

Citizen McGovern now stumps for liberalism

By Teri Banas
staff writer

Former South Dakota Sen. George McGovern, remembered most for his crushing defeat by Richard Nixon's re-election machine in 1972, arrived on the campus of the University of Michigan in Dearborn yesterday looking tanned and fit, and speaking out on the "Future of Liberalism."

Now based in Washington, D.C. and writing a syndicated column on current events, McGovern, 63, spoke in favor of Democrats developing "clear alternatives" to the economic and social policies of the Reagan Administration. "I still think liberalism is mainstream American politics," he said in an interview. "The pendulum swings back and forth. But sooner or later people will be looking to confront the problems of unemployment, declining international trade and the rising national deficit," he said.

"LIBERALISM DOESN'T have to be associated with big government spending," he added. "My own personal feeling is that we're spending too much money on poorly planned weapons systems and not enough on job training, education, health, housing — all of which also have something to do with national strength."

McGovern's visit on a sunny, mid-fall campus day was arranged by the

universally and was to be followed by two other campus visits at Butler University in Indianapolis, Ind., and the University of Chicago.

McGovern took several swipes at Ronald Reagan's presidency, blaming Reagan for racking up the largest national deficit (\$200 million) in the country's history. And he challenged Democrats to take Reagan "head on" on the issues of the MX missile, the Star Wars System and U.S. aid to the Contra rebels in Nicaragua.

HE SAID liberals need to develop issues such as restructuring the "unfair" federal tax system in order to chart a course for the future. In the cities, the issues are unemployment, runaway inflation and competition of foreign products. And in the farm areas, he said "Jefferson would be horrified to see what's happening with the family farm."

Looking toward the 1988 presidential election, he predicted a "free-for-all" with both parties attracting six to 10 candidates each.

Speaking to a government class at the college, McGovern said, "I think the conservative trend is still ringing in the ears, but not with the same force. I don't feel at this time that Americans agree with the policies of Ronald Reagan, though they like him as a leader. When he's off the scene, it seems the Democrats will have a good

chance in '88."

"1988 could be a good year for a new-comer to arrive," he said.

His own political interests, he said, don't include seeking another bid for the presidency.

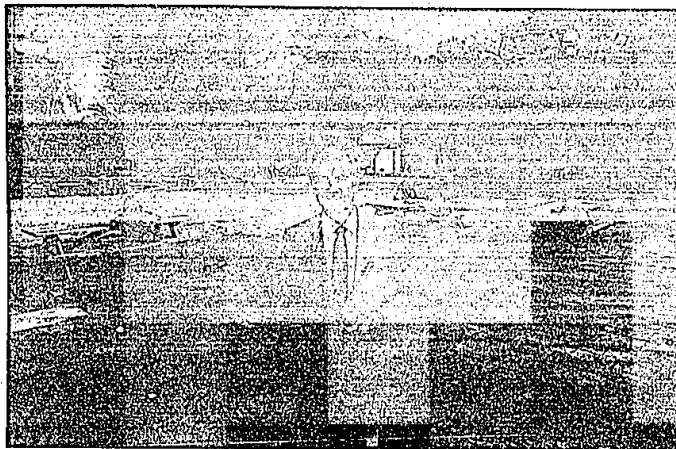
TODAY, HE says, he takes a great interest in foreign affairs, reflected in his column writing.

This week's topic, for instance, was a commentary on the U.S. response to the Achille Lauro hijacking. While he endorsed Reagan's action to intercept the flight, he was took issue with Reagan's blame on the Egyptians and Italians handling of the Palestinian hijackers. "It was a good military operation but bad diplomacy," he said.

Other topics he plans to write commentaries about include the upcoming arms talks between Reagan and Soviet leader Gorbachev.

McGovern lives in Washington, D.C. He says he still stays in touch with old friends from the Congress and former Senate colleagues. This week, he entertained at home old friends — former U.S. Senators Gaylord Nelson and Birch Bayh and former vice president Walter Mondale.

As for Richard Nixon, he says the last time he saw the former president was in New York. He visited him to suggest a joint appeal to Reagan — then in his first term — to meet with the Soviet president. Nixon turned the idea down, however.



DAN DEAN/staff photo

George McGovern appeared yesterday on the campus of University of Michigan-Dearborn.

Executive Lucas in wrangle over his travel costs

By Teri Banas
staff writer

Wayne County executive William Lucas is having his share of troubles with Wayne County commissioners.

The fact that Lucas, a former Democrat who is now an announced Republican and seeking nomination as a GOP candidate for governor, and the county commission consisting mostly of Democrats has nothing to do with it, commissioners say.

Last week the county commission's ways and means committee voted to whack off some \$394,000 from Lucas' \$1.5-million office budget.

The committee said Lucas is traveling too much outside Wayne County on his political quest and voted to trim his travel budget. The committee also voted to cut Lucas' public relations and security staffs.

The full county commission will consider the committee recommendations later this month.

Commissioners were particularly critical of Lucas' travels through Michigan while being an undeclared candidate for governor.

"THE COUNTY executive needs to spend a little more time in Wayne County and if he's not (going to) then, we don't feel county funds should be used on travel expenses that don't relate to county business," said ways and means committee chairman Clarence Young, D-Ecorse.

"This involves taxpayer money and also (county) employees. It has nothing to do with the fact that he is a Republi-

can and we're Democrats — it's just common sense."

Commissioner Kay Beard, D-Inkster, another member of the committee, was equally supportive of cuts.

"He claims he's being an ambassador of good will for Wayne County but it's obvious he's an ambassador for Bill Lucas in his quest to be governor next year," she said. Beard's district takes in Westland and Garden City.

"Absolutely, what we're cutting will not affect his services, but no one seems to know why he needs more security people than the governor," she added.

BILL JOHNSON, Lucas' public relations spokesman, called the cuts recommended by the committee "unconscionable" and a severe threat to Lucas' "safety and welfare."

Johnson wouldn't say how many security officers guard the executive, except to say five was "a good number." He said Lucas has "received threats on his life. We get them all the time."

Of the cuts to the public and media staff, Johnson complained: "Our ability to disseminate timely information to the public will be tremendously curtailed. Wayne County could once again become the silent government. It leaves room for special interests to take control again."

Asked how services would be affected, Johnson said: "There's no question" it would effect the executive's weekly cable television program, Wayne County Perspective, which is made available for area cable broadcasts as well as Channel 62 in Detroit and outstate communities.

Johnson further defended the executive's outstate travels. "He receives invitations from all around the state to talk about what he'd done for Wayne County. It helps improve the county's image."

"If in the process he's giving himself exposure should he seek higher office, that's just part of the process."

In addition to media contacts and the weekly program, the executive's six-

member public relations staff handles constituent mail, inquiries and referrals.

BESIDES making recommended cuts in the executive's office budget, the committee last week recommended cutting \$231,000 out of the county's management audit division, virtually eliminating the five-person division.

"We didn't see where it was functioning exactly where it should be. We

didn't think you need a year-round staff for an audit delivered every two years," Young said.

By charter, the county must employ an outside auditing firm and an auditor general. Said Beard: "It's not necessary to have three different auditing services."

While many of the executive's budget recommendations have received committee approval, the biggest fight so

far has been over the sheriff department's allocation, the largest single share of the county's budget.

Of Lucas' proposed \$185.3-million spending plan, \$47 million has been earmarked for the sheriff's department. The allocation has resulted in public protest by Sheriff Robert Ficano, who charged the nearly \$8 million out could send hundreds of prisoners out on the street.

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