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GOV. CONNALLY

Connally To Replace McNamara?

Is Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara about to step down in favor of Gov. John B. Connally Jr. of Texas?

Reports were circulating yesterday both in New York City and in Austin, Tex., that President Johnson was about to make the big switch.

The word was that Johnson would appoint Connally, his long-time political ally, to the defense post within a few days.

Connally, queried about the reports, promptly denied them. "They are completely unfounded," said a Connally aide. "There's nothing to any of them."

Newsmen could not help recalling that another Johnson appointee from Texas, White House press secretary Bill D. Moyers, denied he was quitting his job until shortly before his actual departure. Moyers is now publisher of Newsday, Long Island newspaper.

In Washington, McNamara's press office flatly denied any change in the top command. A source on Capitol Hill said that while the appointment of Connally would be unexpected news, the departure of McNamara would surprise nobody.

Connally, 50, served as Secretary of the Navy in 1961, the first year of the Kennedy administration. He resigned in December, 1961 to run for governor of Texas and he was elected in 1962, 1964 and 1966. On Nov. 22, 1963, he was wounded in Dallas during the assassination of President Kennedy.

McNamara, 51, is a former president of the Ford Motor Company. President Kennedy named him Defense Secretary in Jan. 1961 and he has now held the position longer than any other man. He has been under constant fire for his policy role in the conduct of the war in Viet Nam and for the frequently controversial changes he has made in the nation's defense organization.