

DAVID PRYOR

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I went to a hearing on defense department procurement; David saw me in the back row and came down and asked me if I had lunch plans.

Typically, as he left the meeting, he said "That defense talk really gets me. The other day I thought I was beginning to understand it but now I'm not sure. But I'm really hot about the subject. And I'm sure they are taking us to the cleaners... I got interested in defense procurement as a result of the consultant work. And I've moved myself over from the postal subcommittee where they are supposed to be working on 20¢ postage stamps and have them working on this stuff. Maybe I shouldn't have done it, but nobody has said anything about it. I don't want them wasting their time on postal affairs."

He liked the testimony of Gordon Rule. "He's my kind of guy. I'd like to hire him. He says 'get those guys under oath when they testify down here.' Oh, I'll bet the military hated him. I sure did like that man. What and where are military decision; but when and how are civilian decisions. I liked that way he put it." The testimony of Rule was wise and to the point and could be viewed as a human scale problem, which is the way I think Pryor thinks and resonates.

He talked about his <sup>rotary</sup> victory speech. "One thing that started me thinking about it was a meeting in Alan Cranston's office. He used to hold meetings regularly to talk about disarmament and SALT, but he stopped. He held one recently, and I went and there were two experts there on disarmament. They were so gloomy about the Geneva talks and saw so little hope that I thought to myself, if this is our attitude we're never going to solve any of our problems. So I said, 'What would you say if I suggested that the President

get on the hot line and said to Breshnev I'm coming over to Moscow to talk. Let's sit down and talk about disarmament.' Oh, they said it wouldn't work, it would give the wrong signals, we'd be leading from weakness, we don't have enough strength. 'Maybe Reagan could come to Geneva, they said. I said I always believed that the shortest distance between two points was a straight line. Those experts make their living figuring out why something can't be done. If Sadat could go to Israel, why couldn't Reagan go to Moscow. There's been absolutely no motion on this thing. Between the death of Sadat and the B-1 and the MX missile, I think people are scared to death. Maybe my idea wouldn't work, but maybe it would set something in motion. I decided to give a speech saying that invulnerability was an illusion. I tried it out on the most conservative audience I could find. The morning of the speech I called in eight of the veterans organizations-- VFW, Disabled Veterans and even Orville Faubus and said this is what I'm going to say. I got a favorable response, so I gave it to the Little Rock Rotary Club. There were about 200 there; and I got another favorable response. I don't think I've ever given a speech that has drawn such favorable response. The other day I got a petition, with 200 signatures from some Presbyterian group praising it. That doesn't mean much, but since when did any speech of mine produce a petition. Not counting that, I'd say we've had about 150 favorable letters. I've heard from a few friends that people say I'm sounding weak on defense. But not much. I gave the speech on the Senate floor last week. I'm going to give the second installment next week. I'm going to suggest that Reagan go to Moscow. I saw Max Fredendorf the other day and I told him 'Max, I'm going to give a speech suggesting the President go to Moscow. I wanted you to know so you wouldn't be caught by surprise.' Max said 'Maybe that would be good in another season. People in this town tend to think in terms of seasons.' I said to him, 'Max, if we don't do

something, there won't be enough seasons left.'"

When I mentioned Alan Ehrenhalt's comment that he needs a cause, David said "He's right. I need something to make my blood boil. Otherwise I get bored. You tell him, he's right on target."

As a supplement to his concern over arms race, he told two stories. "Did I tell you about the Peace nut and the Titan missile solo? This guy called the newspaper and told them to come out to one of the missile silos for a story. They did and there was this long haired guy in a VW who drove onto the missile base, threw a blanket over some barbed wire, climbed onto the silo and started reading the Bible to the press. Twenty minutes later-- twenty minutes--the security guard came around and saw him sitting on the silo. What's going on here they said while he read them the bible. Then there was the alarm system that went off in one of the missile sites. The people living nearby heard it and didn't know what to do. So they called the missile base and asked what they should do, now that the early warning system was going off. The men in the silo said there wasn't any darn system going off down there and there was no problem! The airforce can't explain why the alarm went off all over the area but not down in the silo. It kinda makes you wonder doesn't it? The opportunity for accident or miscalculation or malfunction is just too great to leave things going along as they are." Another good example of how David sees concrete problems, not abstractions.

On AWACS. "I'm going to vote against it. I'm sorry it's become such a partisan issue. It didn't start that way, but I'm afraid it has polarized the parties to a great extent. Actually, after Baker helped Byrd to get the Panama Canal Treaty through--and he wouldn't have gotten the Treaty without Baker, I think Byrd owed Baker one. I'm going to vote against it, but I kinda hope it passes. It's a little like a pay raise. You vote against it, but you

hope it goes through. I got committed very early on it--much earlier than I do on most votes. The White House wants me to come down again tomorrow. I'm going to have to tell them not to waste their time. I went down there last week. I told them I was committed; but they said they just didn't want to leave any stone unturned. They didn't promise me anything. In fact, I told them if they needed a testimonial to that effect, I would give it to them."

He said that after the West Virginia meeting, Byrd appointed a 6 or 7 man committee to come up with some issues on which there was a party consensus. Each man took 8 senators and had a talk with each of them and then the 7 got together to talk about the issues (same meeting Baucus talked about). He then said if I knew anyone who "ate politics for breakfast" that they needed to add me to policy committee. He used the idea of serving all the Democrats the school lunch that had ketchup as a vegetable as the kind of idea he wanted this person to come up with. Again, his penchant for the hot idea.

Mimicked a guy in Arkansas. Wel-come-Dem-o-crats. We are the party of the people, We never cuss in front of our women..." etc. etc.

Or veteranarian who said "What's wrong with Bumper? Has he got liver trouble? He looks so yellow on television." Is Bumper sick?"

Says he never was in favor of SALT because of verification. Said he'd talk to farm bureau about Russians crawling all over our silos in Arkansas, but then when people would get upset at that idea, he'd say. But we have our American boys crawling all over their missiles" and everyone would cheer. Just an example of his storytelling.