

McGovern Is Convinced Kennedy Will Not Run for President in '72

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 13—Senator George S. McGovern said today he was convinced that "no conceivable circumstances" could get Senator Edward M. Kennedy back into Presidential contention for 1972, but that he himself might become a serious candidate.

The South Dakota Democrat told reporters that he sought out Mr. Kennedy for a political conversation several weeks ago after the Massachusetts Senator was involved in the automobile accident in which a 28-year-old secretary was drowned.

"I think he may have been heading that way prior to the accident," Senator McGovern declared, "But I became convinced after a fairly lengthy talk that no conceivable circumstance would bring him back into the picture."

"I fully expect, however, that he will be President some day," he said.

Most politicians here believe that Mr. McGovern could not become a viable Presidential candidate unless Senator Kennedy had eliminated himself from consideration. The South Dakotan's support in 1968 virtually all came from Democrats closely allied with the Kennedy family.

Meeting with reporters over breakfast, Senator McGovern said that he had not discussed the possibility of his own candidacy with Mr. Kennedy or solicited his support. He did say, however, that he had received some expressions of interest from "Kennedy people" in recent weeks.

Senator McGovern said that his only political plans at this point involved "speaking out on the major problems before this country as bluntly and directly as I can, continuing my tradition of speaking my convictions."

He continued: "In complete candor, this may exclude me from being a serious candidate for the Presidency. But if it turns out that history bears me out, I could become a serious candidate in '72—I'm not going to rule that out."

Humphrey and Muskie

Mr. McGovern's comments appeared to place him in the field of possible Democratic opponents for President in 1972, along with Senator Edmund S. Muskie and former Vice President Humphrey. Mr. Humphrey has been more reluctant about acknowledging interest that the others.

The South Dakotan acknowledged that he had been attempting to "strengthen my staff," but was not engaging in any other political preliminaries. Senator Muskie has been putting together two groups of advisers on major policy issues, to "educate" him for a possible campaign.

Senator McGovern was, on the whole, more critical of the first seven months of the Nixon Administration than the other potential Democratic candidates have been in recent days.

"I don't give him very high marks on the key problems that have faced him," he said of President Nixon. "In Vietnam,

so far as I can tell, there has been no change in military strategy, just a tactical response to the other side."

In domestic affairs, he continued, there has been "very little offered" in terms of controlling inflation and solidifying the economy.

"On balance," the Democrat concluded, "I wouldn't rate the President very high."

"We've lost several thousand troops since Mr. Nixon took over," he said. "There's a question whether we have bought anything worthwhile with that."

Mr. McGovern called Senator Muskie and Mr. Humphrey "the major leaders of the party at the present time," but maintained that "I don't think anyone speaks as the titular leader," a position normally accorded the last Presidential candidate.

The Senator said he would probably have to resign as chairman of the special Democratic commission studying party reform if he became a candidate, since it was likely that this group would make recommendations that would affect the manner in which the next Presidential nominee was selected.