

Kennedy in 2d Spot? He Might Run, If . . .

By David S. Broder
Washington Post Staff Writer

6/15/72

Edward M. Kennedy said yesterday he would consider running for vice president with George McGovern if he believed it would "make a difference between success and failure of the ticket."

The Massachusetts senator repeated his familiar denials that he would seek the nomination for President or vice president or respond to a convention draft, but this first broad hint that there were circumstances that could cause him to reverse his thinking was enough to set off political vibrations.

The immediate effect, Democratic politicians said, was to aid McGovern—the front-running presidential hopeful who Kennedy said is "within an eyelash" of clinching a first-ballot nomination.

Coincidentally, Kennedy's statement came just as one of McGovern's challengers, Sen.

Edmund S. Muskie, set out on a 10-state tour, hoping to rally his own and uncommitted delegates to deny McGovern a first-ballot nomination.

Muskie told a press conference, where he also announced that Sen. Harold E. Hughes of Iowa would join him on the tour and be his convention manager, that Kennedy "would bring a great deal of strength to the ticket, but I doubt very much he'd be interested" in the No. 2 spot.

That same doubt was expressed by most Democrats, including Sen. John Tunney of California, who spent the weekend on a camping trip with Kennedy, where the 1972 campaign prospects were discussed. Tunney said he was

See DEMOCRATS, A12, Col. 1

Nixon backers said to violate campaign reporting law.
Page A12.

DEMOCRATS, From A1

"flabbergasted" at the talk of nominating Kennedy for the No. 2 spot, adding, "I feel very confident he doesn't want it."

The one man who may not have been flabbergasted was McGovern, who on May 22 was reported by The Washington Post to have told associates he had reason to think that Kennedy, his first choice for a runningmate, might accept.

Yesterday, in New York, McGovern said Kennedy "obviously would be a great asset on the ticket. Before I made any decisions (on a runningmate), Senator Kennedy would certainly be one of those I'd want to consult."

The first hint that Kennedy might be wavering in his flat rejection of a place on the ticket came in a copyrighted story in yesterday's Boston Globe.

Martin F. Nolan, the paper's Washington Bureau chief, who flew to New York Tuesday night with Kennedy, quoted the senator as saying he would "not exclude the possibility" of running with McGovern if persuaded that his presence on the ticket was needed for victory.

"In my own mind, if it would make a difference, then it really would make a difference, Nolan quoted Kennedy as saying.

Yesterday, Kennedy came out of a Senate hearing room to answer a dozen questions about his statement. Insisting that "my views are unchanged," he said he had answered "a hypothetical question: if I felt—which I do not—it would make a difference between success and failure of the ticket, would I give it consideration? I answered affirmatively . . . Of course, I'd give it consideration."

But Kennedy said he was not a candidate for President or vice president, nor would he accept a draft.

"Under any circumstances?" a reporter asked.

"Under any circumstances that I can possibly foresee," Kennedy replied.

He used the same phrase a moment later, in reiterating that "I can't foresee any circumstances" under which his decision would change.

The language was almost identical to that used by Robert F. Kennedy at a celebrated meeting with reporters on

Jan. 30, 1968, when he said he had no plans to challenge President Johnson "under any foreseeable circumstances." Less than five weeks later, Robert Kennedy was in the race.

There was considerable speculation in Democratic circles that the main intent of the Kennedy statement was to boost McGovern and discourage the efforts by the South Dakotan's rivals to form a stop-McGovern coalition.

The latest step in that effort was Muskie's decision to launch a six-day sweep through 10 states with large blocs of uncommitted delegates.

Accompanied by Hughes and a few aides on a seven-passenger chartered jet, the flu-stricken Muskie headed yesterday afternoon for St. Louis and Salt Lake City, to meet with the delegations from Missouri and Utah.

Later, he is to be in Oklahoma, California, Idaho, Montana, Arizona, Kentucky, Louisiana and Indiana.

Muskie is to visit the Idaho and Montana conventions on the eve of the delegate selection. At the moment, the 628 delegate votes in the 10 states include 318 for McGovern, 169 uncommitted, 55 for Hubert H. Humphrey, 24 for George C. Wallace and 9 for Muskie.

Muskie stopped active campaigning in May, after suffering losses to McGovern and Humphrey in most of the early primaries. His present delegate total is 169. He told a press conference yesterday that he thought if he could build it past 200 by convention time, he would be "a viable alternative" if McGovern fails to achieve a first-ballot victory.

Muskie admitted he was "a long shot," but said he was getting financial help for the trip from "people who continue to believe that maintenance of a constructive alternative is important."

Venezuela Youths

Reuter

CARACAS, Venezuela, June 14—Eighty-five per cent of young people in Venezuela's major cities have tried taking drugs, and more than 50 per cent habitually take marijuana, according to an official report published here.