

The original documents are located in Box 24, folder “Connally, John B.” of the Robert T. Hartmann Files at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

MEMORANDUM

TO: The President

FROM: Earle B. Mayfield, Jr.

SUBJECT: John B. Connally - His Political Role for 1975-76

DATE:

Any discussion regarding John Connally's political future and the role he is to play during the remainder of 1975 and up to the Republican National Convention in 1976 must necessarily include Governor George Wallace.

1. Governor George Wallace

He will enter the Democratic National Convention with more delegate strength than any other contender. There is no chance of his being nominated. He and his followers will not support a Liberal Democrat nor will they endorse and support the Liberal platform that will be adopted. Hence, a walk-out is in the making.

2. Kissinger-Rockefeller

If and when Kissinger resigns Rockefeller should be appointed to Kissinger's position.

Removing himself from a place on the Republican slate, Rockefeller will have saved the party a useless and bitter convention fight; and this move will immediately eliminate Ronald Reagan as a contender for the Presidential nomination. And finally, this move will help to heal the breach between the Liberal and Conservative Republicans.

3. John B. Connally

He should be appointed Vice President as soon as Governor Rockefeller resigns. The quicker Connally is appointed the quicker he will be confirmed.

There are several Southern Democratic Senators who will vote to confirm Connally NOW. But the closer the confirmation is to the election, these Senators will have to vote against his confirmation.

Connally's name on the Republican ticket will:

1. Insure that Texas will go Republican
2. Probably defeat Lloyd Bentsen.
3. Insure that the Wallace people will flock to the Ford-Connally ticket.

Remember, Texas is the third most populated state and is needed to win. Again, ~~remember~~ there is but one John Connally and he is the only one who can carry Texas for the Republican ticket in 1976.

The Texas delegation to the Democratic National Convention will consist of about 35% Wallace delegates. All of them will vote for a Ford-Connally ticket in November, 1976.

NOTE It will help the Republican party, in Texas if the President will "notice" John Connally, in Dallas.

[10/27/75]

Connally
file

John Connally On the Comeback Road

By Aaron Latham

“...Connally is counting on the media’s helping everyone to forget the leitmotif of scandals running through his career...”

The building in which John Bowden Connally, 58, was speaking looked as if it had been constructed of fool’s gold. Known as the Zale Tower, this shimmering, gilded edifice decorates the outskirts of Dallas. It serves as the headquarters of a chain of jewelry stores which last year made \$30 million. This sort of money had drawn Connally like a magnet.

John Connally, former secretary of the navy, former governor of Texas, former secretary of the treasury, former star of a corruption trial, had come as an adornment to the Zale Corporation’s annual stockholders’ meeting. He spent a long August day in the Zale Tower, making several speeches, one of them to the assembled Zale employees. In this particular address, he seemed quite condescending.

“When you take a coffee break,” Connally told the workers, “you take it and you get back to your desk.”

Finishing his short talk, Connally opened the floor to questions.

One woman asked, “Can we trust the Russians’ friendliness?”

“I don’t trust them as far as you can throw a chimney by the smoke,” Connally said. “They’re coming on very hard with submarines.”

A young man in the front row stood up. He was a little disheveled and looked as if he might work in the mail room. He appeared to be the kind of person who would not hurry back from a coffee break.

“What do you believe is the greatest threat to America,” the young man asked, “Russian submarines or corrupt government officials?”

The Zale employees giggled, then laughed, then roared, for what seemed five minutes. Connally stood behind the podium, waiting for the laughter to die down, blushing brightly.

“Abuse by government officials . . .” he began, then became flustered and did not finish the thought. Starting over, he

said, “From a military standpoint, the Russians are a far greater threat.” He paused again and went on, “We’re all human. We’ve had corruption at all levels of government because we’re all human. There’s a little larceny in the hearts of all of us. People lose their equilibrium, their sense of values. . . .”

On the eve of the ’76 election, John Connally is doing what Richard Nixon did on the eve of the ’68 election. He is traveling around the country making speeches, trying to rehabilitate his image. These trips are difficult but they are preferable to the rehabilitation he recently feared: making license plates.

In ’68, Nixon somehow persuaded much of the country to forget about the Pumpkin Papers, the Nixon fund, Checkers, and his image as a loser. Pundits like James Reston began writing about the “New Nixon.” The reviews of Connally’s speaking tour are only starting to come in. It remains to be seen whether he can persuade the country to forget his problems.

Besides the Zale Corporation, Connally has recently appeared before the National Association of Animal Breeders; a Johnstown, Pennsylvania, savings bank dinner; the National Federation of Republican Women; the New York Times’s editorial board; and the editors of the *National Review*, some of whom who are interested in a third party. And he has been questioned on CBS’s “Face the Nation.”

Connally has been telling audiences that he believes in “electing our president to one six-year term . . . mandatory retirement of federal judges at age 70 and reconfirmation of such judges every ten years . . . a remission of all corporate taxes to registered voters. . . .” That last idea would mean that the total corporate tax bill would be divided among all the people on the voter rolls. Everyone over eighteen would be eligible for \$500 a year—a

proposal even George McGovern could probably support 500 per cent.

If Connally does rehabilitate his image, if he can make himself appear as fresh and clean as a new license plate, then perhaps he can run for the office Richard Nixon ran for. Or at least for vice-president.

Speaking from public platforms around the country, Connally disclaims any desire to hold elective or appointive office, but in his hotel room at the Plaza recently his denials softened considerably. He left me with the impression that he thought Ford could be replaced on the Republican ticket. Perhaps by Reagan. Perhaps by Connally.

“I think that if things continue as they are,” Connally said, “the president may falter. And I’m convinced now that Governor Reagan is going to run against him. I heard indirectly that if the president came out for the continuation of this tax cut, which would anticipate another huge deficit, that would trigger Reagan’s getting into the race. And I think that if he does, he is going to give the president a great deal of trouble.”

I asked Connally what he would do if Reagan seemed on the verge of taking the nomination away from Ford.

“I dunno,” Connally said. “I’m gonna sit and watch for a while. I never said I wasn’t going to do anything. The only denial I ever made was that I had any plans to run.”

I asked him if he might run in several states, take a bloc of votes to the convention, and hope for a deadlock.

“Well, I might,” Connally said. “That’s a possibility, I suppose.”

In other words, the Texan seems to hope Ford and Reagan will kill each other off in the shoot-out at the New Hampshire corral. Then Connally, always the survivor, can offer himself.

In his quest for rehabilitation, Connally is counting on the newspapers’ behaving as they normally do: becom-

Some items in this folder were not digitized because it contains copyrighted materials. Please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library for access to these materials.

Some items in this folder were not digitized because it contains copyrighted materials. Please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library for access to these materials.