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McGovern

Defends

War Moves

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RACINE (Wis.) — Sen. George McGovern today rejected White House criticism of his independent contact with North Vietnamese negotiators in Paris and said Henry A. Kissinger's "highly publicized global junket" will do no more to prolong the war than shorten it.

The Democratic presidential nominee, campaigning here during a swing through the Midwest, reacted to a statement by White House press secretary Ronald Ziegler that the contact made by Pierre Salinger with the Hanoi representatives "could jeopardize" the President's efforts to achieve a negotiated settlement of the war.

'Nixon Failed'

"It is ironic that the White House thinks a brief, middle level inquiry about the prisoners of war might interfere with negotiations," McGovern said.

He said Nixon has had 3½ years to end the war and get American prisoners back and hasn't done so.

"The President now has his chief foreign policy specialist on a highly publicized global junket on the eve of the Republican National Convention," the South Dakota senator said.

"That is what is interfer-

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ing with quiet, serious, professional negotiators far more than anything else possibly could."

Ziegler emphasized the word "could," saying the White House didn't know exactly what had gone on at the two meetings.

'Very Careful'

When McGovern first heard of Ziegler's comment, he responded by saying "Pierre Salinger was very careful not to do anything to jeopardize the talks."

Less than an hour later, however, McGovern counterattacked with his written statement, accusing Nixon of bad faith in sending Kissinger on his globe-trotting peace mission.

"Mr. Nixon has manipulated Mr. Kissinger, and he has manipulated public opinion to appear to be negotiating seriously, when actually he has been stalling to prop up Gen. Thieu's government in Saigon," McGovern said.

"I wanted him to discuss with the North Vietnamese whether there had been any change at all in their position relative to the prisoners. Purely on his own volition he urged the North Vietnamese negotiations to understand what I have said publicly all along—and that is I don't want the war delayed one day because of the election campaign."

McGovern was met by a cheering, pushing crowd of several hundred supporters in predominantly Scandinavian Racine. He was greeted by Lt. Gov. Maring Shrieber and then talked to newsmen.

'Not So'

McGovern confirmed that he had told Salinger to inform the North Vietnamese that they should negotiate an end to the Vietnam War immediately and not wait to see who won the presidential election in November.

Asked if he was "at all unhappy" with Salinger's comments to the North Vietnamese, McGovern replied:

"No, I think it is fine. I talked with him on the telephone yesterday for about

two hours after the initial report in the press. And let me say to the members of the press when I was asked about this yesterday I did not know Mr. Salinger was even back from Paris. I knew nothing of any conversations he has had with the North Vietnamese relative to urging an early peace settlement, but after having had the discussion with him, I verified that the report which came across the United Press wires was, in fact, the truth."