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Connally Backs the Warren Report



Associated Press Wirephoto

Governor John B. Connally Jr. of Texas at news session

By MARTIN WALDRON

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AUSTIN, Tex., Nov. 23—Gov. John B. Connally Jr. said today that the Warren Commission's findings on President Kennedy's assassination should be accepted as final unless compelling new evidence is brought forth. A new investigation is "neither warranted, justified or desirable," he said. The Governor, who was riding in a Dallas motorcade with President Kennedy, was wounded in the chest

right wrist and left leg when the President was assassinated. He still carries a bullet fragment just above his left hipcap. Mr. Connally said today that many criticisms of the Warren Commission's investigation might have "political overtones." He said he was shocked "that in the backlash of tragedy, journalistic scavengers such as Mark

Lane attempt to impugn the motives" of members of the commission. Mr. Connally would not elaborate on his suggestion of political overtones. "I am going to let it rest right there," he said.

He said he had not read any of the books that have criticized the Warren Commission's findings, including "Rush to Judgment," written by Mr. Lane, a New York lawyer.

The Governor said that he had read press reports and book reviews on the books he was talking about and that he always accepted as accurate whatever he read in newspapers.

Mr. Connally decided to hold the news conference, at the State Capitol, after, he said, he had been besieged with questions about a Life magazine article this week.

In the article the Governor repeated that he disagreed with the Warren Commission's finding that he and President Kennedy were both hit by one of three shots fired down on the open limousine in front of the Texas School Book Depository.

Sole Disagreement

The Governor said today that his sole disagreement with the Warren Commission's findings centered on which bullet struck him.

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

The Warren Commission found that there were three shots and that one went through President Kennedy's neck and into Governor Connally's body, that one shot hit the President in the head, and that one shot probably missed both men.

Governor Connally said the shot that hit him did not hit President Kennedy.

Reviewed Film

The Governor said he had had no intention of adding fuel to the flames of dissension when he agreed to review a motion picture of the assassination for Life magazine and to point out just when he was struck.

He said, "They asked me to do it and I agreed."

The Life magazine article was not one of those with "political overtones," the Governor said.

Mr. Connally, a close friend of President Johnson, said he had discussed "very casually" with Mr. Johnson some of the criticisms of the Warren Commission investigation. But he said he and the President had never "sat down" and discussed the Warren Commission report itself.

He did not reveal Mr. Johnson's feelings about the criticisms.

Governor Connally said he did not regard his own views as to which shot wounded him as casting any doubt on the validity of the Warren Commission's over-all findings.

The Governor said he was satisfied that the shot that hit him was fired by Lee Harvey Oswald, named by the Warren Commission as the assassin of President Kennedy. The Governor said he did not believe there was more than one person involved in the shooting.

"There are certain facts about this assassination which may never be known," he said. He added that he did not consider his memory or his judgment to be infallible.

He said he had not even heard the shot that wounded him in the chest, although his wife, Idanell Connally, he said, heard three shots.

Lane Replies

Mark Lane said here yesterday that Governor Connally "has displayed an abysmal ignorance of the implications of his own testimony."

"If the bullet that struck President Kennedy did not also strike the Governor, then there was no lone assassin," Mr. Lane said.

He charged that the Governor was "questioning the loyalty and motivation of those who will not accept a false governmental edict" while "the American people" had made Mr. Lane's book a best-seller.