

Politically, Trump Had Already Effectively Won Election When He Began To Speak on Saturday

The country will remember his alert action when he realized that he had been shot and it will rightly remember his undaunted response even before he had left the podium at Pennsylvania.

By Conrad Black

It isn't necessary for me to add my voice to the many thousands who have already condemned the attempted assassination of President Trump as an evil and appalling act. That can be assumed, and I offer a couple of deductions. Politically, Trump had effectively won the election when he began to speak on Saturday.



President Trump at Butler, Pennsylvania, July 13, 2024. AP/Gene J. Puskar, file

The country will remember his alert action when he saw that he had been shot and it will rightly remember his undaunted response even before he had left the podium, as well as his and his wife's gracious comments since. It is right that his

personal popularity should benefit from such a cool headed and distinguished response to so mortally dangerous an incident.

More important in political terms, however, is that the Democrats are practically deprived of their last argument, even though it was a feeble, contemptible, and failing argument. Since they could not make up the great deficit the Democrats face in the major policy areas of inflation, taxes, border security and illegal immigration, the rigidity and costliness of authoritarian programs imposed out of fear of global warming, foreign policy shambles starting with Afghanistan, shocking crime levels, and a collapsing education system, the only argument left was the unutterable bunk that Trump was a threat to democracy and that the ambition to make America great again was fascist.

President Biden and Secretary Clinton compared him to Hitler. This is such an unspeakable defamation that it hasn't much registered. Two nights before the attempted assassination Jill Biden resuscitated the scurrilous falsehood that Trump had disparaged America's war dead and described him as "evil." Mr. Biden and others have repeatedly said that if Trump won, this would be the "last presidential election in America." Mr. Biden's remarks on Sunday night were appropriate but his claim that he and Jill were "praying for" the Trumps strained credulity.

That those responsible for the security of presidential candidates allowed a rooftop only 480 feet away from the speaker's podium to be occupied by a man with an unconcealed deadly weapon requires a profound investigation to determine how this could have happened. It must not happen again, and on its face, it appears to be an inexplicable and massive dereliction of duty and simple professionalism.

It was only a merciful fluke of motion that avoided the murder of a former president and the leading candidate to win the next presidential election and as it was, one innocent

spectator is dead and at time of writing two others are still in serious condition. The security contingent close to President Trump appears to have acted quickly and courageously and once the incident had begun, snipers in the security forces wasted no time in dispatching the assailant. The fact that this incident occurred at all, though, is a shocking failure and the person or persons whose negligence permitted it, and not a scapegoat, should be identified and prosecuted.

The assertions of Mr. Biden and others that this tragic incident is "unheard-of" or "un-American," is nonsense. Six of the last 15 presidents have been the subjects of assassination attempts and apart from the hideous murder of John F. Kennedy, all the others except one were very close calls. The attempt on President Truman was amateurish and never got close to him. The attempt on then President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt missed him but killed the mayor of Chicago, Anton Cermak, and wounded three other people. The survival of Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan, and Donald Trump are miraculous.

Theodore Roosevelt was famously saved by a glasses-case in his breast-pocket and the text of a speech he was going to give (and did), that drastically reduced the penetration of the bullet. The fact is that attempts on the lives of presidents of the United States are frequent occurrences and the public has no idea how many are stopped shortly before they could be attempted. The country is fortunate only to have lost four presidents to assassins, but greater precautions should be taken hereafter.

The most obvious is to have presidential candidates in large public gatherings speak from behind a bulletproof Perspex screen that is not really visible to the public. Even more obvious is to deploy larger numbers of personnel with more comprehensive orders than were apparently in effect at Butler, Pennsylvania on Saturday evening.

If there is any truth to the reports that President Trump had

requested increased security and been denied, those responsible for denying the request should leave their jobs as if in an ejector seat. The Democratic Congressman who sponsored the motion to deprive Mr. Trump of security after the fatuous mockery of a conviction in the Bragg-Merchan kangaroo court, which is now on appeal, should be reprimanded for such an outrageous proposal and his electors should remember it when they vote.

Since the gun was legally acquired by the shooter's father, the customary calls for tighter gun control would not have accomplished anything useful in this case. What many believe to be a more effective method of reducing gun crime, the obligatory lasering of identification onto ammunition and the requirement of authorized ammunition dealers to record the sales of ammunition, would not achieve much in this case either, as the assailant must have known that it was unlikely he would survive the attempt and almost certain that if he did he would be taken into custody.

I believe the identification of ammunition would deter gun crime and significantly increase the apprehension and conviction of gun-offenders, without trespassing on the constitutional rights of gun owners, but almost no conceivable action is going to prevent attempted assassinations of public figures and there is no other response than to strengthen security for potential targets. Presidents have not traveled in open cars since the death of Kennedy, and they should not speak to large crowds unless surrounded by completely transparent but bullet-resistant material.

We will probably never know if the shooter at Butler, Pennsylvania, on Saturday evening was influenced by the shameful campaign of the Democrats that Trump resembles Hitler. They must know that if they do not discontinue Trump-hate on the scale that they have been inundating the country with it for the last three years, they will forfeit many of the dwindling number of supporters they retain, whether Biden

is their candidate or not.

They can go down with some honor or be disposed of with the kind of hysteria they've resorted to the last three years. It will be a much better and happier America in four years than it is now – as it was during President Trump's term. That is all that can be salvaged from the horrible and tragic incident of Saturday evening, but it is not insignificant.

First published in the [New York Sun](#)