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Connally Article Denies Trip By Kennedy Was to Heal Rift

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NEW YORK (AP) — Gov. John Connally of Texas says President John F. Kennedy went to Dallas four years ago for his own political purposes — not to patch up a feud between Lyndon B. Johnson and Sen. Ralph Yarborough.

"President Kennedy wanted to visit Texas with two distinct purposes in mind," Connally says in an article in the current Life magazine. "The first was to raise funds. The second was to improve his own political position in a state that promised to be critical in the election of 1964."

The article restates the position Connally has taken ever since the assassination.

"Washington the Place"

Connally, who was wounded when Kennedy was assassinated in a Dallas motorcade Nov. 22, 1963, said the idea that Kennedy went to heal the Johnson-Yarborough rift was "ridiculous."

"First, both men operated in Washington, not in Texas," Connally said. "One was across the street from the President and one was less than a mile away, and Washington would have been the place to settle it."

"Second, Presidents never insert themselves into such quarrels, for they can only get hurt. Third, the President couldn't have settled it anyway, the quarrel is implacable."

Connally said the Johnson-Yarborough rift was so bad that Yarborough refused to ride in the same car with Johnson in San Antonio and Houston.

In Fort Worth, the next morning, Connally said Kennedy asked him about it, and said, "He'll ride with him today, or he'll walk."

Rode Together Twice

Yarborough rode with Johnson when the motorcade left Fort Worth, and they rode together again in Dallas.

Connally said he was urged repeatedly to arrange a Texas visit for Kennedy from early 1962 on, but that he delayed it for personal reasons.

He said the Kennedy administration was unpopular in Texas at the time.

"I was desperately trying to pay for my own campaign and to rally support, and the last thing I wanted was a national attempt for support or political money," Connally said.

However, Connally said he finally agreed to the 1963 visit because he knew "if I couldn't rally support for my own party's President in my own state, it would be a political embarrassment I would not be allowed to forget."

'A Financial Rape'

Connally said he dissuaded Kennedy from his original plan for four fund-raising dinners in Houston, San Antonio, Fort Worth and Dallas, telling him it would look like "you are trying to financially rape the state."

He said Kennedy told him that, besides fund-raising, he wanted to talk to conservative Texas businessmen to convince

them that "they don't have any reason to fear my administration."

Kennedy finally settled for visits to the four main cities, and a single \$100-a-plate dinner in Austin, which Texans considered as "neutral ground," Connally said.

Connally said it was his idea that Mrs. Kennedy accompany her husband as it "would make the trip seem less politically oriented."

Connally said he opposed the Dallas motorcade "fearing not violence but embarrassment."

"I was afraid of rude signs or that the crowds might be hostile, or, what is almost as bad, apathetic or sullen."