



McGovern: The Dangerous Decoy



"I was planning to stay home on Election Day this year, to protest Nixon's breaking the promises he made in '68. . . but now that McGovern has captured the Democratic nomination, I guess I'm going to have to go vote for old Tricky Dick, after all. The thought of McGovern as President really scares me. By comparison, Nixon seems almost good."

No doubt you've heard this "consider the alternative" line from quite a few people, already. And you'll be hearing it again—and again, and again—between now and November 7th. Nixon's professional fearmongers will be shouting it from the rooftops, in an effort to raise additional funds for their already-bloated campaign chest. "Responsible conservative" publications will echo the cry, albeit a bit less fervently. And millions of good people, who are sick at heart over Nixon's actions in the last two years, will give in and reluctantly troop to the polls in November, hold their noses, grit their teeth, and pull the lever beside the name of Richard Milhous Nixon.

Now, no doubt, if the Democrats had nominated Hubert Humphrey or Edmund Muskie, the Nixon tub-thumpers would be hawking much the same line. But it would have fallen, to a large extent, on deaf ears. For somehow, poor old Hot-Air Hubert and Crying Ed Muskie just don't make very convincing bogeymen.

After all, a lot of people who voted for Nixon four years ago, because they thought he'd at least be better than HHH, have by now figured out that they were seduced and abandoned. For there is little in the record of the Nixon Administration (save its reluctant anti-bussing stance) that one cannot envision as fitting equally well into that of a Humphrey Administration, and there is little that HHH could have done *beyond* what Nixon has done . . . especially given the fact that Republicans in Congress would have fought tooth and nail if a Humphrey or Muskie had tried most of the things they have meekly allowed Nixon to do.

McGovern, on the other hand, somehow retains the ability to terrify. For, although he is not *in fact* more radical than Humphrey or Muskie (his ADA rating, for instance, is *lower* than theirs), his *image* is considerably more radical. Indeed, he is *perceived*, by many people, as being a cross between Norman Thomas and Neville Chamberlain . . . a veritable witch's-brew of socialism and surrender.

It is difficult to say how this image came into being. If one examines McGovern's voting-record carefully, it certainly doesn't hold up. He's a liberal—no question—but no more so than many other public figures generally regarded as being fairly moderate.

To some extent, of course, McGovern

himself has carefully cultivated his radical reputation, as a means of gaining the support of the youthful shock-troops who were so vital to his success in the primary campaigns . . . and is now back-pedaling furiously, in order to appeal to the moderate-liberals whose votes he needs in the general election.

And to some extent, he is simply the beneficiary—if that is the right word—of a curious phenomenon that occurs once every 24 years, as precisely as clockwork.

Nobody knows just why it happens, but every 24 years, a sort of populist radicalism seems to sweep the country . . . and those who are infected with its fever seek a champion. And for some reason, this champion inevitably turns out to be a man of the Upper Midwest—William Jennings Bryan in 1900, Robert LaFollette in 1924, Henry Wallace in 1948, and now McGovern.

These champions and their supporters invariably fail miserably in their attempts at capturing the White House, but this fact doesn't seem to deter them from having another go at it once each generation. And this time, McGovern is their man.

Thus, because McGovern is the candidate of the radical fringe, he becomes, in many peoples' minds, a radical himself . . . and with some justification, it must be conceded.

But McGovern cannot be considered *in vacuo*. What counts is not how radical McGovern is (or is not) relative to some mythical ideal, but how radical he is compared to Richard Nixon. And the answer, unfortunately, is "not very." For despite their rhetorical differences—and the images they project—there is really very little difference between the two men.

Consider first their respective economic proposals. McGovern's proposal for a guaranteed annual income of \$1,000 per person is being decried by its opponents as socialism—which, indeed, it is. But Nixon's Family Assistance Plan is essentially the same thing. McGovern's economic proposals are also damned as being certain to cause massive inflation. But Nixon has run up a Budget deficit of nearly \$100 Billion in four years . . . a record unmatched since the days of FDR.

McGovern's promise to assure "jobs for all"—or, in lieu thereof, 100 percent unemployment compensation—are condemned as being certain to remove incentives for businesses to avoid bankruptcy, and for individuals to remain productive. But then, Nixon bailed out Lockheed. McGovern is blasted as being inimical to the free-enterprise system—but Nixon has imposed wage-price controls, and nationalized a major industry (railroads).

McGovern's proposed Federal Budget of \$350 Billion is viewed as fiscally calamitous . . . and so it would be. Meanwhile, Nixon, who campaigned against Kennedy in 1960 on a pledge to hold the Budget under \$100 Billion, inaugurated his Administration only nine years later with a Budget exceeding \$200 Billion . . . and is now beating his chest and emitting cries to the effect that he will hold the line at \$250 Billion. Judging from this record, there is little doubt that Nixon will be close to the \$350 Billion level himself within four years, if re-elected.

Of course, domestic policy is only part of the package one must consider in assessing a President (or potential President); foreign policy must also be taken into account. And here, as on the domestic scene, Nixon's performance offers little more hope than McGovern's promises.

For Nixon has done everything in his power to "build bridges" to the most oppressively totalitarian regimes in the world—the governments of Soviet Russia and Red China. When he could have used the threat of cutting off foreign aid (a good idea, in any instance) to hold our supposed "friends" in line at the UN, he sat on his hands and let these rented allies unseat the Nationalist Chinese delegation, and seat in its place the murderous Peking regime. And then, his UN ambassador didn't even have the good grace to follow the lead of the Nationalist Chinese, and walk out of that assemblage of pompous pipsqueaks forever.

In Vietnam, he has pursued a policy that combines the worst of two alternatives—neither getting us out as soon as he was inaugurated, nor attempting a military victory. The result: thousands of lives and billions of dollars thrown away for nothing. No, worse than nothing—for the Nixon Vietnam policy has resulted on a destruction of the American peoples' will to fight in any future war which might (unlike Vietnam) be necessary for our survival, and has siphoned money out of our domestic defense budget, leaving us sadly behind the Soviets in missile strength. And then, to cap it off, he has now virtually conceded the Soviets *permanent* military superiority, in the SALT Talks.

The foregoing should serve to convince all but the blindest Nixonites and crassest "My Party, Right or Wrong" Republicans that the "consider the alternative" argument is fallacious—that a McGovern Administration would be no more of a disaster than four more years of Nixon. But even if one still feels that McGovern would be worse, there are some points one should consider before succumbing to the blandishments of the Nixon forces.

First, it is a virtual certainty that McGovern cannot win, under any circumstances. Even before the Eagleton fiasco, the polls showed McGovern trailing Nixon by 21 percentage points. This gap will probably narrow somewhat, but even the most pro-McGovern analysis leaves him shy of the 270 electoral votes needed to win.

There is no doubt, of course, that McGovern will carry some states. Maine (4 electoral votes), Massachusetts (14), Rhode Island (4), Hawaii (4), Minnesota (10) and the District of Columbia (3) would go for Alexei Kosygin, if he were the Democratic nominee. Thus, at bare minimum, McGovern is assured of 39 electoral votes. But there, also, ends the list of "sure bets." Anything McGovern gets beyond these 39 points will have to be fought for.

Since we are trying to determine his best possible showing, however, let us give him the benefit of all doubts, and see what we come up with. To start, let us concede him the entire Northeast, all the way down to the North Carolina border, excepting only Vermont, New Hampshire, and Virginia. This grossly generous estimate gives him seven more states (Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware) and 112 more votes, for a total of 151.

And then, for good measure, let's throw in all the Pacific states (California, Washington, Oregon, and Alaska, on top of the already-conceded Hawaii). This gives McGovern another 63 points, for a total of 214.

And finally, for the heck of it, let's toss in Michigan (21 votes) and the Senator's home state of South Dakota (4). The total is now 239, or 31 short of victory. And that's it. There is not one other state which McGovern has the slightest hope of carrying. Illinois is hopeless, without Daley's wholehearted support . . . and even then, would be unlikely. (Illinois went for Nixon over Humphrey by over 100,000 votes, even with Daley doing his damndest.) Texas? Don't be silly—HHH got only 41 percent of the vote. Missouri? Humphrey carried it by a razor's edge, with Wallace drawing 25 times the vote which separated HHH from

Nixon—and it is hard to conceive of those Wallaceites voting for McGovern. Wisconsin? Conceivable, but Nixon beat HHH by 4 percent, with Wallace drawing an additional 8 percent . . . and Wisconsin has only 12 electoral votes in any case.

The Deep South, Southwest, Midwest, and Mountain States are an absolute desert for McGovern; sure, the *Democrats* in Nebraska (for instance) voted for him in the primary, as did those in New Mexico (where his only opponent was Wallace), but his chances of carrying any of the states in these regions in November are a flat zero.

No, even conceding him a number of states which he is by no means certain to carry (e.g. California, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Michigan), one finds it impossible to rationally envision a McGovern victory.

So, even if one views McGovern as Evil Incarnate, ten times worse than Nixon, one should feel under no compulsion to go vote for Richard the Lyin'-Hearted, if one's motivation is simply to prevent McGovern's election.

But what if one's motivation is *not* simply to keep McGovern out of the White House? What if it is to make sure that McGovern, and all he stands for, is *overwhelmingly repudiated* at the polls?

A laudable motivation, this—but one which carries within it a deadly trap. And this is that one cannot overwhelm McGovern without simultaneously giving Nixon an overwhelming *endorsement*. A landslide victory for Nixon will deliver the GOP into the hands of its Democrat-aping faction forever, and will also give RMN a blank check to do whatever he chooses for the next four years. (Remember LBJ's performance after his victory over Goldwater?) Nixon, and his equivalents in future years, will be able to say "See, it isn't necessary to make any concessions to the minimal-government advocates; we didn't in '72, and we still won by a landslide."

In sum, the greatest danger McGovern poses is not that he will win, and lead us down the road to oblivion, but that his candidacy itself will do two things.

First, it will move the entire spectrum of political debate in this country sharply towards collectivism. Simply by virtue of the fact that he is the Presidential nominee of a major party, McGovern will bring respectability to proposals which, as recently as fifteen years ago, would have categorized any politician who espoused them as a candidate for the funny farm, rather than for the Presidency.

Second—and more critically—he will *legitimize Nixon*. Whether he loses by a wide margin or a narrow one, he will give Nixon a mandate to move towards Total Statism at an accelerated pace.

At first, this analysis appears to leave no hope for those of us who oppose this trend towards statism. If we go to the polls and vote for Nixon, in order to crush McGovern, we implicitly endorse Nixon's policies. If, on the other hand, we stay home, and Nixon wins only narrowly, the socialists in both parties can say "See, our ideas aren't so far out . . . nearly half the voters support them." Either way, the collectivists win.

There is a third alternative. A means by which we can make our dissatisfaction known. We can go to the polls and vote against both Nixon and McGovern—and for a man who represents *our* philosophy of less government and more individual responsibility.

That man is Dr. John Hospers, candidate of the Libertarian Party. His running-mate is Mrs. Tonie Nathan. Together, they offer a *real* alternative to Nixonism/McGovernism. And only by mustering a significant bloc of votes for the Hospers-Nathan ticket can we hope to make Nixon realize that we do *not* endorse his present policies, and that we cannot be ignored or taken for granted.

McGovern must be recognized for what he is . . . a decoy, whose greatest danger is that he will lure us into voting for Nixon, as 'the lesser of two evils.' It will take courage to resist this temptation. And it will take an extra effort to vote for Dr. Hospers and Mrs. Nathan, as this will have to be done by write-in, in most states. But it must be done, for what is at stake is nothing less than the future of freedom in America.

Break Free From Big Brother. Vote Libertarian.

Vote for Dr. John Hospers and Mrs. Tonie Nathan for President and Vice-President of the United States, on November 7, 1972. If they're not on the ballot in your state, find out how to cast a write-in vote.

Contribute to the Hospers-Nathan campaign. Checks should be made out to *Libertarian Party Campaign Fund*, and sent to the Fund at 1415 N. El Paso, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80906.

Join the Libertarian Party, as an active member. Annual dues are \$4 for students, \$6 for regular membership, and \$12 for sustaining membership. Checks should be made out to *Libertarian Party*, and sent to the Party's National Headquarters, 7748 Lowell Blvd., Westminster, Colorado 80030.

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