

Press Conference - Attorney General of Texas, Honorable Waggoner Carr
December 6, 1963

Attorney General Carr read a prepared statement.

Q. Are you leaving it open so you may still have the Court of Inquiry after the federal inquiry is completed?

A. Yes. I think we have that right, if we desire. Just now, our desire is to work in the most effective way to bring all the facts out, whatever they may be.

Q. You were asked to hold this Court of Inquiry?

A. We have been in many conferences here. This has been discussed several times since we have been in the City. I received a letter from the Chief Justice, speaking for the Commission, which I will quote to you, in part:

"The Commission would not wish to interfere in any way with you or other state authorities in the conduct of matters which are your responsibilities, and which, as you point out, the State of Texas has a proper and important interest. At the same time, it is the view of the Commission, for the reasons stated above, that a special inquiry in Texas at this time might be more harmful than helpful in our mutual search for the truth. Recognizing that the timing of this inquiry is your responsibility and your decision, we cannot refrain from the suggestion that you consider the wisdom of postponement of your court. It would be the Commission's desire that you and your special counsel, or either of you, participate in the Commission's work and counsel with it, it being the Commission's wish that you, as the representative of the State of Texas, be fully advised of the progress that is made in the course of the Commission's investigation and advance such suggestions as you consider helpful to the accomplishments of the Commission's assignment. And it may develop that the Commission would deem it advisable that testimony of certain witnesses residing in Texas should be taken before the Texas Court of Inquiry and, in that event, we would expect to call upon you to render this additional assistance. Let me assure you of the desire of the Commission to work most closely with you and that in the spirit of close cooperation we can responsibly meet our independent obligations."

Q. Had you already started an inquiry?

A. No. You remember the original statement that the Court of Inquiry would be held; that it would be organized in a certain way; that we would select one or more eminent lawyers in our State to serve; we are in the process of doing that; Mr. Jaworski has been selected and has agreed; he is a prominent Houston attorney, immediate past president of the Texas Bar--(went into Jaworski's background).

Q. Does this mean you will be staying here in Washington and attending the Commission's meetings--you and Jaworski?

A. We don't intend to stay and are leaving tonight. I am sure we will receive calls to come back and participate in the work of the Commission.

Q. Was your decision based on suggestion of the Chief Justice? Or were there other factors?

A. We have been discussing what ways we might best work together without competing with one another--whatever they might be. We have had numerous discussions during these three days, trying to achieve the best way possible.

Q. Have you conferred with the President?

A. No. We hope to pay our respects to him.

Q. Was asked something about the FBI report?

A. We have not asked for it.

Q. Was asked something about the report that Oswald was the one taking a shot at General Walker?

A. We have pending in the State of Texas the well-known trial of Jack Ruby. For that reason, it is not right for me to make a statement regarding the facts.

Q. No connection between them?

A. We don't know. Another reason--these facts will be presented to the Commission and in the spirit of cooperation, I can't.

Q. You are convinced that the investigative authority of the federal government is being used to the fullest; you announced Court of Inquiry two weeks ago--were you more convinced at that time that FBI or (couldn't hear or understand this question.)

A. No. At that time, you will recall, we were in contact at all times with the staff of the White House. We wanted to be helpful. This has been a cooperative effort from the beginning. Texas feels it has a responsibility in making all the facts known.

Q. Had you discussed this Court of Inquiry plan with the Justice Department before you announced it?

A. No.

Q. Or with the President?

A. With the White House staff.

Q. Who in particular?

A. I don't want -- no one has asked us not to hold a Court of Inquiry. We have ~~been~~ worked out a system to postpone it.

Q. Anyone at the White House suggest you postpone it.

A. No.

Q. You will cooperate with the Commission whenever they call you?

A. Yes. It is an invitation we have accepted.

Q. When will they meet?

A. I don't know.

Q. Did you feel or the Attorney General in Texas feel the Court of Inquiry might turn up evidence that the FBI would not be able to find?

A. No. That's not the purpose of it at all. We knew all this happened in the State. It has been a cooperative matter from the beginning. I keep insisting, in answer to your question, there is nothing like that in it at all-- supplementing each other.

Q. Had you announced any hearings yet?

A. No. Our purpose was not to do that until the proper time; our files in the hands of the FBI, and we have been from the beginning cooperating with them.

Q. Had you decided where the hearings would be held?

A. No. Two cities under discussion. There are legal points involved as to subpoena power. Under discussion whether in Dallas or Austin.

Q. Do you think the Court of Inquiry will be held eventually?

A. If it can serve a useful purpose, at a later date, in establishing what the facts are, why, of course, this would be the purpose of it. Would not call it unless it has a useful purpose. We don't feel it would have useful purpose at this time--just now.

Q. You would not go on and have the Court of Inquiry help duplicate facts here?

A. Not unless we thought it would have usefulness--such as public examination of witnesses under oath and cross-examination.

Q. Have you worked out the nature of your cooperation with the Commission? Have they asked you to be on hand? Will you sit as a member of the Commission?

A. We are not a member of the Commission itself. That's obvious. The Chief Justice, speaking for the Commission has been gracious enough to invite us to participate in the working and attend its hearings.

Q. You don't know if the Commission will actually have public hearings.

A. I don't know if that has been particularly decided.

Q. Did you meet with the Commission today?

A. No, I did not.

Q. You only met with Chief Justice Warren?

A. He was speaking for the Commission.

Q. When did you meet with him?

A. Today.

Q. You didn't meet with him in the last two days?

Was the letter you are reading from written after the meeting.

A. I don't know when it was written -- before or after.

Q. When did you meet with the Chief Justice?

A. At five o'clock.

Q. You got the letter after the meeting with the Chief Justice?

A. I got it at the time of the meeting.

Q. Did you set up the Texas Court of Inquiry, or did Governor Connally do that?

A. You mean this particular one? I did. As you know Governor Connally was in the hospital. . . we never got it actually organized and ready to go, we are still in the process. . . the magistrate has the authority to call it, but of course we could request it orally or in writing.