



Nuclear-powered carrier U.S.S. Nimitz

Winning on Alien Ground

A veto is sustained and a fire is lit under gas

While Jimmy Carter was concentrating last week on the Middle East, his allies were winning a string of important victories for him in two usually unfriendly arenas: the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives.

The Administration's initial score was in the House, where conservatives tried to override Carter's first veto of a major bill, the \$37 billion defense authorization that contained \$1.9 billion for a nuclear aircraft carrier. Carter maintained that the carrier was too expensive, and that the money would be better spent on strengthening NATO forces. Conservative Congressmen disagreed, arguing that Carter was mostly concerned with building a tough-guy reputation by vetoing the measure. Charged New York Republican Clark Kemp: "The President's image guy, Gerald Rafshoon, has been running this." For three weeks, both sides skirmished, with tit-for-tat briefings by experts, breakfast discussions and discreet lobbying. On the eve of the vote, the Administration was confident, but anticipated a narrow margin. Instead, the attempt lost, 191 to 206, falling 74 short of the necessary two-thirds majority. Much of Carter's support came from Democratic liberals who opposed the measure. Moreover, many members of the Texas Democrat George Mahon's staff tried to "repudiate the President" when he needs strength in his

quest for peace in the Middle East."

The President got another boost when the House refused to approve a Republican-sponsored measure to take away Carter's authority to impose import fees on foreign crude oil. For a wobbly moment, the Administration's winning streak in the House was endangered by the threatened gutting of a bill that would require court approval of any wiretapping done for national security reasons. Carter and Attorney General Griffin Bell argued that the measure was necessary to clear up ambiguities in the present law and protect civil rights. The House began rewriting the bill to give the President a free hand to order wiretaps, a liberty that Carter did not want. But after the Democratic leadership rallied the ranks, the House passed just about what the Administration desired.

In the Senate, Administration officials were making headway in their fight to get a natural-gas compromise, the keystone of Carter's long-blocked energy program. The compromise would increase the price of most natural gas by 15% immediately, and continue raising prices until controls ended in 1985. Initially, only gas-pipeline operators supported the bill; almost every other industry group, consumers and labor, opposed it.

Carter was on the phone to Senators urging support for the compromise right up to his departure for Camp David. "I don't call you often," he told conservative Republican Richard Lugar, "but I need your help desperately." Lugar nonetheless declined to support the bill. The President also sent a three-page letter to every Senator. But the missives brought snickers from some because they were obviously form letters—except for scribbled personal messages from Carter on each—and White House aides had lost a line at the bottom of the second page, making some of the text incomprehensible.

For three days, Vice President Mondale worked Capitol Hill, although he was bleary-eyed from the jet lag of his weekend trip to Rome for the installation of Pope John Paul I. He even sandwiched in an hour of phone calls between meeting Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin at Andrews Air Force Base. Energy Secretary James Schlesinger buttonholed Senators as they went in and out of the chamber. At one point, he chased Missouri Republican John Danforth up the stairs, then lost him in the maze of third-floor corridors.

At week's end, the Administration was cautiously upbeat. "We don't have 50 firm commitments," said Schlesinger, "but we are optimistic." Said Mondale's Senate lobbyist, William Smith: "The momentum is on our side." But the pro-compromise coalition was fragile, and Carter's forces still faced the danger that last-minute lobbying by opponents might turn the tide when the compromise comes up for a vote, probably this week. ■

Lone Assassins

Decisions on the deaths of Kennedy and King

It started as a gaudy circus. When the House Select Committee on Assassinations was formed two years ago to investigate once again the killings of President John Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr., Congressmen vied for the limelight and fought with their abrasive chief counsel, Richard Sprague, who quit within a year. But, to the surprise of its early critics, the committee disciplined itself and did some meticulous though costly work (nearly \$5 million by the end of this year). As its public hearings wind down, the committee's sober findings are reinforcing long established official conclusions about the deaths of both Kennedy and King.

Last month the committee in effect re-convicted James Earl Ray of stalking and slaying the civil rights leader in the spring of 1968. In the process, the Congressmen discredited the persistent theory that Ray did not act alone. Last week the committee turned to the Kennedy assassination and added credence to the main finding of the Warren Commission: Lee Harvey Oswald alone killed the President and wounded former Texas Governor John Connally.

The Kennedy hearings produced some dramatic and grisly theater. The Zapruder film, the pathologists, the conspiracy theorists—everyone and everything was there in the Cannon House Office Building to recall the agony of that day in Dallas.

Kennedy's suit coat, the front ripped



Suit coat Kennedy was wearing in Dallas
Grisly theater but no surprises.

The Presidency/Hugh Sidey

He'll Let Us Know

apart by frenzied doctors trying to save his life, and his bloodstained shirt were mounted on a mannequin and used to illustrate the path of one shot. All too vivid sketches showed the exact entry point of the bullet that shattered the President's skull. There was prolonged discussion about what had happened to the President's lower brain after the autopsy. It had apparently been buried at the request of Robert Kennedy.

John Connally, who was moved to tears as he testified, and his wife spoke for three hours in gripping detail about the events leading up to the assassination. They had feared a cool reception for Kennedy in Dallas, but the crowds had greeted him so warmly that Mrs. Connally turned in the limousine, just as it neared the book depository, and said: "Mr. President, you can't say Dallas doesn't love you." And the pleased Kennedy had replied: "That's obvious." Connally recalled hearing a shot ring out and moaning, "No, no, no, no."

Since November 1963 the Warren Commission and two different teams of pathologists have reviewed the autopsy report made at Parkland Hospital in Dallas. The House committee's panel, after its own re-examination, made only minor objections to the original findings, like the exact location of the entry wounds. Its views strengthened the conviction that the shots had been fired from the Texas School Book Depository where Oswald worked. Eight out of nine forensic experts retained by the committee said it was likely that one bullet passed through the President's neck and then wounded Connally in the back, chest, wrist and thigh, thus supporting the Warren Commission's controversial "single-bullet theory."

The panel's findings that the shots came from behind should lay to rest the theory that another gunman, perhaps firing from a grassy knoll in front of the car, was involved in the assassination. But it is unlikely even now that many Americans, deeply skeptical about official pronouncements and constantly confronted by the dirty linen of the CIA and FBI, will give up their notions of a conspiracy. Showing there was no second gunman, as Connally pointed out, posed a difficult problem: How do you prove a negative?

Conspiracy theories will flourish as long as any questions remain unanswered, and the House committee is set to concede in its report that some points remain unsettled. But TIME has learned that the committee will recommend that there be no further studies, on the grounds that many of the remaining questions are simply unanswerable and that 14 years of attack on the Warren Commission report and almost a decade of faultfinding with the King investigation have failed to shake the fundamental conclusions of either of the official explanations: The President and the civil rights leader were each killed by a single assassin. ■

What must have been going through that handsome head as John Connally sat in the Cannon Office Building last week remembering the murder of John Kennedy? So many memories and regrets. So near for so many years to the power he sought, yet still so far away. Sitting there in the very building where he had first entered national politics 39 years ago as an aide to Congressman Lyndon B. Johnson. A President still in search of portfolio.

It must have been a heartache of many kinds. There was the horror of the assassination, of course, and the memory of his own wounds. And, back in Washington again, back in the spotlight, he must have pondered once more why he had not become President, why he should be President. There was not a flicker of that in his public testimony. But just as sure as the day was Wednesday, it was inside. All that testimony about the assassination will not put to rest the questions, the theories about conspiracy within and without the Government. But that may not have been the important thing.

Would the hearing make a difference for John Connally, draw attention to the man who feels he could be President? So many other events and coincidences had made differences during his long career. Had Connally not changed from a Democrat to a Republican, and had he stayed in Texas watching the Watergate drama and the tragedy of Richard Nixon, he might have won the Democratic nomination in 1976 and been President today. Or if Richard Nixon had only taken Connally's advice—made at least a partial confession of his involvement in the Watergate cover-up—he might have ridden out the storm and then that same John Connally might have been President. But a Republican President. Small difference to John Connally, who plays life as it lays.

Connally has been part of more of our history than we sometimes realize. He tried to get Lyndon Johnson the nomination in 1960. Failing that, he joined the Kennedy Administration as Secretary of the Navy. He was a good one. Then he went back to become Governor of Texas. In his first year came Dallas, and later Richard Nixon, the man who was mesmerized by Connally. He became Secretary of the Treasury, but Nixon tantalized him with the vision of being his Vice President and finally moving into the Republican mainstream and the presidency. That is the kind of wide-screen thinking John Connally liked. Too much.

How much was it raw ambition on Connally's part that made him change parties? How much prescience, a feeling for the conservative turn the nation was about to take? Certainly a little of both. In any event, he was tossed along on the great tides of history from Dallas to last week—nearly 15 tumultuous years. A talented and exciting man who seemed to just miss being in the right place at the right time doing the right thing.

Was Connally coming back into the nation's future? He was a powerful figure before the committee, directed the drama, played the lead role, gave the epilogue. He was attentive to the Congressmen, one of whom is half his age, just 18 when the shots were fired on Nov. 22, 1963. He was not afraid to describe the shots, the blood, the brains, the feeling. Connally did not waver. The men in front of him were reduced to size. Once he referred to "Senator" Kennedy. John Kennedy had never really been more than that to the Texans.

John Connally left the building he had entered 39 years ago and stood in the brilliant sunshine in his elegant tailoring and the funny little hat he always wears. He is an old-fashioned man in many ways, but one who relishes the world. He has always believed he could mold it.

Where was the Governor bound?

Back to Texas to do a little campaigning for other candidates, he said.

Not for himself?

"Oh no, not me," he laughed. "But when the November elections are over I intend to sit down and do some thinking. If I decide to go I'll sure let you know." As John Connally talked and joked, he was standing there on the top of the hill that looks out over all of Washington. We may be hearing.

WALTER BENNETT



John and Nellie Connally testifying