

Joseph Kraft

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## McGovern's Loss Was of His Own Making

Losers in presidential elections generally have the grace to keep quiet for awhile. Not George McGovern.

Privately, and now in a lecture at Oxford, he has been blaming his defeat on the deficiency of the American people, the Congress, the political parties, the liberal tradition and the press. So, despite the custom of going easy on losers, a few home truths are in order.

To begin with, the basic deficiency in the McGovern campaign was the candidate himself. Senator McGovern lacked the toughness of mind, the breadth of experience, the judgment of men and the personal presence that are required for the White House.

Because of these failings, the Senator never had the enthusiastic support of the strong men who have been the

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mainstays of the Democratic Party in the past. For the same reason, most of us in the press who knew him over a long period were consistently skeptical about his candidacy.

THE PROGRAM the Senator put forward was studded with examples of a poor grasp on issues. For instance, his defense program would have destabilized the nuclear balance by increasing the number of American attack submarines. It would have cost more than necessary because aircraft car-

riers would have been scrapped instead of being allowed to become obsolescent.

Perhaps the most notable feature of the Senator's staff were the number of former journalists in his entourage. I love the press. But I don't think we have much experience in doing the business of the world—certainly not to the point of knowing how to run the country.

The Senator's slam at the press positively exudes sour grapes. If it is true that we did not, as he puts it, "lay a glove" on President Nixon, that is because Mr. Nixon had the good sense to stay above the battle.

SOME SHARP CRITICISM was thrown at Senator McGovern, particularly in connection with his handling of the Eagleton affair. But you didn't hear the Senator screaming with pain when he was being built up by the media after the Wisconsin primary as the giant-killer of American politics, far-seeing and courageous with a rare inner toughness. The truth is that anybody insubstantial enough to have to live by the media is probably going to die by the media.

A far more serious point comes up for examination when Senator McGovern talks about renegade liberals—"those who charge that liberalism has been tried and found wanting." Certainly the perception that the program of the Great Society did not work is widespread—especially among many former backers of the programs.

That view is endorsed by what anybody can see in the work done by such

orthodox liberals as Mayor John Lindsay in New York, and former Mayor Carl Stokes in Cleveland. It is reinforced by some careful studies, including notably Christopher Jencks' monumental work on education entitled "Inequality."

Maybe these perceptions are wrong. If so, the thing to do is to demonstrate the fact by finding and holding up for public admiration examples where the Great Society programs have succeeded. For my own part, I have looked without great success.

A SECOND SERIOUS charge the Senator makes is that the country is in danger of "one man rule." In fact, the most recent decisions on Vietnam have been made almost alone by President Nixon. He has gone way beyond precedent in impounding funds appropriated by the Congress and in asserting executive privilege against testimony to the Congress.

But "one man rule?" That sounds far-fetched to me. The Congress, the courts, and the rest of the vast and infinitely filigreed apparatus of due process in this country are still very much in place. The Congress can easily take the President in tow by developing its own budget, and asserting the power of the purse.

Only that requires that many Congressmen and Senators develop an ability once possessed by Senator McGovern which he seems to have lost in the heady whirl of Presidential politics. It requires the ability not to be a prima donna.