

*Sigma Delta Chi Community Speech - Sep. 27
Nat'l Press Club*
— Nomination as guest at our convention
— Because
→ rounded in credit card -- why
Mc Govern is in Washington
(Braden... Mendenhall)

GOOD EVENING LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, "LOUSY" NEWSPAPER COLUMNISTS,
"NUTTY" PUBLIC OPINION POLLSTERS. I AM HERE TONIGHT TO COMMISERATE WITH
YOU.

I UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEMS YOU MUST BE HAVING IN TRYING TO COVER
ADEQUATELY GEORGE MCGOVERN CHANGING POSITIONS ON THE ISSUES. I BELIEVE
THAT I UNDERSTAND GEORGE MCGOVERN'S PROBLEM EVEN IF HE DOESN'T. IT IS
A PROBLEM HUBERT HUMPHREY SPOKE OF SIX YEARS AGO IN NEW YORK WHEN HE
SAID, "IT IS ALWAYS RISKY TO SPEAK TO THE PRESS, THEY ARE LIKELY TO
REPORT WHAT YOU SAY."

COVERING MCGOVERN RISKY BUSINESS

ONE MIGHT ADD THAT WHEN HUMPHREY SPOKE HE SPOKE OF A RISK TO
THOSE, LIKE HIMSELF, WHO WERE REPORTED ABOUT. BUT NOW IN 1972 IN TRYING
TO COVER GEORGE MCGOVERN, THERE IS AN EQUAL RISK BY THOSE WHO ARE DOING
THE REPORTING. YOU NEVER KNOW FOR SURE WHEN YOU FILE A STORY ON MCGOVERN
WHETHER IT WILL STILL BE CURRENT BY THE TIME IT IS PRINTED OR WHETHER
MCGOVERN WILL HAVE MADE IT OLD NEWS BY SWITCHING HIS POSITION ON YOU.
THAT MAY EXPLAIN WHY MCGOVERN COMPLAINS THAT HE "SOMETIMES HARDLY RECOGNIZES"
HIMSELF FROM WHAT HE READS IN THE NEWSPAPERS.

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BUT YOU CAN TAKE HEART IN SOME OTHER WORDS OF THE SENATOR STATED RECENTLY AFTER HE DENOUNCED CERTAIN UNNAMED COLUMNISTS AND POLLSTERS AS "NUTTY" AND "LOUSY" AND "PARANOID." HE WAS QUICK TO ADD THAT HE FEELS THE AMERICAN PRESS IN GENERAL IS THE BEST IN THE WORLD AND GENERALLY TELLS THE NEWS FAIRLY.

"I AM NOT TRYING TO BUTTER YOU UP," HE SAID. "I REALLY MEAN THAT." IT APPEARS FROM THIS THAT WHEN IT COMES TO THE AMERICAN PRESS, THERE IS NO NEED TO WORRY, GEORGE MCGOVERN IS BEHIND YOU 1,000%.

BUT THIS SAME GENERALLY-BEST-IN-THE-WORLD-AMERICAN PRESS IS THE SAME PRESS MCGOVERN SAYS IS BEING UNFAIR TO HIM BECAUSE IT HAS YIELDED TO WHAT HE ALLEGES TO BE GOVERNMENT INTIMIDATION.

WHAT MCGOVERN IS REALLY SAYING -- FOR ALL HIS OUTRAGE AND INDIGNATION OVER MEDIA TREATMENT OF HIS CAMPAIGN -- IS SIMPLY THAT HIS MEDIA TACTICS AREN'T WORKING.

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LONESOME GEORGE LACKS SUPPORTERS

ADDING TO THE LIST, JUST YESTERDAY THERE WERE NEWS ACCOUNTS OF MCGOVERN'S CHARGE THAT THE NETWORKS WERE GIVING COVERAGE TO SPOKESMEN FOR THE PRESIDENT, NOT BECAUSE THERE IS ANYTHING NEWSWORTHY ABOUT WHAT IS BEING SAID, BUT BECAUSE THE NETWORKS HAVE BEEN "INTIMIDATED" BY THE ADMINISTRATION. THIS IS, OF COURSE, NONSENSE AND, IS ITSELF A RATHER CLUMSY EFFORT ON THE PART OF THE MCGOVERN CAMPAIGN TO INTIMIDATE THE NETWORKS INTO SUPPRESSING THE REPUBLICAN POINT OF VIEW. WHAT REALLY SEEMS TO BE DISTURBING MCGOVERN IS THE FACT THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS MANY PEOPLE WHO WILL PUBLICLY ADVOCATE HIS POINT OF VIEW WHEREAS MCGOVERN AND SARGENT SHRIVER SEEM TO BE THE ONLY TWO DEMOCRATS IN AMERICA WHO WILL PUBLICLY DEFEND WHAT THE DEMOCRAT REPRESENTS.

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FAIR IS FAIR AND IT'S HURTING MCGOVERN

AND THE MAN WHO WOULD TAKE HIS CAMPAIGN TO THE PEOPLE BY SPENDING LONG HOURS OF EVERY DAY DRIVING PAST PEOPLE OR FLYING OVER THEM TO TO GET FROM ONE CAMERA IN ONE MEDIA MARKET TO ANOTHER IN A DIFFERENT TIME ZONE, NOW COMPLAINS THAT THE MEDIA WON'T DO HIS WORK FOR HIM, NAMELY TAKE HIS MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE. HE'LL GO BEFORE CAMERAS -- NOT BEFORE THE PEOPLE.

THE MCGOVERN CAMPAIGN MESSAGE IS GETTING TO THE PEOPLE, HOWEVER, RATHER EFFECTIVELY IF YOU ASK ME. AS ONE REPORTER PUT IT, "SENATOR MCGOVERN IS ENTITLED TO BE REPORTED FULLY, FAIRLY, AND OBJECTIVELY. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS RAPID REVERSALS, THE EFFECT IS ABOUT AS DAMAGING AS EVEN HIS MOST UNFAIR COMPETITOR COULD WISH." WHICH IS PERHAPS THE REASON WHY HIS PLANNED NEW MEDIA CAMPAIGN -- COMPLETE WITH COZY FIRESIDE CHATS -- WON'T WORK ANY BETTER THAN HIS OLD THREE MEDIA MARKET A DAY CAMPAIGN.

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I WOULD POINT OUT TO GEORGE MCGOVERN THAT THE FAULT LIES NOT IN THE STAR -- OR THE POST OR TIMES OR NBC FOR THAT MATTER -- BUT WITH HIMSELF. THE MEDIA IS TRYING TO BE FAIR AND IT IS TRYING TO PLAY THIS CAMPAIGN STRAIGHT.

I HAVE HAD MY CRITICISMS OF THE PRESS IN THE PAST AND SOME STILL REMAIN. BUT ON THE WHOLE I AM SATISFIED THAT THE PRESS STILL VALUES OBJECTIVITY AS ITS GOAL. IF THERE HAD BEEN INTIMIDATION OF THE PRESS BY THIS ADMINISTRATION OR ANY OTHER -- AND THERE WAS NOT -- I DON'T BELIEVE FOR A MINUTE THAT THE PRESS WOULD YIELD, OR SACRIFICE ITS OBJECTIVITY TO ANY EXPEDIENT OUT OF FEAR.

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THE PROOF OF THIS -- THE PROOF THAT MOST AMERICAN JOURNALISTS STILL HOLD OBJECTIVITY AS THEIR HIGHEST GOAL, LIES IN A MUCH MORE BLATANT ASSAULT ON THAT VALUE WHICH CAME EARLIER THIS YEAR WHEN THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER GUILD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ENDORSED GEORGE McGOVERN. IT WAS THE REACTION OF JOURNALISTS AROUND THE COUNTRY TO THAT THREAT TO THEIR OWN CREDIBILITY ON WHICH I BASE MY CONFIDENCE.

NEWSMEN IN GREAT NUMBERS WENT ON RECORD TO DISASSOCIATE THEMSELVES FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ACTION.

AND THE ACTION OF LOCAL GUILDS AND INDIVIDUAL NEWSMEN ACROSS AMERICA WAS PROOF POSITIVE THAT THE VAST MAJORITY OF WORKING PRESS SEES ITS ROLE AS ONE OF OBSERVER AND REPORTER RATHER THAN ONE OF ADVOCATE OR INTERPRETER OR APOLOGISTS FOR ANY CANDIDATE OR ANY POSITION ON ANY ISSUE.

LEST YOU GET THE WRONG IDEA, AND IN ORDER THAT THE APPARENT IRONY IN THIS DEFENSE OF THE MEDIA AGAINST THE ONSLAUGHTS OF GEORGE McGOVERN BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE BE TOO MUCH FOR ANY OF YOU TO TAKE, I MUST POINT OUT THAT SOME PROBLEMS STILL REMAIN FROM THE REPUBLICAN PERSPECTIVE AS WELL.

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HEADLINE STORY -- ON PAGE 39

LAST WEEK'S ZERO DEATH TOLL IN VIETNAM, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS BIG NEWS -- PERHAPS EVEN HISTORIC -- BUT IT WASN'T PLAYED AS SUCH AROUND THE COUNTRY. ONE PAPER RAN IT IN A SMALL STORY ON PAGE 39. THAT WAS THE FIRST WEEK SINCE 1965 WHEN NO AMERICAN DIED IN THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN WAR.

AND SURELY IF GEORGE McGOVERN'S PROMISES ARE BIG NEWS, THEN THE FULFILLMENT OF RICHARD NIXON'S PROMISE IS NEWS OF AT LEAST THE SAME MAGNITUDE. AND THE ECONOMIC STATISTICS OF LAST WEEK -- WHICH SHOWED THE GOAL TO CUT INFLATION IN HALF HAD BEEN MET -- WAS JUST SUCH AN ITEM BUT IT WASN'T PLAYED THAT WAY.

AND TOO, McGOVERN'S WILD CHARGES ABOUT GOP CAMPAIGN FINANCES GET LENGTHY MEDIA COVERAGE -- WHILE THE NEW YORK TIMES REPORTS MY OWN CHARGES AGAINST McGOVERN CAMPAIGN FUNDRAISING VIOLATIONS ON PAGE 38 UNDER THE HOW-TO-PLAY BRIDGE COLUMN.

THE POINT IS SIMPLY THIS -- McGOVERN'S PETULANT CHARGES AGAINST WHAT HE DEEMS TO BE AN UNFAIR PRESS, ARE IN THEMSELVES REALLY HIS OWN AWKWARD ATTEMPT TO INTIMIDATE IT AND TO MANAGE THE NEWS.

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DON'T REPORT WHAT THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE OR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE HAS TO SAY. THAT'S NOT NEWS.

DON'T REPEAT WHAT SARGENT SHRIVER HAS TO SAY -- WHEN HE STICKS HIS FOOT IN IT -- THAT'S NOT NEWS.

DON'T EVEN REPORT WHAT McGOVERN HAS TO SAY -- SAYS THE CANDIDATE OF TRUTH AND CANDOR -- UNLESS IT MAKES HIM LOOK GOOD. NO STORIES ABOUT STAFF DISARRAY OR CREDIBILITY GAPS -- AND NEVER, NEVER, CHARACTERIZE GEORGE McGOVERN AS INCONSISTENT.

AT ANY RATE, AS YOU HAVE LEARNED, IF YOU DO SO, YOU DO IT AT THE PERIL OF YOUR REPUTATION.

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