which collect them. They hardly touch the very wealthy who can deduct interest payments from their taxes.

Rather they strike at every consumer who must pay exorbitant charges on his new car or house. And they can cripple the small businessman.

Their policy against inflation also requires that unemployment

go up. Again, it is the working man who pays the price.

In other fields the story is the same. They have cut back on health and education for the many while expanding subsidies and special favors for a few. They call upon you--the working majority of Americans--to support them while they oppose your interests. They really believe that if they can make you afraid enough or angry enough, you can be tricked into voting against yourself.

It is all part of the same contempt, and tomorrow you can show them the mistake they have made.

Our difficulties as a nation are immense, confused and changing. But our history shows--and I think most of you suspect--that if we are ever to restore progress it will be under the leadership of the Democratic party. Not that we are smarter or more expert--but we respect the people. And indeed we must--for we are the people.

Today the air of my native Maine was touched with winter and hunters filled the woods. I have spent my life in this state which is both part of our oldest traditions and a place of wild and almost untouched forests.

It is rugged country, cold in the winters, but it is a good place to live. There are friends and there are also places to be alone--places where a man can walk all day and fish and see nothing but woods and water.

We in Maine share many of the problems of America and, I am sure, others are coming to us. But we have had no riots or bombings and speakers are not kept from talking. This is not because I am Senator or because the Governor is a Democrat.

Partly, of course, it is because we are a small state with no huge cities but partly it is because the people here have a sense of place. They are part of a community with common concerns and problems and hopes for the future.

We cannot make America small. But we can work to restore a sense of shared purpose, and of great enterprise. We can bring back the belief--not only in a better and more noble future--but in our own power to make it so.

Our country is wounded and confused--but it is charged with greatness and with the possibility of greatness. We cannot realize that possibility if we are afraid or if we consume our energies in hostility and accusation. We must maintain justice--but we must also



believe in ourselves and each other--and we must get about the work of the future.

There are only two kinds of politics. They are not radical and reactionary or conservative and liberal. Or even Democrat and Republican. There are only the politics of fear and the politics of trust.

One says: You are encircled by monstrous dangers. Give us power over your freedom so we may protect you.

The other says: The world is a baffling and hazardous place, but it can be shaped to the will of men.

Ordinarily that division is not between parties, but between men and ideas. But this year the leaders of the Republican party have intentionally made that line a party line. They have confronted you with exactly that choice.

Thus--in voting for the Democratic party tomorrow--you cast your vote for trust--not just in leaders or policies--but for trusting in your fellow citizens, in the ancient traditions of this home for freedom, and most of all, for trust in yourself.

# THE COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY

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September 20, 1971

Mr. Daniel T. Hayes  
Humanities Building,  
Room 204 E  
Kansas State Teachers College  
Emporia, Kansas 66801

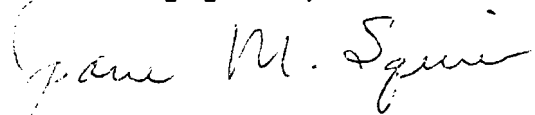
Dear Mr. Hayes:

Your request for a film of Senator Muskie's Election Eve speech has been referred to our office since we produced the speech telecast and serve as communications consultants to the Senator. We have received a number of requests similar to yours and have set up a system whereby we do loan the film to persons interested in using it.

We ask two things of you: first, that you send a \$5.00 check to cover handling and shipping from here. This should be made out to The Communications Company. The second request is that you return the film to us within two weeks so that it will be available to others.

Thank you very much for your interest, and we shall wait to here from you.

Sincerely yours,



Jane M. Squier

JMS/sb

Humanities Building  
Room 204 E  
Kansas State Teachers  
College  
Emporia, Kansas 66801  
September 27, 1971

Ms. Jane Squier  
The Communications Company  
1660 L Street, N. W., Suite 703  
Washington, D. C. 20036

Dear Ms. Squier,

Enclosed you will find a check to cover the cost of renting Senator Muskie's election eve address. I would appreciate receiving the tape at your earliest convenience.

My thesis research is nearly at a standstill at present. I very badly need information which can be provided by you, Senator Muskie himself, or by another person who is in a position to provide such information. If time permits, your assistance in answering these question would be greatly appreciated.

- 1) Were you aware that Senator Muskie's election eve address would follow a Republican broadcast of Mr. Nixon's Phoenix speech?
- 2) Were you aware of the content of President Nixon's Phoenix speech before Senator Muskie's speech was written?
- 3) The Republican broadcast seemed to be a deliberate attempt to excite the American people, whereas Senator Muskie's speech represents, in my estimation, a plea for rationality and reason. A sharp contrast between the two speech is quite apparent. Is the great disparity between the two broadcasts purely coincidental?
- 4) Nearly all who witnessed the Muskie speech and who are involved in government praised its effectiveness. Do you believe that the effectiveness of Senator Muskie's speech can be attributed, at least in part, to the weakness of the Republican broadcast?
- 5) Do you know where I can secure a copy or tape of the Nixon broadcast?

I realize how hectic your schedule must be, but I would certainly appreciate your assistance. Thank you very much.

Yours truly,

  
Daniel T. Hayes

# THE COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY

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October 8, 1971

Daniel T. Hayes  
Associate Teaching Assistant  
Kansas State Teachers College  
1201 Commercial Street  
Topeka, Kansas 66801

Mr. Hayes:

Thank you for your letter and the check. We hope the film will be helpful to you in your research.

Since we produced the Election Eve telecast, I have answered your questions as follows:

1. Senator Muskie was aware only of the fact that the Republicans had purchased 15 minutes of time on all three networks on Election Eve. We had absolutely no word on what they intended to do on the air during that time.
2. No, Senator Muskie did not know anything of the content of the broadcast beforehand. Knowing that the President would be on the air, we designed in our own mind what we expected him to do. Let me try to describe it to you: The camera opens on a window outside the White House. It zooms in to find the President all alone behind his desk in the Oval Room. He looks into the camera and says something to this effect: "Good evening, my fellow Americans. Two years ago you sent me to this lonely and awesome office. Tonight across the land there are many capable and outstanding men of my party who are running for the opportunity to join me here in Washington. Together we can get about the business of solving the enormous problems which confront this nation. I need those men here to help me and I urge you to go to the polls tomorrow and.....etc.,

On the basis of this imagined presentation, we designed the telecast program. The fact that what the President actually did put on the air bore absolutely no resemblance to what we had expected. It was a complete and utter surprise.

3. I'm not sure coincidental is a good word. There was certainly no planning for one broadcast to be one way and the other to be its opposite. We believe that the Republicans saw the law and order issue as the major one in the campaign, and they felt the President was leaning toward that issue. Senator Muskie's speech dealt with the issue which he believed to be most important - the longing of the American

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ber 8, 1971

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le for constructive and positive leadership as opposed to the  
e of harsh negative ranting which the campaign had taken in so  
y places. And, in addition, to the issue of the economy which he  
usses in the latter half of the speech. The fact that the Nixon  
ech was the perfect example of what Senator Muskie was talking  
t might almost be called a quirk of fate. As we watched the  
n speech the first time with incredulity, I felt like saying,  
is alive and well and he's a Democrat".

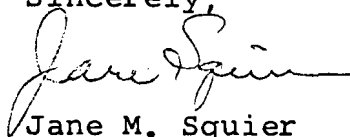
4. I think the answer to this question is yes, partially. Al-  
gh I would hate to try and measure just how much the effective-  
s of Senator Muskie's speech could be attributed to the Republican  
dcast. When you look at the speech today completely removed from  
proximity to the Nixon telecast, it maintains practically all of  
power and effectiveness.

5. There is only one copy of the Nixon broadcast that we know  
and we have it. Actually, we were able to obtain it only by  
e very intricate negotiations and from a source which we can't  
lose. I know that sounds mysterious but from what we have heard,  
re are absolutely no copies available to anyone. Some of the  
ole we have talked with have contacted the Republican National  
nittee, and that might be a lead you could try, but they have not  
vided a copy of the speech that I know of. You also might write  
William Safire at the White House.

As to who produced it, that is a classical case of buck-passing.  
e of the President's consultants is willing to assume the respon-  
lity for the telecast. The tape itself was made by a local  
tion in Phoenix and provided to the Republicans when they requested

Since our copy is very valuable to us, we are not willing to let  
out of our office. We could provide you with a 1/4-inch audiotape  
the speech or a printed transcript taken off of our film copy  
that would be of use to you. Please let us know if you would  
e either of these, and thank you again for your interest. We will  
ame that you will return the film as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Jane M. Squier

sb

Humanities 204 E  
Dept. of Speech, P. A.  
Kansas State Teachers  
College  
Emporia, Kansas 66801  
January 18, 1972

Ms. Jane M. Squier  
The Communications Company  
1660 L Street, N. W., Suite 703  
Washington, D. C. 20036

Dear Ms. Squier,

I wrote to your office in late September of 1971 with reference to Senator Edmund S. Muskie's election eve address of November 2, 1970. As I indicated earlier, I am in the process of doing graduate research on Senator Muskie's speech, and I hope to complete the requirements for my thesis in May of this year.

The film of the election eve address proved to be most helpful, as did a written transcript of the speech. You informed me that a videotape of the Republican broadcast which preceded Senator Muskie's speech is unavailable, but that you could provide me with a printed transcript taken from the film copy of President Nixon's Phoenix address. I have written to the Republican National Committee about a transcript of the Republican broadcast, yet they sent me the entire Phoenix address (a copy of which I already have). Could you provide me with a transcript of those excerpts of President Nixon's Phoenix speech that were actually used by the Republicans on the evening of November 2, 1970? I am attempting to show that the situation generated by the 1970 political campaign demanded that a spokesman for the Democratic party respond to the Republican allegations and reaffirm the image of the Democratic party. In short, I am examining the manner in which Senator Muskie adapted to the rhetorical situation with which he was faced.

In addition to receiving a copy of the transcript from the Republican broadcast, I badly need answers to the following questions: (1) Why was Senator Muskie, as opposed to other potential Democratic spokesmen, selected to act as a spokesman for the Democratic party? (2) Who were the individuals that determined that Senator Muskie would be the most effective spokesman for the Democratic party? (3) What kind of imagined audience was envisioned either by Senator Muskie, his speechwriter Richard Goodwin, or you and your colleagues for the election eve address?

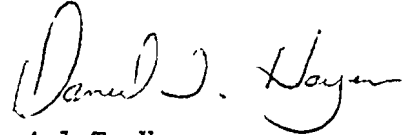
I recently came across an article in the November 21, 1970, issue of The New Republic that indicates several individuals who

were instrumental in lending their support to Senator Muskie for the address. Among the names mentioned were Geoffrey Cowan, a Washington attorney who "triggered" the election eve speech; Joseph Califano, a former aide to President Johnson; Sam Brown, youth coordinator for Eugene McCarthy in 1968; Richard Goodwin, the speechwriter; and Robert Squier (Am I correct in assuming that this is your husband?), producer of Senator Muskie's telecast.

I am having extreme difficulty in obtaining the addresses of these individuals, and if my thesis is to be completed on time, I need to get some information from them. I would greatly appreciate your assistance in helping me get in touch with these individuals.

Thank you very much for your assistance and consideration. Your efforts have been most beneficial to my research.

Sincerely,



Daniel T. Hayes  
Graduate Assistant  
Humanities 204 E  
Dept. of Speech  
Kansas State Teachers College  
Emporia, Kansas, 66801

# THE COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY

87

March 29, 1972

Mr. Daniel T. Hayes, Graduate Assistant  
Humanities 204 E  
Department of Speech, P.A.  
Kansas State Teachers College  
Emporia, Kansas 66801

Dear Mr. Hayes:

It is with some embarrassment that I am answering your letter dated January 18. Quite frankly, it got lost amidst the confusion which is the watchword of this campaign, and I just came across it today.

First, I am enclosing the transcript which you requested of President Nixon's telecast. This is exactly as it plays on the soundtrack of that program.

Now, to try and answer your other questions. Why was Senator Muskie chosen to be the spokesman for the Democratic party? I think there is a two-fold answer. First, coming out of the 1968 Presidential election, Senator Muskie was the one man out of the six (Nixon, Agnew, Wallace, LeMay, Humphrey, Muskie) who most impressed the country with his calm, cool, reasonableness. He was actually the hero of that campaign, and had you asked the public to rate those six candidates, I think you would have found this general consensus. Secondly, by November, 1970, which was after Chappaquidick, Muskie was recognized by most to be the front-runner for the Democratic nomination in 1972.

What kind of an audience was envisioned for Senator Muskie's speech? The answer to that is quite simply, the voters of this country but primarily, the Democratic voters. They has been subjected to a dirty, vicious, and unfair campaign and those responsible for asking the Senator to do the speech felt that it was imperative to reply to these Republican tactics. I think the responses to the two speeches prove that they were correct in their assessment of the situation.



Page 2  
March 29, 1972

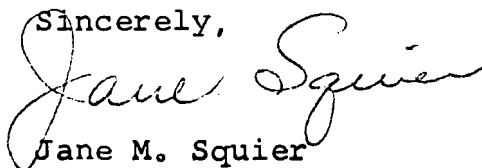
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I am enclosing two articles which I hope you will find helpful. One is from the Washington Post and the other from National Journal. I feel that especially the Post piece goes rather deeply into the questions you raise.

As to contacting the persons you mentioned, I am listing their addresses for you. I do not know where you would reach Sam Brown nor Dick Goodwin at the present time, but I do feel that Mr. Harriman would be a valuable source. As far as Robert Squier goes, you are right in assuming that he is my husband and he concurs with the information I have given you.

Again I apologize for my long delay in replying, and I hope this information is not too late to be of help to you in your project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane M. Squier". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Jane M. Squier

encl

Mr. Geoffrey Cowan  
1600 20th Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036

Mr. Joseph Califano  
839 17th Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20006

Mr. W. Averell Harriman  
3038 N Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20037

1970 ELECTION EVE BROADCAST

Richard M. Nixon

President of the United States

Transcript<sup>1</sup>

Announcer:

Last week a rock-throwing mob attacked the President of the United States. Two days later in Phoenix, Arizona, President Nixon spoke to the American people on the subject of violence. Because his address was so important to the American people, there will be a re-broadcast tonight. Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States.

President Nixon:

And now, ladies and gentlemen, you've all been standing here and I know you've been standing for a long time so I have selected this particular occasion for a major statement, a major statement that needs to be made--needs to be made now, not because it's the end of a political campaign, but because the problem has been building up in America. It's time that the President of the United States speak out clearly to the American people not because he personally has been affected by it but because all of America is affected by what happened a couple of days ago in my home state of California in San Jose.

Along the campaign trail we have seen and heard demonstrators but never before in this campaign was there such an atmosphere of hatred. As we came out of the hall and entered the motorcade, the haters surged past the barricade and began throwing rocks. These were not small rocks, they were large rocks. They were heavy enough to smash windows--windows in the press bus, windows in the staff cars. Now, what are the reactions of people who came? People like you started around peaceably throughout. Well, many who brought their children were terrified. Others were incensed at the insults at their elected leaders, and all were repelled by the atmosphere of violence and danger and they thought to themselves, is this America? Is this

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<sup>1</sup>The transcript of the Republican broadcast, taken from the tape itself, was provided by Jane Squier of The Communications Company. Differences in the transcript of the broadcast and the original speech as it appeared in Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents might be attributed to the technical weaknesses in the recording of the speech.

the land where peaceful discussion is the hallmark of free society?

Some say that the violent dissent is caused by the war in Vietnam. Well, ladies and gentlemen and my fellow Americans, it's about time we branded this line of thinking, this alibi for violence for what it is. Sure enough, those who carry a peace sign in one hand and throw a bomb or a brick with the other are the super hypocrites of our time.

My friends, the war is ending. Instead of sending men to Vietnam, we are bringing them home. Instead of casualties going up, they are coming down. And the peace plan is on the table and we're ending the war in a way that will discourage aggressors so that we will have not just peace for the next election but peace for the next generation. That's what is happening.

Violence in America today is not caused by the war. It's not caused by repression. There is no romantic ideal involved. Let's recognize these people for what they are. They're not romantic revolutionaries. They're the same bums and hoodlums that have always plagued the good people. For too long this has needed to be said and it's said now and here.

The strength and freedom in our society has been eroded by a creeping permissiveness in our legislature, in our courts, in our family life, and in our policies at universities. For too long we have appeased aggression here at home and with all of these the result has been more aggression and more violence. The time has come to draw the line. The time has come for the great silent majority of Americans, of all ages, of every political persuasion, to stand up and be counted against the rock-throwers, the obscenity shouters in America. My fellow Americans, let us understand this is not a partisan issue. There is no candidate in either party that is for crime or that is for violence. The choice before the American people next week is simply picking between the pro-violent and the anti-violent. Everyone denounces violence. The choice is between approaches to the same goals. One approach holds that violence will end if we end the war. This violence will end if we give more power to those who demand power. This violence will end if we end hunger and poverty in America. This approach dominated America. It has obviously failed. The time has come to try a new approach. Let me first point out what the new approach, our approach, is not. The answer to a bluster is not more bluster. The answer to bluster is firmness. The answer to a wave of violence is not a wave of repression. That is exactly what the violent want--sympathy for the martyrs. The answer to violence is a strong application of fair American justice. And the answer to violent dissent is not the crushing of legitimate dissent. The great danger to dissent today comes not from the forces of law but from the organized tyranny of some. Now, let me spell out the new approach.

Our approach is: First, the new approach of ours calls for new and strong laws that will give the peace forces new muscle to deal with the criminal forces. New approaches to violence require men in Congress who will work and fight for laws that will put the terrorists where they belong--not only out of civil society, but behind bars. And that's where they belong. Our new approach calls for a new approach to the interpretation of the laws we already have. I will continue to appoint judges to the Supreme Court and to all the courts who have an awareness of the rights of the victim, as well as the rights of the accused. Our new approach to violence calls for a new attitude on the part of the American people, on your part, on all of us. Law and order are not the code words for racism and repression. Law and order are not code words for freedom from fear in America. The new attitude means that parents must exercise their responsibility to moral guidance. It means that college administrators and college faculty stop caving in to the demands of the radical few. It means that moderate students must take a position that says to the violent, hit the books or hit the road. This new attitude means that all Americans should stand with the men who are trying to carry out the law. After all, my friends, the first step toward respect for law is respect for the lawman. Let's give him the respect that he deserves. If a man chooses to dress differently, wear his hair differently, or talks in a way to repel decent people, that's his business. But when he picks up a rock then it becomes your business and my business to stop him.

Because you see, that's what America's freedom is all about. When a man cannot bring his child, and I know so many wonderful children are here today, when he can't bring this child to a political rally for fear that the person in the next seat is going to start yelling some filthy obscenity, when a man can't bring his wife to a rally for fear she's going to be pushed around by an unruly mob, and when an American faces the risk of a rock being thrown at him when he rides in the streets, then I say appeasement has gone too far and it's time to draw the line. Since 1776, this great nation of ours has never knuckled under to the tactics of terror abroad or at home and we're not going to start in the year of 1970. The terrorists of the far left would like to make the President of the United States a prisoner of the White House. Well, let me set them straight. As long as I'm President, no band of violent thugs is going to keep me from going out and speaking to the American people whenever they want to hear me and whenever I want to go.

This is a free country and I fully intend to share that freedom with my fellow Americans. This President is not going to be cooped up in the White House. To keep this country free, to adopt a new approach to violence, to answer those who abuse the right of free speech--what can you do, particularly you of voting age, as an

individual? I'll tell you what. You don't have to shout back the same obscenity. You don't have to pick up a rock or a stone or a bomb. You have your vote. That's more powerful than any obscenity, any word. It's more powerful than a bomb. That vote of yours is what makes this government respond. That vote of yours can bring about the new tough-minded approach to violence that threatens freedom. I need help in the Congress to put across a program that will make America strong enough to make a full generation of peace abroad and strong enough to turn back the threat of peace and order at home. My fellow Americans, America is a great country. Americans are great people and Americans together share a great future. I approve. I have felt this in an airplane hanger in Vermont, the warmth and friendliness of the vast majority of people in San Jose. I want to say too, to young Americans, as I said last night, and I repeat it here to many young Americans--night after night on the television screen you get an inaccurate picture of young Americans. You see the bomb-throwers, the rock-throwers, those shouting out the filthy words, trying to shout down speakers, and you get the impression that they are the majority of young Americans or maybe the leaders of the future. Well, I have news for you. I've seen young Americans all over this country and those that appear on the television screens night after night, and they're not a majority of young Americans today and they will not be the leaders of America tomorrow. My fellow Americans, the message of the campaign of 1970 is simple. Have faith in this great country. Have faith in your ability to improve this country with your vote. And have faith in the system that has resisted attack from a violent few for almost two centuries. Nobody is going to tear this country down as long as you are ready to cast your vote to build this country up.

September 9, 1971

Humanities Building,  
Room 204 E  
Kansas State Teachers  
College  
Emporia, Kansas, 66801

Governor Ronald Reagan  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, California

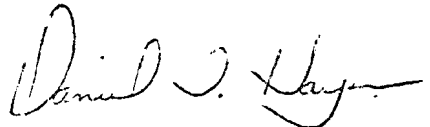
Dear Governor Reagan,

As a graduate student in rhetoric and public address at the Kansas State Teachers College of Emporia, I found the election eve broadcasts of the Republican and Democratic parties that appeared on national television on November 2, 1970, to be quite intriguing. The Republican appeal consisted of excerpts from President Nixon's speech in Phoenix, Arizona, while Senator Muskie, representing the Democratic party, responded to what he called the "fear tactics" employed by the Republican party during the election campaign.

Many students of American public address are now engaging in inquiries into the prominent political figures involved in 1970's "off-year" election and the political speaking of the election campaign. Although I am quite certain that your heavy schedule is demanding, I hope that you can find the time to answer the few questions that I have enclosed, each of which pertains to the political broadcasts of November 2, 1970. Your answers to these questions will improve the quality of my thesis research.

I appreciate any assistance that you can offer. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,



Daniel T. Hayes  
Graduate Assistant  
Department of Speech  
Kansas State Teachers  
College  
Emporia, Kansas, 66801

# Office of the Governor

STATE CAPITOL  
SACRAMENTO 95814



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September 29, 1971

Mr. Daniel T. Hayes  
Kansas State Teachers College  
1200 Commercial Street  
Emporia, Kansas 66801

Dear Mr. Hayes:

This letter is in response to your request for answers to questions pertaining to the political broadcasts of November 2, 1970, for your thesis.

1. In your opinion, did the fact that television was being used as a means of presentation in any way affect the manner in which the prospective voter would interpret Senator Muskie's remarks?

A: Yes, if you mean visual and aural vs. aural. The received impression from television is more intense than that of radio, for instance, and therefore the remarks of the speaker can be more fully interpreted by the viewer.

2. In your opinion, was the manner in which the prospective voter would reflect upon the broadcast most affected by the content of Senator Muskie's message or by his use of television as a means of getting voter approval?

A: The two are so interdependent that no valid comparison can be drawn.

3. Do you feel that the use of television, as opposed to other forms of mass media, had any appreciable effect on whether the prospective voter accepted or rejected

Senator Muskie's comments?

A: Yes, television had an appreciable effect.

Do you believe that Senator Muskie's speech--its content, the manner of presentation, the Senator's use of television--in any way lessened or minimized a Republican advantage that might have been obtained by televising portions of the President's message in Phoenix, Arizona?

A: No, because technical difficulties precluded any advantage which might otherwise have been obtained.

Several Republicans, and of course many Democrats, indicated that the Republican broadcast may have been a serious campaign error for the Republican Party. I am particularly interested in why you would agree or disagree with the preceding remark.

A: This cannot be determined because the speech did not have its desired impact due to technical difficulties.

Do you believe that, in general, Senator Muskie's speech represented an effective contrast to the Republican appeal?

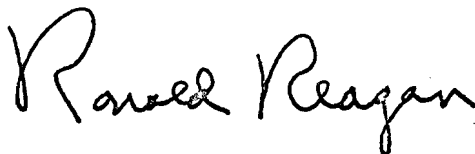
A: Yes, due to the technical difficulties mentioned above.

May I be permitted to use your responses to these questions in my thesis?

A: Yes.

Thank you for writing, and I trust that this will assist you with your research.

Sincerely,



RONALD REAGAN  
Governor



September 9, 1971

Humanities, 204 E  
Kansas State Teachers  
College  
Emporia, Kansas, 66801

Senator Hubert Humphrey  
United States Senate Office Building  
Washington, D. C., 20510

Dear Senator Humphrey,

As a graduate student in public address at the Kansas State Teachers College of Emporia, I was particularly interested in the election eve broadcasts of the Republican and Democratic parties, November 2, 1970. The Republican appeal consisted of excerpts from President Nixon's speech in Phoenix, Arizona, while Senator Muskie, representing the Democratic party, responded to the "fear tactics" employed by the Republican party during the "off-year" election campaign.

Although I am certain that your schedule is quite demanding, I hope that you can find the time to answer the few questions that I have enclosed. Your answers to these questions will improve the quality of my thesis research.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,



Daniel T. Hayes  
Graduate Assistant  
Department of Speech  
Kansas State Teachers  
College  
Emporia, Kansas, 66801

## QUESTIONS FOR SENATOR HUBERT HUMPHREY:

- (1) Did the fact that television was being used as a means of presentation in any way affect the manner in which the prospective voter would interpret Senator Muskie's remarks?
- (2) In your opinion, was the manner in which the prospective voter would reflect upon the broadcast most affected by the content of Senator Muskie's message or by his use of television as a means of getting voter approval?
- (3) Do you believe that Senator Muskie's use of television, as opposed to other forms of mass media, had any appreciable effect on whether the prospective voter accepted or rejected Muskie's comments?
- (4) Do you believe that Senator Muskie's speech--its content, the manner of presentation, the Senator's use of television--in any way lessened or minimized a Republican advantage that might have been obtained by televising portions of the President's message from Phoenix, Arizona?
- (5) Several Republicans, and of course many Democrats, indicated that the Republican broadcast may have been a serious campaign error for the Republican party. I am particularly interested in why you would agree or disagree with this statement.
- (6) Do you believe that, in general, Senator Muskie's speech represented an effective contrast to the Republican appeal?
- (7) May I assume permission to quote your responses in my thesis?

HERMAN E. TALMADGE, GA., CHAIRMAN  
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## United States Senate

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COTYS M. MOUSER, CHIEF CLERK

COMMITTEE ON  
AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

September 21, 1971

Mr. Daniel T. Hayes  
Humanities Building, Room 204 E  
Kansas State Teachers College  
Emporia, Kansas 66801

Dear Mr. Hayes:

Thank you for your letter. I hope the following responses are of some assistance.

Question No. 1 - Senator Muskie's statement was a perfect blending of the television medium with his message. The rationality, calmness and reason of Senator Muskie's message was perfectly adapted to his own demeanor and his method of presentation. Obviously, the same effect would have been impossible before a personal audience of thousands. And the message would have been lost had it been given only in print or only to a small group.

Question No. 2 - I think I have answered this in my response to the first question. You could not separate the content from the media.

Question No. 3 - Again, this particular message, and Senator Muskie's particular style, were perfectly attuned to television.

Question No. 4 - It is very clear that the contrast of Senator Muskie's speech to the televising of portions of the President's message made the Muskie speech much more effective.

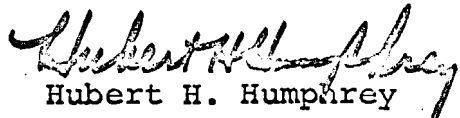
Question No. 5 - Yes, I believe the Republican broadcast was a campaign error. Its quality of technical reproduction, as well as its content, were harmful, in my opinion, to the Republican effort. There is no way to

know how many voters were affected, but in my opinion a good many were "turned off" and did not respond with the feeling of confidence to the President's broadcast.

Question No. 6 - Yes, an extremely effective contrast in this particular instance.

I hope this is of help. You certainly may quote my responses.

Sincerely,

  
Hubert H. Humphrey