

# GUNMAN'S ATTACK CLOUDS CAMPAIGN

Uncertainty Created Both by  
Wallace's Status and  
Impact of Shooting

By MAX FRANKEL  
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 15—The bullets that felled George C. Wallace on the eve of his greatest achievements in national politics will also upset both the conduct and the calculations of the 1972 Presidential campaign.

If he could recover in time to resume some form of campaigning, and his press secretary says he will, the Alabama Governor may find an even more aroused constituency rallying to his cause. And some degree of sympathy vote may further swell his expected victories tomorrow in the Democratic primaries of Michigan and Maryland.

The Governor had 210 delegate votes of the 1,509 needed for nomination when he was struck down.

If he is forced out of the campaign, there is no one now in sight to pick up the banner of populism, tinged with an overtone of segregation, that brought the Governor 9.9 million votes, or 13.5 per cent of the total cast for President, in 1968 and seemed to promise him an equally strong following this year.

No one has ever quite

Continued on Page 34, Column 7

Continued From Page 1, Col. 4

agreed on whether the building Wallace candidacy this year was a bigger threat to Republicans or Democrats. President Nixon has figured that he would run better in the South without an independent Wallace challenge. The Democratic National Committee had all but decided that it could fare much better in the big industrial states of the North without a third-party Wallace challenge.

But mathematically, at least, Mr. Wallace had an even better chance this year to win 70 or 80 electoral votes and deny his

major party rivals the absolute majority that is needed for a clear election by the Electoral College. All the available signs suggested that he coveted such a result and was preparing to revive his American Independent party, in many if not all states.

Regardless of the Governor's chances of recovery, his shooting has undone four years of effort and brave self-exposure by President Nixon and all those who covet his job. From the President down, politicians had tried to pretend that the passions and the madness that struck down two Kennedys and Martin Luther King belonged to a remote and unhappy past, that the country was recovering its balance and that controversy could again be argued out in a civilized manner.

Now, yet another huge constituency of American voters has been made to feel that it cannot, after all, safely present controversial views and electric personalities to the electorate. That is how the New Frontiersmen felt when President John F. Kennedy and later his brother, Robert, were gunned down by assassins at the peak of their political promise. That is also how vast numbers of black citizens felt when Dr. King, the militant but nonviolent leader, was slain.

#### Candidates Take Chance

President Nixon, Senators Hubert H. Humphrey, George McGovern and Edmund S. Muskie and all the other candidates this year, like Mr. Wallace himself, had taken enormous chances since then to expose themselves once more to the crowds at airports and in shopping centers to help the country regain its pride and confidence in orderly political competition. They were heavily protected, but they knew that there really was no protection against the enraged act of a suicidal assailant.

President Nixon's first instinct, to revive security protection for Senator Edward M. Kennedy, symbolized the first reaction everywhere in Washington that the violence of the nineteen-sixties was not over. It also dramatized the fear of Senator Kennedy and many members of his family that whatever other calculations he might make, he ought not to tempt fate by exposing himself to a national campaign.

It was thought here that Mr. Kennedy would almost certainly be confirmed in his decision not to seek the Presidency this year, no matter how great the pressures that were building up.

Mr. Wallace was widely ex-

pected to win strong pluralities in the primary contests tomorrow for 132 convention delegates in Michigan and 53 delegates in Maryland. But his indicated success—in a Northern industrial state where school busing has been a particularly intense issue, and in a border state that gave him 42 per cent of the Democratic vote eight years ago—also promised to be the peak of his showing inside the party.

In all, he had won 210 delegates to the Democratic convention and stood to gain fewer than 100 more. Since even some of the delegates required to vote for the Governor have been eager to bolt to another candidate, it seemed impossible that he would even come near to the 1,509 votes needed for nomination and increasingly likely that he would organize a third-party challenge.

In the race for the nomination, the delegates formally pledged to Mr. Wallace, if released, were expected to move in almost equal numbers to Mr. Humphrey and Mr. McGovern.

In the general election, Mr. Wallace appeared to have a dual power: first, to gather the electoral votes of six or seven Southern states with which to bargain in case neither President Nixon nor his Democratic rival obtained a majority in the Electoral College; and second, to draw enough votes from the Republicans in such states as Texas or Florida or from the Democrats in such states as New Jersey and Michigan to confound the results.

#### Gun Foe Defeated

A further consequence of today's shooting is bound to be yet another effort to write stringent Federal laws against the indiscriminate sale of guns. Many of the voters who passionately resisted such legislation were in Mr. Wallace's constituency and President Nixon, fearful of those votes, has long resisted the pressure for gun registration and limitation from urban communities.

Paradoxically, Governor Wallace was struck in a state that only two years ago defeated the re-election bid of Senator Joseph D. Tydings, a Democrat who had aroused the ire of the groups opposing gun control.

The Johnson Administration tried to write tough gun controls after the King and Robert Kennedy assassinations in 1968, but the final version left huge loopholes leading to vastly increased imports of foreign gun components. Mr. Nixon has favored tougher penalties for criminals toting firearms, but he has been sympathetic to the demand that law-abiding citi-

zons be spared from all restrictions or inconveniences in the acquisition of weapons and ammunition.

How the Secret Service and the Federal Bureau of Investigation will react to the shooting was not yet evident tonight, but they will almost certainly reimpose severe limitations on the conduct of the President and his challengers in uncontrollable environments. Mr. Nixon had gone so far as to defy unruly crowds in 1970 by exposing himself to their taunts to demonstrate that politicians were free to face their people again.

---