

U.S. INVESTIGATES NEW 'DIRTY TRICK'

Statement May Have Hurt Muskie's Florida Drive

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MIAMI, Aug. 19—New evidence of political misinformation damaging to Senator Edmund S. Muskie in the March, 1972, Florida primary has been discovered here.

Early last year two men who pretended to be working for Senator Muskie paid for publishing in *réplica*, a Spanish-language Miami weekly, what appears to have been a statement falsely attributed to Mr. Muskie.

Federal investigators are said to be making extensive inquiries in Spanish-language media here, to learn whether there had been similar activities at the time.

Addressed specifically to Cubans—who account for most of the 450,000 Latins in Dade County, including Greater Miami—the bogus statement said Senator Muskie was "misinterpreted" as having declared that the United States should help Cubans to "get rid" of the government of Premier Fidel Castro.

"Ed Muskie believes that all persons have the right to the government they have elected," the announcement said, urging Cubans to vote for Senator Muskie.

Max Lesnik, the editor of *réplica*, who said he did not read the paid announcement before its Jan. 17, 1972, publication, said in an interview today that the 70-word release "was obviously meant to harm Senator Muskie and to turn Cuban voters against him."

'Ignorance' of Cuba

"Everybody knows that the Castro regime is not an elected government," Mr. Lesnik said, "and to affirm such a thing clearly demonstrates ignorance of the Cuban affairs."

Mr. Lesnik said that two men, one a Latin and the other a North American, came to *réplica* with the printed text of the release, which he said was written in poor Spanish, and paid \$72 in cash for its publication.

"We have never ordered such a release published," said Mrs. Priscilla McCutcheon, a Dade campaign coordinator for Mr. Muskie at the time of the Florida primary, "and besides, our political advertisements were invariably paid with a check," she added.

Mrs. McCutcheon said that early in January, 1972, a Latin named Roberto Riguel "breezed into our Miami office and said he had been sent from our Tampa state headquarters to work with the Cuban media."

'We Put Him to Work'

"We made a cursory check and it appeared that Roberto did work in Tampa and that he had been a real pain in the neck there," she said. "But at that time we were a very naive group so we put him to work, just as we did with everybody who offered to help."

Three weeks later, Mrs. McCutcheon said, after "Roberto really messed things up, we got rid of him and he left town." She added: "Only recently we started to wonder whether his unsolicited appearance here had anything to do with the dirty tricks we were subjected to in Tampa."

Mr. Riguel, who seems to be unknown in Miami, could not be reached for comment.