

Nation's Leaders Fear The Virus of Violence

By The Associated Press and
United Press International

Reaction from public figures came swiftly in the wake of today's shooting of Sen. Kennedy with expression of shock, sorrow and outrage and prayers for his recovery.

Some commented they feared such violence is becoming commonplace in America.

President Johnson was notified in Washington immediately after word came that the New York Senator was shot.

Johnson said, "There are no words equal to the horror of this tragedy.

"Our thoughts and our prayers are with Sen. Kennedy, his family, and the other victims.

"All America prays for his recovery.

"We also pray that divisiveness and violence be driven from the hearts of men everywhere."

GENE AWAKENED

Sen. Eugene McCarthy who had gone to bed was awakened and went to the Beverly Hilton hotel ballroom where he asked the stunned crowd to join him in silent prayer.

McCarthy canceled plans to go to Seattle to campaign and said he would fly directly to Washington.

In New York, Roy Wilkins, executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said:

"I'm shocked and horrified to think that this type of attempted assassination has become an American habit it would appear."

James Farmer, civil rights



Eyes open and seemingly conscious, Kennedy lies on floor moments after

shooting. A short time later he lapsed into unconsciousness.

—AP photo © 1968, Los Angeles Times

activist, said "a terrible contagion of political violence has struck again."

'GONE MAD'

"Americans somehow must learn that debate should be conducted with words, and not bullets," Farmer said. "once again our hearts go out to the Kennedy family."

Mayor John V. Lindsay

said, "This is shocking beyond belief."

Sen. Ralph W. Yarborough (D-Tex.), who was riding with Lyndon Johnson two cars behind the presidential limousine when President Kennedy was slain by a sniper in Dallas, said:

"The horror of it is that political assassination in this country is becoming as common as it is. America has to

reorient and take stock of itself that this has become so common in our public life."

Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.) said: "The world has gone mad."

"My God," gasped House Speaker John McCormack. "What is this country . . ." and his voice trailed off. "It's terrible, it's indescribable."

Senate Democratic leader Mike Mansfield said he is "terribly disheartened and saddened that another member of the Kennedy family



Clutching a rosary given him by a priest, Kennedy lies on floor of the hotel

—UPI Photo



Eyes open and seemingly conscious, Kennedy lies on floor moments after

shooting. A short time later he lapsed into unconsciousness.

—AP photo © 1968, Los Angeles Times

has been attacked in this manner.

"I wonder what is happening in this country," Mansfield said. "I'm shocked that this violence is becoming so prevalent."

Senate Republican leader Everett Dirksen termed the shooting "a disaster of national proportions."

'BAD DREAM'

Sen. Mark Hatfield (R-Ore.) said he was totally stunned by the act.

"It's a bad dream," Hatfield said. I can't believe it. It's just something beyond me."

House Republican leader Gerald Ford, a member of the Warren Commission that investigated the assassination of President Kennedy, said "it's shocking, unbelievable."

"An attacker must be demented to do something of this sort," Ford said.

Sen. Jacob K. Javits

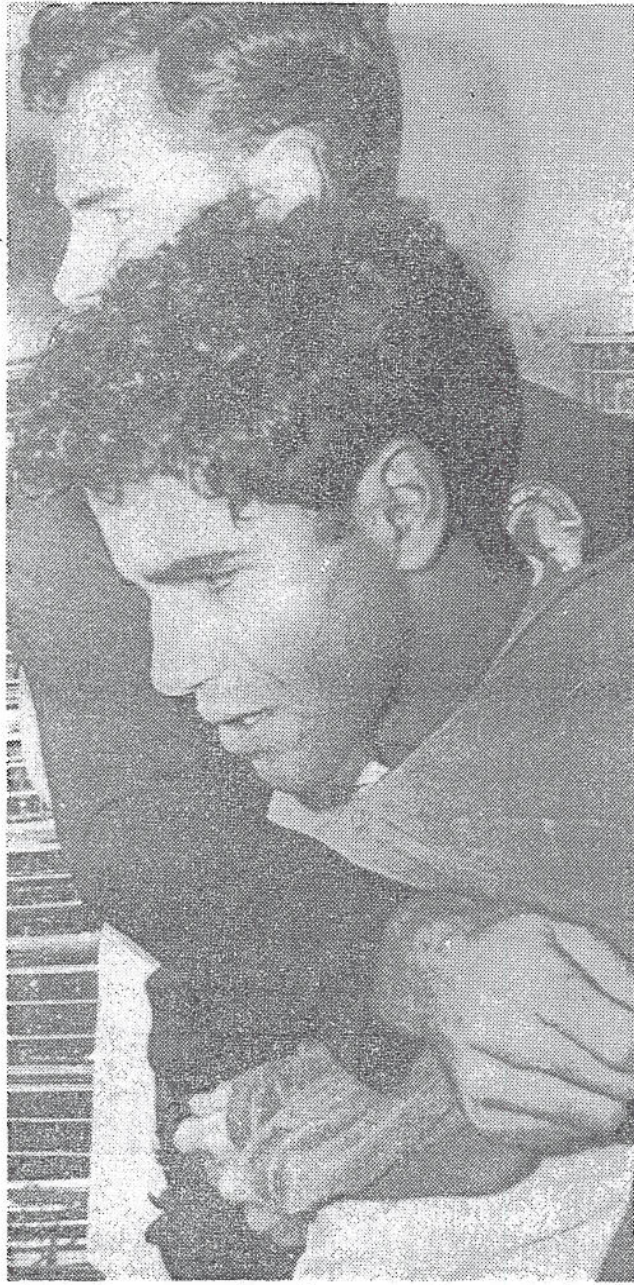
(R.N.Y.), said it "is a shocking, terrible tragedy." brilliant and progressive among us.

Yarborough said the "deep stain of criminality and assassination in American life" appears aimed at "the most
"My main hope is that he recovers for the benefit of America as well as his family," he said.



A stunned Ethel Kennedy is shown as she rode in ambulance that carried her husband to the hospital.

—UPI Photo



In the firm grasp of a policeman and several others, suspect is rushed from the scene of the shooting.

—UPI Photo