

# McGovern's Team Relied on Papers

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Every week last spring during the Democratic presidential primary campaigns, Rick Stearns of Sen. George S. McGovern's staff would sit down with his "desk men" and sift through what new political intelligence and information had become available.

The information was used to compare McGovern's activities with what his primary opponents were doing, what they were saying in speeches, what issues they were likely to emphasize in the future, how well their state and local organizations were shaping up.

The sources of the information, in 90 per cent of the cases, Stearns said yesterday, was newspapers. The rent came primarily from campaign officials throughout the country who kept track of local developments, he said.

"The most useful piece of political information is the newspapers, especially local newspapers," Stearns said. "That's all they write about is local politics."

In the wake of the Watergate scandal and the allegations that widespread political espionage and sabotage were used in behalf of President Nixon's re-election, Stearns and others connected with the McGovern campaign said in interviews they never placed great importance on the gathering of political intelligence.

"I give it (political intelligence gathering) a very low priority in general," said Frank Mankiewicz, McGovern's national political coordinator. "In certain specific situations—such as finding out where uncommitted convention delegates stand, or what approach an opponent is likely to take—it can be useful."

Gathering information on opponents is not new in American political campaigns and both the methods used to obtain the information and the uses to which it eventually is put can vary, depending on the

situation.

In the California Democratic campaign, for example, McGovern officials tried to have a worker present at each public appearance of Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey (D-Minn.), McGovern's only opponent there. If possible, the McGovern officials—usually with the help of a volunteer who held press credentials from a college newspaper—would attempt to tape record Humphrey's remarks, he said.

"We didn't get anything

from it, and I'm not even sure we listened to the tapes," Mankiewicz said.

In another case, Mankiewicz said that when a list of "Democrats for Nixon" was released last year he recalled having read that some of those listed had been reported as under investigation by various government agencies. Research through old newspaper clippings, and checks with the government agencies, produced material that made its way into campaign speeches along with the suggestion that some of the "Democrats for Nixon" might

be seeking favorable treatment from the government, he said.

Mankiewicz and Stearns, who was a regional campaign director for McGovern, said they gathered useful information from McGovern loyalists and workers in various states. For example, Mankiewicz said he spent several days talking to McGovern officials in Illinois, a nonprimary state, to determine who would be most effective in wooing certain uncommitted convention delegates.

In the campaign against President Nixon, Mankiewicz said, McGovern officials spent little time keeping track of the President's movements largely because Mr. Nixon did so little campaigning himself.

"It was a different kind of campaign because we had no candidate to follow around," he said. "Normally you would try to have someone at every public appearance of your opponent, at least to see what he was saying. But Nixon's appearances were so controlled and so rare we didn't even bother."

"We did try to do a thorough job of tracking through the newspapers, finding out who was coming into what states and what they were saying," Mankiewicz said. "Sometimes this way you can pick up a campaign theme before it really emerges, and be prepared to respond."

Joe Grandmaison, who headed McGovern's campaign in the New Hampshire primary and his general election campaign in New York, said he could recall only one bit of political intelligence that affected campaign tactics. It occurred, he said, when the advertising agency handling McGovern's New Hampshire campaign discovered, accidentally, that McGovern and Muskie were planning to use the same format in their radio commercials—a "man in the street" interview format. Fearing that the same radio format would confuse voters, McGovern officials changed their commercials, he said.

Speaking of the Watergate scandal, Grandmaison said, "These things only happen when you have a lot of time and money on your hands. We had neither."