



*Texas governor John Connally, sitting directly in front of President Kennedy, insisted that one of the bullets had his name on it.*

trary to “all reliable evidence,” says Holland, a Research Fellow at the Miller Center of Public Affairs, and was only introduced because of a key commission member’s “misplaced pride” and antipathy toward the commission’s liberal chairman.

In testimony before the commission, Texas governor John Connally, who was wounded in the attack, insisted that one of the three shots heard in Dealey Plaza in Dallas that November day in 1963 was meant just for him. “He refused to believe that he had been injured incidentally,” Holland says. “According to Connally, the president was injured by the first shot; then he, Connally, was wounded separately by the second shot; then the third and final shot hit the president in the head.” Since it would have been impossible for Oswald to have fired the first bullet that hit Kennedy and a second one hitting Connally in the scant seconds between them, his account implied there were two shooters—a conspiracy.

Nevertheless, the medical and forensic evidence was clear, Holland says. The shot that first hit Kennedy entered the back of his neck, exited his throat, and then—according to what the commission stated was “very persuasive evidence from the experts”—hit Connally, who

was sitting in front of Kennedy in the limousine. This bullet (which skeptics came to call the “magic bullet”) *must* have hit Connally, avers Holland, for if it didn’t, as Connally claimed, then, after emerging from Kennedy’s body, it “disappeared altogether. Such a missile would truly have been a ‘magic bullet.’” (That bullet and the second, fatal one that hit Kennedy’s head “probably” did all the damage, the commission said, with the other shot—Holland believes it was the first one fired—missing

the limousine occupants entirely.)

Despite the unambiguous evidence, Holland says, the commission report left open the possibility that the so-called magic bullet might not have hit Connally after all. “Governor Connally’s testimony and certain other factors,” the commission stated, “have given rise to some difference of opinion as to this probability.”

Why did the commission thus water down the firm conclusion of its own staff? To avert a threatened dissent by one of its most influential members, conservative senator Richard Russell of Georgia, says Holland. Russell strongly disliked the commission’s chairman, Chief Justice Earl Warren, the *bête noire* of southern segregationists, and “would not permit the report—Warren’s report—to contradict the sworn testimony of a southern governor, no matter how impossible that testimony was.”

Warren wanted a unanimous report to dispel public fears. So unwarranted doubt about the single-bullet conclusion was introduced. Though conspiracy theories were sure to abound anyway, the commission itself, Holland concludes, “bears some responsibility” for the widespread disbelief in its findings.

## *Liberals Confront Sociobiology*

“Darwin’s Truth, Jefferson’s Vision” by Melvin Konner, in *The American Prospect* (July–Aug. 1999), P.O. Box 383080, Cambridge, Mass. 02238.

From the moment sociobiology (a.k.a. evolutionary psychology) first reared its head in the 1970s in the work of Harvard University zoolo-

gist Edward O. Wilson and others, liberals have been aghast. Prominent biologists on the left, such as Stephen Jay Gould and Richard

Lewontin, strongly rejected the idea that many patterns of human behavior have a basis in evolution, branding it unscientific and a reprehensible revival of 19th-century social Darwinism. The notion that much human behavior is genetically “hard-wired,” immune to environmental influences, is unacceptable to many others. But liberals ought to calm down and learn to live with it, contends Konner, a professor of anthropology, psychiatry, and neurology at Emory University.

In recent decades, he notes, sociobiological theory has gained “almost universal acceptance...among researchers in natural history and animal behavior and among many psychologists and social scientists.” The theory has not proved useful in all circumstances, he says, but without it, it would be hard to explain, for instance, the research finding that a child is at least 10 times more likely to be assaulted or killed if he or she lives in a household with an unrelated male—a finding that holds true regardless of socioeconomic status, ethnicity, religion, or education, and in at least four countries. Children are much safer in households with men to whom they are genetically related.

“The implications of evolution are not . . . inherently conservative,” Konner maintains. “They are, however, inherently materialist and fraught with conflict.” This makes some

liberals—those with a rosy view of human nature—uneasy. But it would not have bothered America’s Founding Fathers, he says, who had the “gift to be able to take a Hobbesian view of human life without applying a Hobbesian solution.” Scientific materialists with a realistic view of human nature, they nevertheless constructed a liberal order. “In questions of power,” said Thomas Jefferson, “let no more be said of confidence in man, but bind him down from mischief, by the chains of the Constitution.”

Though it must seem inadequate to liberals who believe that human nature “is inherently good, unselfish, and cooperative,” the Constitution “has more or less worked for a couple of centuries,” Konner notes. To “those of us who see human nature as the unpleasant product of too many eons of individual selection,” that is a considerable achievement, he says. And this shows what may be “the enduring implication of Darwin’s theory for liberal political philosophy: assume the worst and you can still get something workable.” Precisely because human nature, as designed by evolution, cannot be relied upon to care for the old, the sick, and the very young in a market economy, the case for “programs and supports deliberately designed by a collective, humane, political will” to accomplish that is all the stronger.

## FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

### *History Begins Again*

“Second Thoughts” by Francis Fukuyama, and “Responses to Fukuyama” by Harvey Mansfield et al., in *The National Interest* (Summer 1999), 1112 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Ten years ago, in a new journal called the *National Interest*, an obscure researcher from the RAND Corporation ventured to suggest that with the West’s victory in the Cold War, the end of History was in sight. Not *history*, in the ordinary sense of the unfolding story of man’s sad stumble through the centuries, but capital-H *History*, in the Hegelian-Marxist sense of the progressive evolution of human political and economic institutions. And the “end” that Francis Fukuyama discerned was not socialism, as Marxists had supposed, but bourgeois liberal democracy and capitalism. There would be no more grand world conflicts over ideas and ideologies. His bold thesis still stirs controversy.

Now, Fukuyama says that he was wrong—but not for reasons his critics suggested.

Neither the stalling of reform in Russia nor the economic crisis in Asia, says Fukuyama, now a professor of public policy at George Mason University, invalidate his conclusion “that liberal democracy and a market-oriented economic order are the only viable options for modern societies.” Instead, he writes, the “true weakness” in his argument was this: “History cannot come to an end as long as modern natural science has no end; and we are on the brink of new developments in science that will, in essence, abolish what [philosopher] Alexandre Kojève called