



## EDWARD M. KENNEDY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

### **Interviewer's Briefing Materials** **Ellis Mottur Interview, 10/17/2006, 11/30/2006**

Robert A. Martin, Research Director

#### **Miller Center Documents<sup>1</sup>**

- Ellis Mottur Timeline.

#### **Secondary Source Materials**

- Bruce Bimber, *The Politics of Expertise in Congress: The Rise and Fall of the Office of Technology Assessment* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996) pp. 25-39.
- Jude Waxxiski, "Teddy Kennedy's 'Shadow Government'," *The Wall Street Journal*, 03/27/1973.
- "The Assessment Process," *The OTA Legacy*, <http://www.wws.princeton.edu/ota/>.
- William Safire, "The Charles River Gang Returns," *The New York Times*, 05/26/1977.
- Colin Norman, "OTA Caught in Partisan Crossfire," *Technology Review*, October/November 1977.
- Julie Wakefield, "Flunking Science," *Washington Monthly*, 01/01/2001.

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<sup>1</sup> These are original documents created by Miller Center researchers for the Edward M. Kennedy Oral History Project. Please acknowledge credit for any use of these materials.

## ELLIS MOTTUR TIMELINE

*Prepared by Rob Martin and Anne Mariel Peters*

*Miller Center, University of Virginia, 09/05/2006*

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- 1952** Ellis Mottur receives his bachelor's degree from Swarthmore College. He later receives his master's degree from the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration.
- 1967-1971** Mottur conducts research on technological innovation at George Washington University. His affiliation with GWU is unclear. (Ellis Mottur, "National Strategy for Technological Innovation," prepared at the request of Senator Howard Cannon, chairman of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, October, 1979)
- 1971?** EMK names Mottur as his Science Adviser to the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare's subcommittee on Health. [Note: *Congressional Staff Directory* lists Mottur on EMK's staff in 1972 but not in 1969.]
- Mottur serves as EMK's chief investigator into a number of ethically questionable medical experiments in the early 1970s. Around this time Mottur likely aided in EMK's investigation of the Tuskegee syphilis experiments, in which government researchers withheld treatment to human test subjects. EMK also holds a national conference on medical ethics around this time as well. (*The Boston Globe*, 02/12/1994)
- 1971** EMK drops his investigation into Pentagon-funded radiation experiments at Cincinnati's General Hospital, which had allegedly led to the deaths of eight people. EMK had reportedly been planning to hold a public hearing on the experiments, but was strongly opposed by Senator Robert Taft (R-OH), as well as then-U.S. Representative William Keating (R-OH), who defended the project. *The Washington Post* had reported in October that the Pentagon had funded the experiments to study the combat-effectiveness of troops in a nuclear war. Mottur, who played an important role in EMK's investigation, later says, "Taft went absolutely bonkers... Kennedy felt if we got into this battle with Taft it would divert attention from the really constructive purposes we were trying to achieve." EMK instead passes legislation in 1972 amended to the defense appropriations bill ensuring that human subjects are fully informed about the nature of the experiments for which they volunteer. (*The Boston Globe*, 02/12/1994; *The Cincinnati Post*, 02/14/1994)
- 1972** Mottur plays an important role in the creation of the congressional Office of Technology Assessment (OTA), which is founded on October 13<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Emilio Q. Daddario, a former Democratic representative from Connecticut and Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Science, Research, and Technology, serves as OTA's first director. Mottur serves as the OTA's first assistant director. EMK is elected

as the first chairman of the OTA's Technology Assessment Board (TAB), which consists of six senators and six representatives, with equal representation from each party. JFK's former science advisor, Jerome Wiesner, had also played an important role in founding the OTA, and goes on to serve as Chairman of the OTA's independent Advisory Council. (*Washington Monthly*, 01/01/2001; *Technology Review*, October/November 1997)

- 1973** *The Wall Street Journal* suggests that EMK is attempting to take control of the OTA and its resources to create his own "shadow government," in order to help launch a run to the White House in 1976. (*The Wall Street Journal*, 03/27/1973; *Technology Review*, October/November 1997)
- 1974** Unable to locate appropriate office space until now, OTA operations begin in earnest early in the year. The first report that the OTA undertakes is a study on the viability of generic drugs, allegedly proposed by EMK to help resolve a dispute between drug manufacturers and administration experts in his Health and Scientific Research Subcommittee. Tired of waiting for the dispute to be settled in committee, Senator Ernest Hollings (D-SC) had pushed for OTA to take up the case; allegedly eager to move forward, Daddario had accommodated the wishes of the TAB. (*Technology in Society*, Spring 1995)
- Mid-1970s** EMK's chairmanship of the TAB ends and begins to rotate to other members of the board; he is replaced by Rep. Olin Teague (D-TX), Chairman of the House Science and Technology Committee. (*Technology Review*, October/November 1977) The *Congressional Staff Directory* lists Mottur's position in 1975 as Program Manager for the Technology and World Trade Assessment Program.
- 1976** The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) is established with the assistance of Mottur.
- 1977**
- May* William Safire charges that EMK, again Chairman of the TAB, has "forced out" Daddario in an attempt to take over the agency by installing his own aide, Mottur, as its new director. (*The New York Times*, 05/26/1977) Safire's source for the story is U.S. Representative Marjorie Holt (R-MD), who has recently resigned as Vice Chairman of the TAB after losing a series of battles with EMK. She claims that EMK has "taken over this office," though Daddario says he left the position voluntarily to run for governor of Connecticut and that he had only planned to stay at the OTA long enough to get the agency up and running. Others argue that the senators on the TAB, including EMK, have politicized the OTA by placing their own staff inside the non-partisan agency. (*Technology Review*, October/November 1997; *Washington Monthly*, 01/01/2001)
- EMK's press secretary says that EMK never intended to place Mottur as the new director of the OTA. (*The New York Times*, 06/20/1977)

- June* Russell Peterson replaces Daddario as OTA director. He is later credited with depoliticizing the agency by prohibiting staff aides to the TAB members from also working at OTA. The *Congressional Staff Directory* lists Mottur's position in 1978 under Peterson as Program Manager for Research and Development Policies and Procedures. Mottur is not listed in any staff directory for either EMK or the OTA after 1979. (*The New York Times*, 06/20/1977)
- July* While considering the congressional budget for FY 1978, a conference committee approves a \$1.6 million cut in the requested OTA budget, as well as a provision to reduce OTA staff. This gives OTA a \$7 million budget for 1978. (*Technology Review*, October/November 1977)
- 1978/1979** Mottur is a guest scholar of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C. (Mottur, "National Strategy for Technological Innovation," p. vii)
- 1979** John Gibbons is named Director of the OTA, where he serves until 1993. Gibbons is later credited with building a strong national reputation for the OTA and helping to free it from the cloud of partisan politics that had surrounded the agency in its early years. (*Science*, 01/08/1993)
- 1988** Mottur works on Senator Michael Dukakis' (D-MA) presidential campaign. His responsibilities include building support within the business community on the west coast for the Dukakis campaign. In a 1992 interview, Mottur contrasts Dukakis with Clinton, suggesting that Dukakis "never understood" the business world and that he came across as "very aloof and off in the clouds on this kind of thing." (*The Wall Street Journal*, 09/25/1992)
- 1990** According to *The Omaha World-Herald*, Mottur is still serving on EMK's staff. [It is unclear whether Mottur had served on EMK's staff through the 1980s.] (*The Omaha World-Herald*, 04/15/1990)
- 1992** Mottur is named Deputy Political Director for Business and High Technology for the William J. Clinton presidential campaign. Mottur's responsibilities include drafting the Defense Conversion Plan and the national technology strategy, as well as working to build support for Clinton in the business community. (*Wall Street Journal*, 09/24/1992; *Aerospace America*, 03/1997)
- November* After winning the presidential election, Clinton names Mottur as his Deputy Political Director for Business and High Technology in the presidential transition. Mottur's responsibilities include helping to staff the incoming administration with experts in the field of science and technology. (*Aerospace America*, 03/1997; *The Boston Globe*, 11/29/1992)

- 1993** Clinton names Mottur as his Deputy Assistant Secretary for Technology and Aerospace Industries in the Department of Commerce. Ron Brown, who is also a former EMK aide, is named Secretary of Commerce. John Gibbons leaves the OTA to serve as Clinton's OSTP director.
- 1995** In an effort to cut government spending, the Newt Gingrich-led 104<sup>th</sup> Congress withdraws funding for the OTA. Hollings had attempted to restore full funding for the OTA in July and was supported by Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD), Appropriations Committee ranking Democrat Robert Byrd (D-WV), and OTA board members EMK, Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Ted Stevens (D-AK), and Representative Charles Grassley (R-IA). EMK argues that the OTA "continues to serve an indispensable role... it should not be abolished." However, they are unsuccessful and the agency is effectively shut down on September 29<sup>th</sup>. The OTA had long been viewed as a Democrat-controlled agency and had particularly angered conservatives in the 1980s with its critical reports of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). Mottur is strongly opposed to the closing of OTA and later lobbies for its reopening. (Ellis Mottur, "Technology Assessment in the War on Terrorism and Homeland Security: The Role of the OTA," Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars; *Washington Monthly*, 01/01/2001)
- November* The Commerce Department announces that Mottur will lead a trade mission to Turkey and Egypt in April 1996. (*Aviation Daily*, 12/13/1995)
- 1997**
- October* Mottur, who has been named Acting Assistant Secretary for Trade Development, leads a trade mission to Northern Ireland. The trip is the Clinton administration's third trade mission to Northern Ireland since the 1994 ceasefire. (*Irish Times*, 10/09/1997)
- 2000**
- June* Mottur, as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Technology and Aerospace Industries in the Department of Commerce, is scheduled to lead a trade mission to the Chile and Argentina. ([www.ita.doc.go](http://www.ita.doc.go))
- 2001?** Mottur begins working as a Public Policy Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C.
- 2002**
- March* Mottur releases a Wilson center report on the 22<sup>nd</sup> titled, "Technology Assessment in the War on Terrorism and Homeland Security: The Role of the OTA," in which Mottur argues that Congress "urgently needs to reactivate the OTA." Mottur goes on to argue that, because the OTA's enabling statute had never been rescinded and remains in effect, the OTA still technically exists and has ongoing

authorization to receive appropriations, making it very easy to resurrect the agency. Also note that the senators who had sat on the Governing Board in 1995, including EMK, still technically are board members. (Mottur, "Technology Assessment in the War on Terrorism and Homeland Security: The Role of the OTA")

*April*

Hollings, now Chairman of the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, requests that Mottur's Wilson center study on the OTA and Homeland Security be submitted to his committee. (Mottur, "Technology Assessment in the War on Terrorism and Homeland Security: The Role of the OTA")