

# McGovern: U.S. Nearing 1-Man Rule

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Sen. George McGovern said yesterday in England that the United States under President Nixon is "closer to one-man rule than at any time in our history."

"Fundamentally, we have experienced an exhaustion of important institutions in America. Today only the presidency is activist and strong, while other traditional centers of power are timid and depleted," the South Dakota senator said.

In his bluntest speech since his overwhelming defeat by Mr. Nixon in the Nov. 7 election, McGovern called Congress impotent, the political parties lacking in principle, the press exhausted and the American people dispirited.

The American people "have followed a bloody trail of disappointment from a sunny street in Dallas to a hotel kitchen in Los Angeles," he said, and in 1972, after a decade of being "oversold on social programs . . . they are wary of buying even sensible and essential social progress from any political leader."

This, he added, was the major factor in his defeat for the presidency.

"To my mind, this mood was central to the outcome of the 1972 election. For example,

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commentators have suggested that credibility was among my principal difficulties.

"I agree, but not with the proposition that people did not believe me. I think they did believe that I would do what I said, and they were afraid. Many Americans looked back at the debris of the last decade, and they feared that once again, they were about to face a hard effort and harvest nothing from it."

The speech was delivered at Oxford University in England the day after Mr. Nixon's inauguration. Its text was released here.

Citing Congress' failure to halt the Vietnam war, and Mr. Nixon's impoundment of funds, McGovern said, "This is not the way of a government of laws or even of men, but of one man. Today the United States seems to be moving dangerously in that direction. The Congress seems incapable of stopping what it opposes or of securing what it seeks . . . And it may fairly be asked whether the congress of the United States in the seventh decade of this century is in peril of going the way of the House of Lords in the first decade.

"The difference is that the diminution of the Lords made English government more democratic while the diminution of the Congress makes American government more dictatorial," he said.

The Republican Party has been "reduced to utter vassalage by the White House," while the Democrats are "in peril of becoming a party of incumbency out of power . . . a party with no principle, no programs, living only from day to day, caring only for the prerequisites of office, doing nothing, and worse, not caring that nothing is done," McGovern said.

"But perhaps the most dis-

couraging development of recent years," he added, "is the exhaustion of the institution of the press."

He said that during the campaign he was "subjected to the close, critical reporting that is a tradition in American politics . . . Yet Mr. Nixon escaped a similar scrutiny. The press never laid a glove on him."

And now, after the election the press and television "are trying to get along by going along."

McGovern concluded by calling on Congress to "exercise positive leadership" to lead America in a new direction and perhaps "spark a similar institutional revival outside government."