force him to play the right wing of his party. His Administration's concept of civil liberties is nar- rowly based on his consistent and implacable opposition to the Watergate affair, for he is after all the head of his party.

McGovern's potential most serious mistake, as we have said before, was his choice of Spiro T. Ag- new as his running mate for a second term as Vice President. Agnew is a redoubtable politician, and it may some day haunt the Republican Party.

Nevertheless, the choice in November is not be- tween the unacceptable Agnew and the unsungres- pective McGovern. It is between Mr. Nixon and Sen. George S. McGovern.

McGovern's strongest point is his obvious per- sonal decency. That decency was outraged by the Watergate affair, but it is still there, and McGovern is still supporting it. It is in his credit that he saw sooner than most, and argued more strongly than most, that the political cost of Watergate to the nation.

But McGovern has been unable to translate the moral outrage of a senator from South Dakota into a convincing case that he has the experience and the understanding to lead.

He has raised a number of domestic issues that need talking about—tax reform, allocation of re- sources, budget deficits. But, while his arguments are excellent in the abstract, he is having difficulty bringing his ideas into closer connection with the realities of the world power. This means a less interven- tionalist but still active United States on the world scene.

China Out of Shadows

His dramatic approach to China has begun to bring that country into the world community.

Long months of careful negotiations with the So- viet Union have brought about a nuclear non-ag-gression agreement, probably the most important single achievement of the Nixon Administration. Now, in the fall of 1971, Russian-American relations appear to have become a reality.

As the President and Henry Kissinger have care- fully explained, the purpose of these uses of Ameri- can power is to bring about world stability, for the President has put the highest hope of world peace. It has been no mean achievement by the President, all the more remarkable because the President's policies have been so widely misunderstood, largely to second thoughts on the part of the Ad- ministration itself, a new attempt is being made to bring about a normalcy in our relations with China. The "Nixon shock" largely achieved its purpose—to make world trade and monetary arrangements less disruptive. But United States policy remains.

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His views of civil liberties are, we think, more in accord with the American tradition than are Mr. Nixon's. Since the American black, he has been more positive than Mr. Nixon, but no more positive in program.

Weakest and Strongest

Weaker where McGovern is weakest is Mr. Nixon's strength—in the perception of the nation's place in the world.

The defense budget is big. It always needs close scrutiny. It may very well need cutting. McGovern's proposal for drastic cuts indicates to us that he does not understand the intimate relation- ship between a strong defense and a strong foreign policy. It is becoming an fashionable cliche to say that world peace depends upon American power; he believes that if peace is to be achieved, it is probably the world's best interest to cut back the American military establishment. But if, put into effect, peace would be fragmented, the world's nations, especially to the Soviet Union, the message, unas- similable to the Soviet Union, it is the old story of bull- ing back from the world as well as Vietnam. Such a signal could have the most dangerous conse- quences.

It is this kind of disregard for consequences that we find most disquieting about McGovern. His pro- posals for withdrawing troops from Europe convey this conclusion. By the fall of 1975 he is to be gained from goodwill from world power, more from unilateral action than from careful step-by-step nego- tiations. His proposals for domestic policy, are coldly domestic and whose tendencies are clearly in the traditionalist style. When he says "Come Home America," he has to take him at his word.

Question of Leadership

There is, at the end, the intangible but important question of leadership. Since his nomination, Mc- Govern's performance has shown a marked improvement in the way he talks and in his own ideas and indicative and clumsy in the han- dling of his campaign.

McGovern has put together a policy that has shown a capacity for growth and a willingness to change when conditions demand a change. The Senate can be a monument to his first term in office. His approach to Cuba and his recent attitude toward China in the name of peace are already bearing fruit.

He has also decided and when the domestic economy demanded boldness and deci- siveness.

For the voter who seeks reasonable answers to governance, McGovern, in 1972 is, by far, the clear winner. The Times recommends the reelection of President Nixo- n.