



Capitol Comment

By Charles McC Mathias
U.S. Senator

I bitterly condemn and regret the violence that struck Alabama Governor George C. Wallace in Maryland. This act not only did violence to him but violated a long tradition of toleration in Maryland.

The bullets that struck Governor Wallace were propelled by madness and cowardice and I hold the day on which he was shot as a day of shame because it was a day that had been prophesied, a day that was scheduled to come - no one knew when, no one knew who would be the victim.

However, in 1969, the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence under the leadership of Dr. Milton S. Eisenhower of Baltimore issued a report after extensive hearings in various parts of the United States. That report, "To Establish Justice, to Insure Domestic Tranquility," gave its attention to the particularly tragic problem of political assassination. I quote from the words - now three years

old - of the Commission on this problem.

"Thus, it might have been hypothesized in 1968 that the next assassin to strike at a President or Presidential candidate as it turned out would have most of the following attributes:

- From a broken home with the father absent or unresponsive to the child;
- Withdrawn, a loner, no girlfriend, either unmarried or a failure at marriage;
- Unable to work steadily in the last year or so before the assassination;
- White, male, foreign-born or with parents foreign-born;
- Short, slight build, a zealot for political, religious or other cause, but not a member of an organized movement;
- Assassinates in the name of a specific issue which is related to the principles or philosophy of his cause;
- Chooses a handgun as his weapon;
- Selects a moment when the

President is appearing amid crowds.

Dr. Eisenhower's Commission went on to say this and again I quote: "We do not know with any degree of certainty why these characteristics appear in the Presidential assassin. Certainly the personal attributes can be found in many valuable, trustworthy citizens. Nor do we know why the assassin politicizes his private miseries or why he chooses to express himself through such a terrible crime. Perhaps he comes to blame his own failures on others. Maybe because he does not live in a true community of men and has no rewarding relationships with others, he relates instead to an abstraction, the poor or mankind. Once his own inner misery becomes identified with the misery of those whom he champions, he places the blame for both on the nation's foremost political figure. Incapable of sustained devotion toward

a longrange goal, the assassin is capable of short bursts of frenzied activity which are doomed to failure. Each failure, seems to reinforce the self-loathing and the need to accomplish in one burst of directed energy something of great worth to end his misery and to assert his value as a human being.

"Certainly one of our goals in the years ahead should be to make each human being understand his own unique value of every other human being and to remember the percept of Voltaire: 'I may disagree with what you say, but that I will defend to the death your right to say it.'"