

White House Query Is Put to McGovern In TV Appearance

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The White House had some questions for Sen. George McGovern yesterday, but it wanted a television reporter to ask them.

"They are questions from the White House," said ABC special correspondent Frank Reynolds during McGovern's appearance on that network's "Issues and Answers" program. "I will read one if you don't mind."

Reynolds told the Democratic presidential candidate that the questions, "phrased in question-type language," had been sent over after ABC called the White House to request a transcript of former Treasury Secretary John Connally's "Democrats for Nixon" television address.

"I wish we had the President here so I could ask him some questions, but I will take his," said McGovern, who has repeatedly challenged President Nixon to a debate before the Nov. 7 election.

After answering one White House question about campaign rhetoric, McGovern said he had a question of his own:

"Why have we had no explanation from the President of the United States about his seven agents campaigning for his re-election who invaded the Democratic National Committee?"

McGovern then launched into an attack on the Watergate bugging incident and subsequent allegations of acts of political sabotage and espionage orchestrated by White House and re-election committee aides.

"I want to know, Mr. Nixon, why you permitted activities of that kind to take place in this country?" asked McGovern. "Why were you willing to do something unprecedented in American politics in order to retain your control of the White House?"

The question about rhetoric

was the only White House question Reynolds used on the air. It read:

"You have likened President Nixon to Adolph Hitler. You have implied President Nixon is barbaric in his conduct of the war and you have repeatedly used personal attacks in your campaign against the President. How do you reconcile this with your views that issues should be rationally discussed and that harsh rhetoric is counterproductive? There is a good amount of public opinion that you have used some of the most strident language of any presidential campaign ever."

McGovern, looking surprised to be answering White House questions, denied ever calling Nixon an Adolph Hitler. He said he had stated that bombing civilian populations in Indochina "is the most barbaric thing that has been done by any great power since the Nazis were in office, and I personally hold Mr. Nixon responsible for that."

Reynolds said he had learned about the White House questions yesterday morning when he came to the Washington studio to prepare for the McGovern interview.

There were five or six questions sent over with the Connally transcript," he said. "I asked the one about campaign rhetoric simply because I thought it was the most interesting."

Reynolds said none of the other questions dealt with the Watergate allegations.

Rocci Fisch, a production as-

sistant for the program, said the questions were sent to ABC Saturday by Al Snyder, a staff aide to Herbert G. Klein, White House communications director.

"He called to see if we got the (Connally) transcript and then said he was 'sending along a few questions' to ask McGovern on the show," Fisch said.

Snyder could not be reached for a comment yesterday. A White House operator said "everyone in Mr. Klein's office has gone to the ball game."

"I think this is really an interesting development here, that I should come on a program to be interviewed and have questions submitted by the White House," McGovern said during the program.

"Isn't it interesting that the President himself is afraid, apparently, to come on this program with me, or to come on any other television program and raise his own questions... he knows that I would have some questions for him," McGovern said.

The Democratic presidential candidate complained that the public was using a double standard in assessing Nixon's involvement with the Watergate bugging.

"If seven of my top assistants had been caught burglarizing the Republican National Committee and had been indicted by a grand jury, I know that I would have been held responsible for that," McGovern said.

"I might just as well have dropped out of the race if it had happened on the Democratic side... but some people put Mr. Nixon above the battle," he said.

In another television interview yesterday, McGovern's running mate, R. Sargent Shriver, said Nixon "should come clean as a hound's tooth" on the Watergate affair.

Shriver, appearing on the CBS program, "Face the Nation," said the phrase was the same one used by former President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1952 "when the public was outraged by a mere \$18,000" Nixon was accused of having in a secret "slush fund."

"I don't think the moral conscience of the American people has degenerated so much since... so that the President can be the only candidate to refuse to disclose where his campaign money comes from."