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SUSPECT APPREHENDED: Man identified as Sirhan Sirhan being removed from the hotel after shooting. Behind him, right, is Jesse Unruh, the Senator's California manager.

A Transformed Race

Kennedy Shooting Casts Great Doubt On Future of Presidential Campaign

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 5—The shooting of Robert F. Kennedy left the 1968 Presidential campaign in a state of uncertainty today, with nothing sure but that it had been transformed. The vital political question was the same as the source of the personal suspense at Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles: Could Senator Kennedy recover without permanent damage from so extensive an injury to the brain as he apparently suffered? In the absence of any conclusive evidence on that point, all the Presidential candidates immediately suspended political activity. Their motive was personal respect for Mr. Kennedy and his family; yet, their action reflected the fact that none could be sure how to proceed anyway.

News Analysis

Even if Mr. Kennedy were to make a complete recovery, for instance, there appeared to be great doubt today that it could be rapid enough for him to return to the 1968 campaign.

If he did recover so quickly, on the other hand, his whole personal and political situation would be something entirely

different from what it was before the attempt on his life.

Thus, for the third—and most harrowing—time, a shock wave of unexpected events has completely altered the shape of the 1968 campaign.

The first came on March 12 when Senator Eugene J. McCarthy of Minnesota won 42 per cent of the Democratic vote in the New Hampshire primary, and Mr. Kennedy immediately thereafter became an active candidate.

The second transformation occurred on March 21, when President Johnson said he would neither seek nor accept renomination by the Democratic party. That led to the entry of Vice President Humphrey and his rapid progression to the front runner's place among Democrats.

The most likely result of the critical wounding of Mr. Kennedy, as it appeared today, was that Mr. Humphrey's most formidable opponent for the nomination would be removed from the campaign.

This would leave only Sen-

Continued on Page 25, Column 6

A Transformed Race

Continued From Page 1, Col. 6

ator McCarthy as an active opponent of Mr. Humphrey. While he, like Mr. Kennedy, is an anti-Administration candidate and no doubt would inherit some of Mr. Kennedy's strength, other elements of that strength would surely shift to Mr. Humphrey.

Many Democrats who support Mr. Kennedy do not regard Mr. McCarthy as a potential winner, and some others would find Mr. Humphrey a more congenial ideological alternative.

Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Humphrey are locked in a hard struggle for delegate support in Ohio, for instance. If Mr. Kennedy is out of the race, the Ohio delegation will almost surely turn to Mr. Humphrey rather than to Mr. McCarthy.

Thus, Mr. Kennedy's elimination from the race would probably have the effect of strengthening Mr. Humphrey, unless Mr. McCarthy should prove able to consolidate anti-Administration Democrats in support of his candidacy.

Has Delegate Backing

Even a long moratorium on political activity, pending the outcome of Mr. Kennedy's struggle for recovery, would probably work to Mr. Humphrey's advantage. He is the front runner and has the most delegate support, and a long hiatus in the campaign would tend to let that support crystallize.

The same effect would be felt in the Republican party. Richard M. Nixon is regarded as being so far out in front in the race for that party's nomination that Governor Rockefeller of New York needs every available campaign day to persuade favorite son candidates and delegates either to remain uncommitted or to support his candidacy.

Senator McCarthy, appearing briefly on television and before reporters in Los Angeles today, spoke cryptically of meeting with President Johnson—one of his prime targets—and with Mr. Humphrey—his principal opponent—before resuming any political activity.

Seeks 'a Different Way'

He also said he would talk with Mr. Kennedy's "spokesmen."

These plans suggested to some observers here that Mr. McCarthy, who was obviously in a state of emotional upset, might be contemplating either a withdrawal or some other gesture toward unifying Democrats without further campaigning.

He was quoted by Mary Mc-

Grory in The Washington Evening Star as saying last night upon hearing of the shooting: "Maybe we should do it in a different way. Maybe we should have the English system of having the Cabinet choose the President. There must be some other way."

Miss McGrory was writing what appeared to be an eyewitness piece about the scene of Mr. McCarthy and his family receiving the news in their suite at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Los Angeles.

Another McCarthy remark today suggested somber reflection upon the political meaning of the assassination attempt. The nation is no longer a "pioneer" society, he said, but "a complex, sophisticated civilization." His implication, echoing a frequent theme of his campaign, was that the nation had to begin acting in a more rational and civilized manner if it wished to cope with its problems.

Pressure Could Rise

One political possibility, looking beyond 1968, was that if Mr. Kennedy recovered completely, but too slowly to return to this year's campaign, terrific emotional pressures would build up for another effort by him at some future time.

On a somewhat different scale of meaning, the shooting placed a new and shocking focus on a problem of which Mr. Kennedy himself has made in his campaign—lawlessness and violence.

Revered in Negro Areas

It was not clear, however, whether the event would bring louder cries for law and order at any cost, or whether it would lend poignant emphasis to Mr. Kennedy's own campaign theme — his insistence that a just society must deal with its social and economic inequities if it would preserve law and order.

One bleak possibility was that the shooting might provoke new disorders in the Negro sections, where he is politically and personally revered. Such outbreaks followed the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

There was no real precedent for the removal by violence of a Presidential aspirant from the campaign. A would-be assassin shot and wounded Theodore Roosevelt in October, 1912, but Mr. Roosevelt was the formally nominated candidate of the Progressive party in what was by October a hopeless campaign. The shooting had little effect upon the victory of Woodrow Wilson on the Democratic ticket.