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McGovern Praises Nixon's Stand

Washington

Senator George McGovern, the defeated 1972 Democratic presidential candidate, praised President Nixon yesterday for admitting a mistake on the Watergate affair but criticized him for suggesting the espionage was typical of American politics.

In his first formal statement of the Watergate since losing the November presidential election, McGovern said he believed the President was not personally involved.

The South Dakota senator told a meeting of the America Society of Newspaper Editors "there is no direct evidence to implicate Mr. Nixon in the planning of political espionage or the subsequent obstruction of justice. Like all of you, I hope he was not involved. He denies that he was—and I, for one, must believe him."

McGovern said, "It is not an easy thing for a President to admit a mistake — but it is perhaps essential to the nation that he can. On Monday, President Nixon did."

He added it is now essential for the President to restore fully the credibility and capability of his administration.

"He must insure that the administration is rid of all officials who have broken the law, hidden the truth, or betrayed the ethics of public service," he said.

McGovern said: "The Watergate scandal is not, as the president implied, typical of the political process.

Our politics is better than that. And Watergate is worse than the tactics of any national campaign in my memory of modern years."

He said he had no doubt that the ethical standards of American politics can be improved. "But we must wonder about Mr. Nixon's refer-

ence to campaign excesses that have occurred on all sides."

"I emphatically reject the notion that I or my colleagues or my party in the presidential election condoned or would have countenanced activities of a criminal nature." *Reuters*