

Panel Sees Increased Risk Of Plots for Assassination

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 2—The national violence commission warned today that the nation might be entering a time of political assassination conspiracies and recommended some fundamental changes in Presidential campaign practices.

The commission urged that

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the President and the candidates in a Presidential campaign forgo traditional outdoor political rallies and that the Secret Service extend its coverage to public figures who might become targets of violence.

The commission asked, too, that Congress arrange free television time for the major candidates in the final weeks before a Presidential election to establish a new pattern of safe national campaigning.

It also expressed concern that Negroes holding public office might increasingly become targets for assassination by both white and black extremists.

In a report based on a study by professional staff members of assassination patterns here and abroad, the commission said:

"Present trends warn of an escalating risk of assassination,

not only for Presidents, but for other office holders at every level of Government, as well as leaders of civil rights and political-interest groups.

"We do not predict that such an outbreak will occur, but we feel compelled to note that some of the conditions for such an outbreak are present or may be developing. These conditions add urgency to the need to develop effective protection against assassination."

The panel, formally named the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, was established by President Johnson in June, 1968, after the assassinations of Senator Robert F. Kennedy and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Today's report was the sixth sent to the White House.

Although the recent assassinations in the United States were nonconspiratorial, the commission said, "many of the conditions associated with conspiratorial assassination in other countries appear to be developing in this country."

It cited these reasons for its concern about an increase in assassination plots:

¶The threat of urban guerrilla warfare, such as an attack on Cleveland policemen

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by black extremists in 1968.

¶Constant vilification of American institutions and leaders.

¶The promise in the next few years of rapid social and economic change.

Part of the blame for the assassinations the nation has experienced in this decade, the report asserted, must be placed on the "violent rhetoric of our politics . . . our constant flirtation with actual violence," and the impact of these forces upon the "twisted mind" of the lone assassin.

The commission reported that the Secret Service had developed intelligence systems and equipment since the slaying of President Kennedy six years ago that greatly increase its capacity to protect a President.

"The Secret Service is confident that, had its new intelligence system been in effect in 1963, the activities of Lee Harvey Oswald would have been brought to [its] attention before the fatal attack," the

commission said.

No 'Perfect' System

However, the report conceded that there was no "perfect" way to guard a President. But to minimize the risk, it said, the President and other political figures who face the threat of violence can limit their public appearances to carefully controlled indoor rallies where electronic arms-detection equipment can be used to screen the spectators.

And noting that television was not only an effective campaign tool but an eminently safe one, the report said:

"This commission recommends that the Congress enact a law that would grant free television time to Presidential candidates during the final weeks preceding the national election. The amount of television time allocated to the candidates should be adequate to establish a new pattern in Presidential campaigning and to reduce significantly the pressure toward personal appearances in all parts of the country."

The commission left the

questions inherent in such a proposal — how broadcasting time should be allocated to minor party candidates and other complications such as scheduling—to Congress and the networks.

It said the idea, even without the benefit of limiting the candidates' exposure to danger, would be in the public interest since the broadcasts might become a forum for serious discussion of complex issues, replacing the hoopla of mass rallies and reaching far more voters.

It also recommended that city and state governments review the measure of protection given Mayors and Governors and enlist the aid of the Secret Service and the Federal Bureau of Investigation if warranted.

"The precautions we are

urging are worthwhile whether or not this nation faces a new outbreak of political assassinations," the report said.

At a news conference held to release the commission's statement on assassination, the chairman, Milton S. Eisenhower, was asked why other heads of state could expose themselves to the public while the American President must be constantly shielded. Mr. Eisenhower responded:

"We're the only nation in the world that has the gun population we have."

The commission, in an earlier report, had called for drastic reductions in the number of hand guns currently available in this country.

The commission will make its final report to the President by Dec. 10.

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