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POLITICAL MEDIA ANALYSIS

October 17, 1972

Three Weeks

Last night on the tube, we did far better than we had any reason to expect yesterday morning. The President's appearance before families of the POWs led all networks; the footage was variously moving, effective and favorable. The TV types themselves noted tears and cheers as RN departed. All gave excellent coverage of the event -- the lead story of last night. This morning the play is generally front-page with pictures. The implied attack on McGovern's amnesty and war positions, was effective politically directly, as well.

Other plusses for the Admin are these: Continuing analyses that are favorable to President and damaging to us, continue to pour in from all over the country. The polls which got noted on the tube last night cannot have induced any sense of confidence in the McGovern camp.

Also note: RN's criticism of "opinion leaders" got a good ride -- not extensive, but good -- and one expects to see reaction from elite media that we are not the "cheer-leaders" of the Administration -- upcoming. Again, however, the POW story swept Watergate-bugging-espionage-sabotage off the lead.

MCGOVERN -- His lead story of the day is his charge that we hired fifty saboteurs to disrupt and harass the Democrats. Gets extensive, not great, coverage. His lead of today, and probably of last night. Shriver, picking up the theme in today's wires. Last night, however, McGovern's edge was blunted by screw-ball fire marshal who disrupted -- on two networks -- his rally to order press around, hullabaloo developed, his aides denouncing marshal -- general screw-up which made McGovern footage on nets somewhat comical.

On the down side for McGovern are the polls and analyses mentioned.

WATERGATE-ESPIONAGE -- Again, on this matter we did better than one expected in the early morning hours of Monday. McGovern's charges made the nets, in fashion stated above, but MacGregor was on all three networks denouncing the charges. On ABC we did well -- on NBC (Valeriani) not so well. Theme developing is that while we are "denouncing" the charges, we are not "denying" the charges. Dole and MacGregor in Post quotes are getting good rides on press and in wires -- in these stories.

SHRIVER -- Last night's report on Shriver picked up theme reported in here previously. Shriver asserting people were leaving RN in droves to go into undecided -- questioned critically by Jack Perkins of NBC who then went into theme of resignation in Shriver camp, with victory written off -- and hope now being to hold down RN's margin.

OBSERVATIONS -- 1) While we effectively counter-attacked on Watergate, etc., last night, this is not our issue, but theirs; and further focus on their issue, making this story of the day seems unwise. 2) The way the W. Post hyped our attacks upon them this morning, with Bradlee's smug assertion to wait for "time" to judge accuracy of charges -- suggests we may be raising into a pat hand; and Post may have wherewithall to chop us off, if we move too far out on limb. However, "denouncing but not denying" theme is one that needs consideration for handling. 3) Howls from both Shriver and McGovern suggest that the "attack" commercials have gotten to them. 4) The Allin "Atlanta Report" contained in final pages of news summary for leisurely reading.

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POLITICAL MEDIA ANALYSIS

November 4, 1972

Vietnam was the political issue of yesterday. The President, the Vice President, McGovern & Shriver all focused upon it -- it led most stories on all candidates. With the President and Vice President, however, there was a sub-theme of "hecklers" upon whom the media focused very heavily -- both TV and press. Politics has come to dominate television almost to the exclusion of other news -- but not so with the writing press. The McGovern attack on the President -- hitting us on a point of maximum political vulnerability according to some polls, i. e., alleged "political" timing of cease-fire -- was given the lead in the Times this morning but nowhere else.

One negative from yesterday was the handling of the pre-April donors release. Names and contributions were probably stunning to average fellow -- also, Common Cause came off as hero of the hour.

But both the President and Vice President, however, made their points loud and clear about peace with surrender and McGovern meddling in delicate foreign policy negotiations of the United States.

McGovern's Kiss My Ass comment got a surprising second day ride in a number of stories this morning -- page one in the Philly paper with a story essentially focusing upon the remark.

Negative story making the rounds is alleged Secret Service transmission of information on McGovern "private" visits to White House aides.

And now for the Good News -- Technicians and others in a contract dispute with CBS have walked off the job -- and here it is only three days to election night. And that's the way it is, Saturday, November 4th.

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POLITICAL MEDIA ANALYSIS

October 27, 1972

II To Go

"Peace is at hand" dominates television and press last night and this morning as no story in recent memory. Watergate-Espionage has been inundated completely for the time being.

MR. MCGOVERN -- At present here is how McGovern is handling the issue; lead on his remarks is that he welcomes peace, even on election eve; sub-themes: why didn't we get it four years ago; and let's not let President Thieu stand in our way. McGovern will move cautiously on this, as press reports, waiting for perhaps a deadlock or a hitch, before going on attack.

Perhaps we ought to consider the pre-emptive strike -- i. e., the Vice President saying on Sunday television that the President's achievement proves the wisdom of his bombing and mining; and also, shows how close to disaster McGovern would have brought America -- as not a week ago, even after Hanoi had secretly made concessions, McGovern was still calling for an American surrender and a dishonorable peace. The fact of the peace treaty is to prove the peace-at-any-price leftists-like McGovern as dreadfully mistaken and wrong for the last four years, and the President right.

One problem here is that we (Dole, MacGregor) have been calling on McGovern et al. not to play politics; and McGovern has not breached that call yet -- though Shriver has; and he may be the hinge on which to go after McGovern for offering a surrender to the enemy, and betrayal -- even while secret peace terms had been agreed to.

Secondly, President has achieved peace despite the fact that here at home, he had been harassed, and attacked and undercut every step of the way. Note: Shriver's remark of two weeks back that Kissinger's trip to Paris was the "most immoral thing Richard Nixon ever did," or words to that effect.

Question: Should we wait for McGovern to attack if things go awry -- which could redound to our benefit -- or go after him first?

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