

McGovern, Buoyancy Renewed, Attacks President on 2 Fronts

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HUNTINGTON, W. Va., Sept. 17—Senator George McGovern began the second straight two-week swing of his Presidential campaign here today by calling for the suspension of a Cabinet member and declaring the "failure of Richard Nixon's war on drugs."

The change in tone was a dramatic reversal for a candidacy that had been on the defensive until Labor Day.

In a telegram to the President, the Democratic nominee charged that the Secretary of Agriculture, Earl L. Butz, and others in his department had been engaged in improprieties surrounding the sale of wheat to the Soviet Union.

Mr. McGovern urged President Nixon to suspend Dr. Butz and others involved in the wheat negotiations until an investigation could be made to determine whether large grain traders had profited from inside information about the deal.

In a separate statement, he asserted that the number of heroin addicts in the United States had doubled since 1968.

Under Mr. Nixon, he said, Southeast Asia emerged a "major source of heroin supply" because the Administration would not "crack down on the narcotics trade in Laos, Thailand and South Vietnam."

Charges Failure

The Nixon Administration, he declared, has failed to try to stop the drug traffic because it "needs air bases in Thailand, Laos mercenaries and Vietnamese soldiers to fight its war."

The two statements today seemed noteworthy less for what they said than for the manner in which they said it. Mr. McGovern appeared more like the candidate who had left the Democratic National Convention at Miami Beach triumphant after having spent more than a year and a half carefully putting together the pieces that brought his nomination.

An acknowledged underdog against President Nixon, he had still been confident that he could win with the same kind of effort that led to his primary victories. Then came the admission by Senator Thomas F. Eagleton, his running mate, that he had been treated in the nineteen-sixties for nervous exhaustion and depression, followed by his resignation and replacement by Sargent Shriver.

For George McGovern, the pieces were scattered all over again, and he was visibly shaken.

A New Hardness

But the last weeks in August were kind to him. Crowds were large for that time of year and enthusiastic. He visited former President Lyndon B. Johnson in Texas and Mayor Richard J. Daley in Chicago.

By Labor Day, there was a new hardness about George McGovern as he began two weeks of incessant campaigning that took him across the country and back, up and down the West Coast, through the major cities of the Middle

West and many of those in the Northeast.

During the early going he acknowledged that he was the underdog, reminding his listeners that he almost always had been in nearly 20 years in politics in Republican South Dakota. Still, he insisted to the approving cheers of the partisan crowds that he was "ready for this uphill fight against Richard Nixon."

Last week, as he was joined by Senator Edward M. Kennedy for four days of intensive barnstorming, he was noticeably buoyed by the size and spirit of the audiences that greeted them in city after city.

He dropped the talk of being an underdog and of uphill battles. Instead, he told his supporters that he brought them good news—that "no matter where we stand in the polls in the middle of September, we're going to win this election in November."

Convinced of Victory

And at the end of the week, at a labor meeting in Baltimore, he said firmly:

"I'm as convinced as I've ever been in 20 years about anything in politics that we're going to win this election."

That could be brave public posturing for a man who is 34 points behind in the national polls, but if there is anyone around Senator McGovern who does not think he means it, it is difficult to find him.

Moreover, that kind of apparent confidence is infectious. A staff that was obviously despondent, almost defeatist, at times in mid-August is suddenly loose and aggressive again.

And on the McGovern campaign plane, the Dakota Queen 2, the flurry of work between cities on speeches and statements is lightened more often these days ban banter and laughter.

After touching down in Washington Friday night for a day off before taking off for a rally here tonight that starts another two-week trek, two senior advisers reflected the new mood as they shared a taxi on the way to their hotel.

"I think the guy can really win this thing," said one, an experienced cynic whose recent assessments were limited to a cautious and unconvincing, "He has a chance."

'Luckiest Politician'

"George McGovern is the luckiest politician in the world; he always has been," said the other, encouraged by the Federal grand jury indictments that day of seven men, including two former White House aides, on charges of having conspired to break into the Democratic National Committee's headquarters in the Watergate complex on June 17.

Both agreed that the Watergate case should be a strong issue for Senator McGovern, who yesterday accused President Nixon of having ordered a "whitewash" in the investigation by the Department of Justice.

Actually, to the surprise of many in the McGovern organization who thought the Water-

gate case would have little impact on most voters, it has been one of the most effective lines in the candidate's standard speech ever since he first used it on an airport crowd in Decatur, Ill., a month ago.

"We're engaged in a struggle with a group of people who are willing to invade our party headquarters with their rubber gloves in the dead of night," Mr. McGovern tells his listeners, usually to boos or an angry roar.

But the Watergate issue is not his best crowd rouser.

Over and over, at huge outdoor rallies, at union conventions, in meetings with small groups, he draws the loudest and longest applause when he declares that if the lessons of Vietnam are learned, "never again will we send the precious young blood of this country to die for a corrupt military dictatorship 10,000 miles from our shores."

The response is so consistent that it prompted Frank Mankiewicz, Mr. McGovern's national political director, to remark sarcastically one night in Seattle as the usual cheers rumbled from a large street crowd:

"The President really has defused the war issue."

Near the top of the McGovern applause meter are his daily sallies at John B. Connally, the former Secretary of the Treasury, who heads Democrats for Nixon.

"I want to say this to Mr. Connally," Senator McGovern says. "We'll let you go to Mr. Nixon with your oil billionaire friends, and we'll take the oil workers and the dock workers, the auto workers and the aircraft workers and all the other workers in this country."

And the listeners who start by laughing when he mentions Mr. Connally's name invariably end up with a roar of approval.

But as he attacks the "special interests" in his bid for traditionally Democratic working-class votes in the battleground states such as California, Illinois, Ohio and Michigan that he is focusing his campaign on, no line is more sure-fire than the one that has become known to campaign followers as "the bologna sandwich."

"There is something wrong in a system," Mr. McGovern declares, a hint of a smile on his lips as he anticipates the response, "that permits a corporate executive to deduct his \$20 martini luncheon when the working man can't even deduct his bologna sandwich."