

GAO Checking McGovern's Fund Records

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The General Accounting Office, which last week reported finding several "apparent violations" of federal campaign finance laws by President Nixon's re-election committee, said yesterday that it had begun a similar investigation of Senator George McGovern's campaign finance records.

Phillip S. Hughes, head of the GAO's office of federal elections, which monitors spending by national political candidates under the new Federal Election Campaign Act, said his investigators had begun the inspection of the McGovern organization's spending records earlier this week in a spirit of "even-handed treatment."

Hughes said that although the McGovern audit had not been initiated in response to recent demands by the Republicans that the GAO examine the McGovern campaign's records, new charges yesterday of specific violations against the Democrats by Senator Robert Dole, the Republican National Chairman, would be taken seriously.

CHARGES

In a three-page letter to Hughes, Dole accused the McGovern campaign of "devious cover-ups in various fund-raising activities," which he charged had resulted in "at least seven serious violations" of the campaign spending act.

Dole listed as one example of a possible violation the failure of a London-based fund-raising committee called "Americans for McGovern Abroad" to register with the office of federal elections.

He said the committee had raised \$10,000 which it later gave in two payments in May and June to the McGovern campaign, adding "the secrecy of this fund leads me to question" whether the committee had been created as a "conduit for political contributions to the senator's campaign from foreign principles."

At a news conference called to respond to the Dole charges, Frank Mankiewicz,

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McGovern's national political coordinator, confirmed that the committee had contributed the amount named by Dole and that it was so far not registered with the federal elections office.

Mankiewicz said the question of the committee's registration had been discussed by McGovern staff members, but that there had been "some doubt as to whether foreign committees were required to file."

He dismissed the idea of the committee's serving as a conduit for foreign funds and called the Dole letter "a rather obvious and not very subtle attempt" to divert public opinion from the Justice Department's current investigation of the GAO charges against the Republicans.

The Federal Election Campaign Act, which took effect on April 7, requires the registration of all committees which collect or disburse more than \$1000 after that date for the purpose of influencing a Federal election.

The Dole letter also accused the McGovern campaign organization of failing to comply with that section of the campaign spending law that requires candidates to obtain the occupation and principal place of business of all persons contributing more than \$10 to their campaign and to report such information to the GAO if the contribution is more than \$100.

'LAX'

"The McGovern campaign filings are so lax in meeting this requirement that one can only conclude that it is a purposeful intent to be less than totally honest in revealing the true identity of con-

tributors," the letter said.

Mankiewicz said, however, that the McGovern campaign received "so many small mail contributions that we are unable to get the occupation and place of business of all the people who send money."

He said that direct-mail and other solicitations contained spaces for contributors to provide such information, but that many neglected, or for some other reason declined, to do so.

ALLEGATIONS

The letter from Dole to Hughes also listed these alleged violations:

- The failure of an organization called California Citizens for Fair Share, which placed an advertisement in a Los Angeles newspaper on May 5 "obviously acting on Senator McGovern's behalf" to file a statement of organization with the Federal elections office.

- The failure of the McGovern organization to report the identity of persons "generally reported in the press" to have purchased large blocks of tickets "in the amount of \$2000 or more" to a McGovern rally at Madison Square Garden in June.

- An apparent discrepancy of some \$8000 between the amount reported by the Committee for Good Government here as having been transferred to the McGovern campaign and a lesser amount reported as having been received by it.

- The failure of the Drug Hospital Union, the Academic Lobby and the Committee for Peace, all of which transferred at least \$1000 to the McGovern for President Committee in New York, to register under the campaign law.

Included in 4* ed:

- A contradiction between published reports that Steward Mott, the General Motors heir, had "contributed \$377,500 to the McGovern campaign," and reports filed showing \$38,000 in contributions and \$160,000 in loans by Mott to the campaign.