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Gov. Connally Opposes Reopening of Inquiry

Says His Only Disagreement With Warren Report Is Conclusion on Bullet Sequence

BY NICHOLAS CHRISSE
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AUSTIN — Texas Gov. John Connally Wednesday firmly opposed reopening the Warren Commission investigation into President John F. Kennedy's assassination, saying it would be "neither warranted, justified nor desirable."

Connally, who was wounded in the assassination, characterized as "journalistic scavengers" authors of books and articles that cast doubt on the commission's findings that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in shooting the President.

The silver-haired governor, whose interview with Life magazine this week escalated the controversy over the Warren Commission, called a special news conference to praise the commission and slam its critics.

"Why not leave the matter rest?" he said.

Connally, 49, was asked why, in view of his statement Wednesday, he submitted to the Life interview, which the magazine cited as the principal reason why it ended its article with a call for reopening of the investigation into the assassination.

Was Asked

The governor said he granted the interview and agreed to closely examine an 8-mm. movie of the assassination simply because Life asked him to do so. He said he gave Life no new information.

Life, which purchased the film shortly after the assassination, printed 31

color frames in this week's edition and featured Connally's belief that he was hit by a bullet other than one which struck Mr. Kennedy.

Whether Mr. Kennedy and Connally were struck by the same bullet, as the Warren Commission concluded, is a major point of controversy raised by critics to show either that the commission did not do a thorough job or that Oswald may have had an accomplice.

In response to questions, Connally said he had no doubt whatsoever that Oswald acted alone. He dismissed as "fleeting thought" his first impression, immediately during the assassination, that two of three persons might have been involved. He said the thought has no bearing on the case today and came to him at the time because of the rapidity of the shots.

Prepared Statement

Connally opened the news conference with a prepared statement saying, "I want to make abundantly clear that I have no desire to prolong nor perpetuate the stark memories of the tragedy of three years ago."

Connally said the news conference was arranged solely as a result of widespread requests from newsmen following publication of Life's interview.

"I will take just a moment to reiterate and to clarify once again the events of that day," he said. "Let me point out that this information is not new."

The governor said it was precisely the same information he gave in a television interview from

a hospital bed in Dallas on Nov. 27, 1963, and was exactly the same as the testimony he gave to the Warren Commission.

"I am convinced," he continued, "beyond any doubt, that I was not struck by the first bullet. I know that I heard the first shot, that I turned to see what happened, and that I was struck by a second shot. The third shot struck the President and not me."

"As I said earlier, this testimony was presented

to the Warren Commission. They chose to disagree, which is their privilege. I maintain my original view and always shall."

"I want to make it very clear, however, that simply because I disagree with the Warren Commission on this one detail does not mean that I disagree with the substance of their overall findings."

The commission did an outstanding job under difficult circumstances, Connally said.

"The members of the commission, Chief Justice Earl Warren, Sen. Richard B. Russell, Sen. John Sherman Cooper, Rep. Hale Boggs, Rep. Gerald Ford, Mr. Allen Dulles and Mrs. John J. McCloy are men of unquestioned integrity and of long and devoted service to their nation," he said, "men whose dedication to the task of seeking truth in these circumstances I would never question, and men whose

patriotism has been manifested so many times in so many ways over such a long period that it now is somewhat shocking to me that in the backlash of tragedy journalistic scavengers such as Mark Lane (author of the book "Rush to Judgment") attempt to impugn the motives of these members individually, cast doubt upon the commission as a whole and question the credibility of the government itself.

Time to Reflect

"It is time that we pause to reflect on who these individuals are and rather

than calling for a further investigation of the assassination which in my judgment is neither warranted, justified nor desirable, we should turn our attention to doing a little research on an evaluation of the credentials of the self-appointed experts who, with no evidence, no new facts, nevertheless use distortion, inference, innuendo in order to cast doubts and create confusion.

"I suspect that a searching investigation into their own credentials will divulge that their motives have political overtones and that their views have been given prominence out of proportion to their value."

Connally said he had not read any of the books or articles criticizing the commission but had read reviews of them. He re-

fused to discuss what he meant by "political overtones" but said he might elaborate on it at some later date. END