

Shooting may shift

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The attempt on the life of Gov. George Wallace is expected to have a pronounced, immediate and chilling effect on campaigning for the Presidency in the remaining 1972 primary elections.

That impact could significantly alter the course of the race for the Democratic party's nomination, and conceivably could even influence the outcome of the battle for the White House in November.

One likelihood is that the trend away from commercially televised campaigning — of the sort heavily utilized by Richard Nixon in 1968 — will be reversed, with candidates substituting their image on the tube for their presence in the flesh among the voters.

THE CANDIDATE whose

campaign style is likely to be most adversely effected by these developments is Sen. George McGovern of South Dakota.

With Wallace now politically sidelined, McGovern is the sole surviving practitioner of the "politics of protest." A populist approach, it relies heavily on getting out among the voters, meeting the public face-to-face, and projecting the image of a candidate bent on ending the remoteness of government from "the little people."

The technique has been called "retail" campaigning, as opposed to "wholesale" campaigning that seeks support through the more impersonal medium of television commercials.

It also relies on maneuvering the candidate's schedule to earn televised, spot news cov-



McGovern



Humphrey

erage of campaign "stunts," winning that highly-prized prime TV news attention that has been shown to have far more impact than purchased commercials.

SUCH "STUNTS" may range from visits to a veterans hospital, a steel mill or a brewery to tours of the local zoo, a nearby farmer's market, a union hall or a construction site.

Inevitably the two Democratic front-runners, McGovern

and Sen. Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota, will come under increasingly strong pressure — from their Secret Service guards and from some of their own staff — to radically reduce such free-wheeling contact with crowds.

Such a change in game plans — if McGovern succumbs to the pressure — could be particularly injurious to the South Dakotan in the campaign for California's "winner-take-all" primary June 6.

A non-partisan poll in late April showed Humphrey ahead of McGovern in California by seven percentage points, but another released last week showed McGovern had cut Humphrey's lead to fewer than four points — which pollsters rate a virtual toss up.

To sustain that momentum, McGovern had planned a meet-the-people "blitz" of the state,

ampaign stress to TV

where Humphrey is still a much better-known figure.

BUT SECRET Service agents now fear that "some nut" of strongly conservative persuasion — angered by the attack on Wallace and by McGovern's liberal political views — might seek to "even the score" by attempting to assassinate the South Dakota senator.

As a result, when McGovern again hits the campaign trail — after the moratorium he and Humphrey declared after the Wallace shooting — his Secret Service guard is expected to protest in the strongest terms any campaign tactics that open the senator, his guards, his staff or the accompanying press to the kind of attack that left Wallace and three others around him wounded Monday at Laurel.

The other major primaries are in Oregon May 23 and New

York June 20. McGovern has been favored in both. Wallace had not been expected to be a factor in either — or in California.

THE RE-FOCUSING of attention on the dangers inherent in presidential campaigning, in combination with the disability apparently suffered by Wallace, is also expected to have other political ramifications:

The odds on the Democrats "drafting" Sen. Edward M. (Teddy) Kennedy, in the event of a Humphrey-McGovern convention deadlock, now appear dramatically reduced.

For any inclination the Massachusetts senator may have had to consider such a bid seems certain to be diminished for the sole surviving Kennedy brother, now that the concept of political assassination is again abroad in the land.

Thus the chance that the

party's choice will be either McGovern or Humphrey is considerably enhanced.

IF THE PARALYSIS in Wallace's lower extremities persists, the attack will probably have substantially reduced his political power at the convention.

For Wallace's most potent threat was that the convention would have to bend to his conservative views on issues such as busing and welfare reform, if any candidate wanted to win the support of Wallace's delegates — or if the Democrats wanted to head off another third-party challenge such as Wallace raised in 1968.

But if Wallace's physical incapacities make it doubtful that he could mount a meaningful, vigorous campaign in the fall, or would be unable to personally project his concerns at the convention in Miami

Beach in July, then his bargaining power would appear to be significantly reduced.

As for the fall contest, the attack on Wallace — and the fresh apprehensions for presidential safety which it will generate — seems certain to guarantee that President Nixon will again rely heavily on television campaigning in seeking re-election.

STRATEGISTS at the Democratic National Committee had planned to attack any such reliance on TV campaigning as indicative of the President's "remoteness" from the people and his unwillingness to get out amidst the public he serves.

But such criticism would now have little validity, and indeed would probably never be offered.