

NY Times FEB 14 1975
Ford Met Connally
Accidentally, Aide
To President Says

By JOHN HERBERS

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 13—Robert T. Hartmann, President Ford's chief political adviser on the White House staff, said today that the President had not intended to meet alone with former Treasury Secretary John B. Connally when in Houston on Monday.

Mr. Hartmann said that Mr. Connally was among a number of Texas Republican leaders the President had arranged to see while in Houston promoting his economic and energy proposals.

After Mr. Ford met with the group at the Shamrock Hilton Hotel, Mr. Hartmann said, "Connally just hung around and the rest left." He and the President then conferred for about 45 minutes.

Mr. Hartmann, at a breakfast asked about the propriety of the President's meeting with Mr. Connally in view of the former Texas Governor's indictment for accepting a bribe, committing perjury and conspiring to obstruct justice in a case involving campaign contributions by milk producers.

Mr. Hartmann said it was known before Mr. Ford left Washington for Houston that Mr. Connally was to begin the group of Texas Republican leaders to meet with the President.

"I was aware here was in the group and that his name was not stricken," said Mr. Hartmann.

Mr. Ford, in his travels about the country, has been meeting with Republican leaders wherever he goes to promote his energy and economic proposals. Mr. Hartmann, who is counselor to the President, said there was no particular political meaning behind the meetings.

President Ford's spokesmen said the President had not discussed Mr. Connally's indictment but had talked of economic and energy policy matters.