

Muskie's Strong Blast At Nixon

Hyde Park, N.Y.

Senator Edmund S. Muskie (Dem-Maine) said yesterday the Nixon administration is using the claim of national security as "an excuse for systematic deception" of Congress and the public.

Muskie, who has claimed that his 1972 presidential candidacy was torpedoed as a result of administration-inspired political sabotage, was the second leading Democratic politician in two days to lash out at abuses uncovered in the Watergate scandal.

On Sunday, Governor Marvin Mandel of Maryland, chairman of the National Governors' Conference, accused President Nixon's associates of "a massive scheme by a cynical and callous power elite to remake the nation in its own image" without accounting to the electorate.

WATERGATE

Neither Mandel nor Muskie, in his speech for Memorial Day serves at Frank-

lin D. Roosevelt's grave, mentioned Watergate by name.

But both criticized the President's recent explanation that crucial "national security" considerations led him to restrict the FBI's Watergate investigation last year.

"National security" became the excuse for systematic deception," Muskie said. "They could not tell what they thought was the truth, so they began to lie."

"In the name of national security, officials have built a wall between their actions and those in whose name they act.

"Inside that wall -- in a world of obsessive secrecy -- crucial decisions have been made and important policies set in motion, but they have been immunized against the healthy skepticism of a people who question any concentration of unsupervised government power."

CRITICISM

Muskie said that secrecy "carried a special corruption to those under its spell. Those in authority lost their ability to weigh -- perhaps even to hear -- the criticism of others who had solid instinct, but lacked privileged knowledge."

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