

Connally Agrees With Warren Study

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AUSTIN, Texas—Largely recovered from his wounds of last Nov. 22, Gov. John Connally expressed agreement Sunday with the main points of the Warren Commission's report.

Connally concluded a 35-minute press conference on this subject with an emphatic defense of Dallas' role in the tragic assassination last year of President John F. Kennedy.

Criticism of Dallas in connection with the shooting is "basically unfair and unjust," said Connally.

"This Marxist—this mentally deranged man—was not a product of Dallas," the governor said of Lee Harvey Oswald. "Not a product of its schools, its environment, or its culture. He had no ties to Dallas more than any other transient. To condemn a great city is unwarranted and does the city and state a great disservice."

Commenting on the 816-page Warren Commission report, and his own recollections, Connally said:

—He is "convinced beyond any doubt that Oswald shot (me)."

—He has "90 to 95 per cent" recovered from the wound, but still has difficulty from his bullet-shattered right wrist that makes difficult such actions as brushing teeth, holding a fork, and handling coins.

—The second of Oswald's three shots hit the governor and "may well be" the same bullet which hit President Kennedy, as the report indicates.

—In about a week or 10 days, Atty. Gen. Waggoner Carr, Robert Storey of Dallas and Leon Jaworski of Houston will issue recommendations from the state level dealing with problems raised by the assassination. The three represented the state in assisting the federal investigation.

—Some criticism of the Dallas police and Federal Bureau of Investigation may be justified in connection with the assassination and its aftermath, the murder of Oswald by Jack Ruby.

But Connally said it is "easy in hindsight to be critical of people or agencies."

"This report should be read in the light of the time in which the events occurred," the governor commented. He spoke of "pandemonium . . . chaos . . . rumors rife through the country . . ."

"I don't want to justify permitting a stranger to walk into jail and shoot a man," said Connally, "but we ought to remember the circumstances which existed. I'm inclined to be more charitable than many (toward the Dallas police and its chief)."

The FBI's failure to advise the Secret Service what they knew about Oswald was "obviously weakness" and FBI "should have communicated" in advance with those protecting the president, Connally said.

Connally commended the Warren report as reflecting "a desire on the part of the commission to be extremely thorough, to run down every facet . . . extremely well they've done so."

"I've never felt it was a conspiracy," said Connally of the shooting. "I think this (report) will have a salutary effect throughout the free world."

Connally expressed opinion that much of the talk about a conspiracy to kill President Kennedy "was Communist-inspired in the first place." The governor said he did not consider himself "the major target" at Dallas despite a threatening letter which Oswald wrote when Connally was secretary of the Navy.

"He could have killed me on many occasions far easier than picking the time he did," the governor said. "It doesn't make sense to choose this occasion (if Connally was the main target)."

More protection should be given a governor, said Connally, who has taken some steps in that direction since Nov. 22. For a president, he said, the problem of being exposed to possible harm is "a difficulty question." Our system of government makes it desirable and necessary for the chief executive to go before the public "and I don't think it will or should change," Connally said.

"We should protect (the president) against the premeditated killer which he had in Dallas . . . this very deliberate, planned assassination," he said.

Connally said that he was sure there was some negative opinion expressed among President Kennedy's friends in planning the ill fated Texas trip. The governor said he had advised Mr. Kennedy to make the trip "basically non-political" which the schedule later called for.

Perspiring under television lights, Connally talked freely of the tragedy 10 months ago. He and Mrs. Connally, who rode in the car with President and Mrs. Kennedy, "don't talk about" it. The Connallys testified once before the Warren Commission.

The governor said the Warren report "brings into focus all the memories" of the horrible day. His recollection of the actual shooting. He heard the first shot, but did not feel it. He felt the second shot, but did not hear it. He heard the third shot "very clearly . . ."

"My eyes were open and I was conscious," Connally said. "I am convinced beyond any question of doubt that the first shot did not hit me . . . then I was hit . . . I have no memory of sound (on the second shot . . . the third shot did not hit me . . . I can't categorically say which shot or which two shots hit the president. Mrs. Connally has a definite feeling that the first shot hit the president . . . the second shot hit me . . . the third hit the president . . . I cannot say . . . I never saw him (Mr. Kennedy)" during the shooting.

The governor lost consciousness after the assassination. For two days, he said, he didn't know Oswald had been apprehended or that he had been shot by Jack Ruby.

"Nearly everyone in the country knew more than I did," Connally said of the aftermath.