

Back to TV?

The Shooting's Political Effects

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CHICAGO — (CDN) — The attempt on the life of Alabama 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 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. Candidates will again substitute their image on the tube for their presence among the voters.

Populist

The candidate whose campaign style is likely to be most adversely affected by these developments is Sen. George McGovern of South Dakota.

With Wallace at least temporarily politically sidelined, McGovern is the sole surviving practitioner of the "politics of protest," a populist approach that 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."

• Maneuvering the candidate's schedule to earn televised, spot news coverage of campaign stunts, winning that highly prized TV news attention which has more impact than purchased com-

mercials.

Informal

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 frontrunners, 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.

Crucial

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

A nonpartisan poll in late April showed Humphrey ahead of McGovern in California by 7 percentage points, but another released last week showed McGovern had cut Humphrey's lead to less than 4 percent, which pollsters rate a tossup.

To sustain that momentum, McGovern had planned a meet-the-people "blitz" of the state, where Humphrey still is a better known figure.

Revenge

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 senator.

As a result, when McGovern hits the campaign trail

after the moratorium he and Humphrey declared after the Wallace incident, his Secret Service guard is expected to protest in the strongest terms any campaign tactics that open the senator, his guards, his staff or accompanying newsmen to the kind of attack that left Wallace and three others around him wounded yesterday at Laurel, Md.

The re-focusing of attention on the dangers inherent in presidential campaigning also is expected to have other political ramifications:

• The odds on the Democrats "drafting" Sen. Edward Kennedy, in the event of a Humphrey-McGovern convention deadlock, appear dramatically reduced. Any inclination the Massachusetts senator may have had for such a bid seems certain to be diminished, now that the concept of political assassination is again abroad in the land.

• If the paralysis in Wallace's legs persists, as the governor's doctors fear, then the shooting probably will have reduced his potential political power at the convention.