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McGovern's View of Nixon and Watergate

Washington

Senator George S. McGovern said that President Nixon's landslide reelection and his own overwhelming defeat will probably prove to be of greater value to the nation than a McGovern victory because it is "forcing us to face the corrupting of our political process."

In an article in yesterday's edition of the Washington Post, McGovern said:

"And after months of trying to sort through the debris of the November defeat, I have about concluded that the shattering Nixon landslide, and the even more shattering exposure of the corruption that surrounded him, have done more than I could have done in victory to

awaken the nation to what Henry Adams called the 'degradation of the democratic dogma.'"

McGovern, a South Dakota Democrat, was the Democratic-presidential nominee. He said it takes a period of physical and spiritual rejuvenation, plus a few tears and an occasional outburst of bitter anguish, to recover from a presidential defeat.

McGovern said that Watergate and subsequent disclosures of corruption in the Nixon administration "are forcing us to face the corrupting of our political process — an examination I was unable to provoke effectively for most of my fellow citizens in 1972."

He continued: "Watching the high and mighty who so

arrogantly engineered Mr. Nixon's re-election now humbled by their own testimony (before the Senate Watergate committee), I have been struck that such humiliation would have looked like a graceless vendetta had it been executed in the wake of a Democratic presidential victory."

McGovern said he also wondered whether all the facts could ever have come out under a Democratic administration.

McGovern said that in the wake of Watergate may come more honest and thorough campaign reform than would have in the aftermath of a successful presidential campaign that stood for such reform.

Associated Press