

PAUL TSONGAS

December 2, 1981

High school group from New Orleans, Houston, Kansas-taped for C-Spann.

Tried to warm up group by asking them how many from here and here, etc. "If you can't hear me, raise your hands." Whole bunch raised hands and then realized he said "You must have heard me." - Program was pretty stiff and he said afterwards. "The students were tight and nervous with the TV cameras.... with a large audience like that, humor won't work... I would guess that was about as conservative a group as you'll find, but most of them seemed open to things.

Topic was "global economy." He talked persuasively about concern for third world and in course of it two PT themes were repeated--the value of experience and the generational emphasis.

Re interdependence. "It's different from the generation in which I grew up and your parents grew up."

When asked about unemployment, he talked about "distinguishing between two classes of countries"--developed and third world. Then he talked about third world.

"Every minute we talk here, a child a student a young person dies somewhere in Uganda or Somalia or someplace like that. The question is: Do you feel it?.. If you don't feel it, it will all come back to haunt you. The difference between my generation and your generation is that my generation could ignore the linkage, yours can't ignore it because of the nuclear bomb."

He asked the group if they had ever met a starving person or ever seen a person die of starvation. None did. "I spent two years in Africa teaching school. I saw people die, some of my students, from inadequate medical care.

✓ A society incapable of not caring about what happens overseas will pay the price." He told them that "If we don't care, they will turn away from us." And they'll go to Soviets. He also said that we'll be in there, too, with guns and that the young people may have to fight--mentioned 55,000 killed in Viet Nam and 150 billion spent."

! ✓ "If I could take all of you by some magic and put you down in a refugee camp in Somalia where you would see children starving to death--if for only one ^{it} hour--you would come back a different person. I have seen it and ^{it} is a part of me. You can talk about starvation as an intellectual exercise, but until it is a part of your experience, it is not a part of you... I spent two years in the Peace Corps. And when I went I was a Republican--a pretty conservative Republican. When I came back, I was a different person. It's like the old saying. You should spend some time in the other person's shoes... We are very ^ainsulted. We don't have a chance to experience anything but our American context."

He talks about the importance of travel. "While you are single, and enthusiastic and your minds are still open, you should get out and travel. Once you get married and have kids and a mortgage you won't do it. So go and see other countries while you can. There will be time to be a solid citizen later."

Talk about recognition and Cuba. "Not recognizing Cuba is just what the Russians want."

✓ Problem of gasoline came up somehow. He asked how many of their parents drove fuel efficient cars and how many drove gas guzzlers. The number of gas guzzlers was a big majority. He commented on how different that was from what he was used to. "If your parents drive gas guzzlers, every gallon of gasoline they use is one gallon taken away from your children. I have three kids--one of them is 4 months old. You look at that child and worry about how that child is

going to survive... Go with your parents when they buy a new car and lock them in the closet if they are thinking of buying a gas guzzler. It's their responsibility to look out for your children and your grandchildren... Buying a gas guzzler is a heck of a way to show love for the next generation."

Later "There isn't a day that goes by that I don't think about nuclear war. If you have kids you can't help it... Most of our substantive conversation consists of whether to go to McDonalds or Rory Rogers. But one day my 7 year old asked me "Daddy if there's a war, will I be killed?"

I sat in the outer office for quite a while waiting for Paul to let me come in and sit with his PM appointments--and I kept sending Debbie, Mary Helen and Chris in to see what the scoop was.

Finally I went in while the Algerian Ambassador talked about western Sahara and how US was tilting toward Morocco and sending arms and how they want neutrality. Paul said that he would introduce a resolution of disapproval on any Moroccan arms sales "if nobody else does." And he said he'd like to go to Algeria to see the situation there, perhaps on the way to Ethiopia, which he wants to visit. All this was in French! He and I kidded about it afterwards.

Then he talked to some delegates from the Conference on mostly about how it is.

Then he went to vote and we talked a little, as we walked, about his book. How's your book going? I asked. "It's had about a 6 week shelf life. It's dropped way off to 100 copies this week. It was 900 one week. It hasn't sold anywhere near as many copies as I thought it would... We had a pool in the office on how many copies it would sell and whoever has the lowest number will win. I thought it would sell about 35,000 copies. It's up to 14,000 now. They tell me books like this sell in the range of 8,000 to 30,000 and you can't break

out of it. I may sell 20,000. And there seems to be some interest in the paperback edition in college... Well, I can't complain. I got an advance that repaired the Lowell house and helped us buy a new home in Washington."

I said to him that he had worried about it being taken seriously and that surely he didn't have to worry about that. "I know it's been taken seriously. I made Doonesbury. I got more comments on that than anything else. My sister even called me to tell me about it. That tells you something about the world." (He laughed). "I got a bad review in the New Republic and a bad review in Fortune."

✓ I asked him if the speeches and the Q & A and the reviews had any effect on his view. "It has reenforced them. People are listening--conservatives as well as liberals. Did I tell you the story of my speech to the Natural Gas Producers in New Orleans. The man who introduced me was on my side. But he said 'We all know that fuzzy idea comes from the Democrats, that they are even fuzzier coming from liberal Democrats and that they are fuzzier still when they come from an ivy leaguer. Now, from Dartmouth, Harvard and Yale, I give you Paul Tsongas.' He did it tongue in cheek. I got up and said "I didn't realize that being a liberal Democrat from the ivy league was a social disease.' And I went on to say 'Now I know why you invited me down here. I'm your token flake.' They laughed. I talked and we had a good tough Question and Answer period. When I finished they gave me a standing ovation. Everyone may not like what I'm saying but the analysis has held up. No one has challenged the line of analysis. People follow what I'm saying and they want to hear it said. I'm right; and I'm adamantly convinced of it."

✓ I asked him if he felt he was reaching a larger constituency and he said 'Yes' in very strong tone. But he didn't elaborate because he was walking into Senate and had to vote.

Later I asked him if anyone had said the book was written from a Mass. or a New England point of view. 'No, not one person has said that.'

I asked if it was received any differently in Mass. than elsewhere. "If anything it has been received more favorably elsewhere than it has in Massachusetts. After all when they know you as a Lowell City Councilman, they aren't likely to be very impressed."

Walking out of Senate and down the steps, he said. "I've found you get an extra measure of respect when you have written a book. It makes you something more than just a mere politician. People treat you differently whether it is deserved or not."

I'm going to an ^{DMC} ~~ONL~~ speech of his Friday night. Chris and Mary Helen came in to brief him. Chris said "Kennedy is going to one of the workshops. You were asked to do one of the workshops but then you were asked to give the keynote speech." Paul read the program. "Moynihan, keynote in the morning, Kennedy keynote at lunch, and me at night. That's Moynihan, Kennedy and me. How many people will be there?" Chris said "Not as many as they expected. They have 100 committed but they expected 200. One of the troubles is that they scheduled other events that same night." Paul said "Does that mean Kennedy will get 200 at noon and I'll only get 100 at night?" Chris "Oh, no." And Paul said "If there's going to be that much fall off, there's no point in my giving the speech." He said this seriously and it seemed more "Senatorial" than he normally sounds.

Marsha gave me a House Senate comparison. She's the manager of the softball team. "When he was in the House he played in half the games--except the year he campaigned for the Senate. The first year in the Senate, he played in almost half the games. But last year he only played in one game. It was the Kennedy game. He and Kennedy both played--Kennedy played third and Paul played short stop. When our team saw Ted Kennedy, they completely fell apart."

He talked with Larry _____ of the Lowell Sun about his proposed new ideas for labor. He met a union guy, from the engineers, by chance, or an airplane. "He asked me how the book was doing. I said it was doing all right, but that it wasn't being read by people who ought to read it--labor." So the guy arranged a meeting of 20 union leaders". "We had a good 2 hour session; and at the end of it I said 'Why don't I go back put some of these ideas on paper and get back to you for your reactions to it. I wrote a draft and showed it to some of my friends who also happen to be in the labor movement. Their reaction was a lot more critical than I expected. But it was more a criticism of the process than of the substance. They wanted something that would be worked out more cooperatively. They didn't like the idea of my drawing up a program and sending it are to them. So I'll have to go back to the drawing board with it. You have to tend to both substance and process, and sometimes process is more important than substance." (Randy said they were working on it this week.)

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Frank kept pushing him on the substance of the draft and Paul kept being vague. "It's an extension of the ideas in the book. Basically it has to do with the approach labor should take, so that people will see unions in a different light, see them as interested in things like quality control and cost effectiveness. It's about the public face of labor. The labor movement is in decline. It is losing its public constituency and it can't go on the way it has in the past. If it does, things will only get worse for them... If I can't tell them who will? It seems to me I'm in a unique position to do it. For three reasons. First, I have a voting record favorable to them--a pro-labor record, 85%, 95% depending on which rating you go by. Second, I vote with them even though they did not ~~suggest~~ support me in 1978. They supported my opponents in the primary and in the general election and still I vote with them. I won in spite of them; and still I support them. So I have no political obligation to

them. And third. I have no political ambitions in 1984. Who else has those three conditions?"

"I would talk about labor issues more if I had a forum. I spoke to the Bartender's Union last month. But I'll bet I have fewer invitations to speak to labor conventions than any other Senator with as good a voting record on labor issues as I have... They don't think of me as one of theirs. There will always be that distance."

In meeting with old age group he said "To show you how bad things are, a group of younger members proposed to Haig that we go to Europe to help the President and Haig refused. We agree with what the President did with his speech. We thought it might be helpful if we talked with some of the peace groups there, with whom we have some credibility, to try and convince them that the President's proposal is a serious one. We wanted to help him... They didn't want anyone over there that they couldn't control."

What's interesting about this offer is that sitting out in the office I heard him call David Broder and Broder's call came back. Mary Helen said "Haig refused the offer and Paul wanted Broder to know about the letter and the refusal. We wanted to go to someone we knew. Paul suggested Kraft at one point. I don't even know Kraft, never met him." Now, whatever led Paul (and Dan Bonker, who was in it with him) to think Haig would accept this 'offer', when Paul voted against his confirmation and when Paul opposes most all of Reagan's foreign policies, is beyond me. Then when it was refused, he ran to Broder to spill the beans. All of which leads me to think of it as a PR stunt. On one level, surely he wants to help and thinks he can. On another level, he was sure to reap lots of publicity from it and would surely be perceived by the administration as a loose, unfriendly possibly presidential, cannon on the

elect. He must have know the offer would be refused. So you have got to conclude he and ~~Brooke~~ sent the letter, then get the refusal and then called Broder all as part of a plan. But if they did that, why the calling back and forth Bonker about calling Broder (or I assume that's what it was). To give Paul the benefit, perhaps, he didn't plan to call Broder; not calling Broder was the natural senatorial reflex to the refusal of an offer to help the President. It's the running to Broder "tell", to amke problem a private transaction, that seems very Senatorial to me. If, along with Paul's comments on the ONC dinner, may indicate some change of attitude. We'll watch.

Debbie asked me if I thought he had grown as a Senator. She thought he had, that he was awed by it at first and isn't now. I disagree with her. She said the only way to measure it would be by the number of speeches he now gives. And that may be the best indicator of growth. The book represents reaching. That's clear. Does it represent growth, too???

He ended the day with a chat with 2 Catholic Bishops from South Africa. They talked about Namibia, and South Africa. Paul mentioned Mandele's wife to whom he had sent a gift and letters and hadn't heard back. "Tell her we haven't forgotten her. Tell her we think of her." he said, and the Bishop of Capetown said he'd try to get her the message. She is wife of black leader, and she has probably been "detained".

Again, as with the Algerians, Paul indicated sympathy. He said Crocker in was most moderate person/State Department and that the USA might help in Namibia.. There was a lot of good humor expressed. When one Bishop said they were caught between white hostility and black ingratitude, Paul said, "Welcome to politics." Other bishop said "You mean we'll get no sympathy from you." "Not a bit" said Paul and everyone laughed.

When Bishop said they were getting to know Paul in case Democrats came to

power in 19 , Paul said "Can you give us an ecclesiastical basis for that? Do you know something we don't know? Can you intercede on our behalf?" Lots of laughter.

Paul has a monstrous map of the world that covers one wall of his office, and the people who come in surely represent a cross section of the world. This is partly his Foreign Relations Committee slot and partly his personal interest. He moves in a different world from most of the others in my group--except Glenn. Pell moves in that world but in a ceremonial fashion, not as a player. Paul also has a sign "Amnesty International" on top of one bookcase.

Appropos of this, when I left, Mike Naylor (who was waiting for Chris) came in and said to Paul, "We just got our first editorial--You're spending too much time in El Salvador when you should be spending your time in Stonington." To which Paul said, "I'm surprised you've gone this long without one."

In commiserating with the bishops, he said "I have been called a communist, too. In fact some people in my state say they have a picture of me carrying a Viet Cong flag in an anti war demonstration. Never mind that I didn't do it. It gets said But in 12 years no one has ever produced that picture."

He talked to someone about the high school group he spoke to today. "There was such a cultural gap between that group and what I get in Massachusetts. One girl got up and asked why we gave so much foreign aid at a time when we didn't have a balanced budget. They were smart and alert, but very different from our students."

Yesterday, Dec. 1, I talked a little bit to Mary Helen about press coverage.

She said "The Herald doesn't have anyone who covers us in Washington, They have one person here, Janet Simpson, and she covers Kennedy. I don't see her once in three months--only when what we do intersects with Kennedy. They are still 2 1/2 years behind in covering us. They don't cover us any better now than they did before Paul was elected to the Senate."

The Globe, she said has not single Washington reporter that covers them-- she mentioned Oliphant, Rogers, Taylor and Healey. She said Globe gave them "fair coverage" but "it could be better."

Today, she said they did not generate many press releases. "We don't send out many press releases. Our theory is that they may come home to haunt you. And the papers won't use them. Some offices crank out press releases all day. Most of what we do are statements: on Sadat's death, the State of the Union Message, things we are expected to comment on... The Massachusetts office does a lot of announcements of grants, for example, They work that out with the Kennedy office and the office of the Congressman involved."

PT office is not a press release office.

An interesting point made by one of the inters in PT's office was that the staff in the Senate is insulated as compared to House staff. He said that his friends on House side talked about all the interaction they have with other office and that he had none and didn't see any. Once in a while with Kennedy, but even then, not much.

If so, then it's not only congressman as enterprise that needs to be examined but the relationship among enterprises. Do these enterprises interact? Rich said to me that with 100 people it's inevitable that they clash with each other--everyone bumping into every other one several times each year. What Rich meant was that this feature makes personality more important in the Senate than in the House. Rich keeps pushing this view on me, because he says that if he knew people, and only then, he could evaluate what I say in my paper. Maybe, he says, size of state has nothing to do with a campaign style. Maybe it's the person. The idea of 100 bumping bills given to Committees, etc. would be fun to compute bumps.

With respect to his role in relation to the unions, Paul told the Lowell reporter

"I'm acting as the point man--the point of the lance that gets broken."

At lunch with the 3 Dartmouth inters they noted that he had tried to change his committees this year to pick up Defense. I had never heard that before. They also noted that SALT was his prime interest and that I should pick up on his foreign affairs stuff next year because of that. I had thought I would do it anyway, because of Africa.

The interns also noted that office turns out a lot of work but that the office is not efficient organization chart sense, not hierarchical on that sense either. The LAs compete for Senator's time and need to see Senator after they have worked on something a long time--just to keep self respect.

"One of the LA's took up running just so he could get more time with the Senator. He hates running around, he's a terrible athlete. But he did it because he didn't think he was getting enough time with the Senator." (Mitch)

With respect to the DNC speech, the pre-speech staff evaluations tend to overly exaggerate the prominence of the Senator. Chris told Paul "You are going to be the keynoter", whereupon Paul looked at program and said "Keynoter of morning session Senator Moynihan, Keynoter for the luncheon, Senator Kennedy, to make the point that he was not THE keynoter. Then Mary Helen had 15 press copies of the speech made up, but I didn't see any press people there. And Chris told Niki over the phone that "there will be lots of press coverage." Perhaps, they feel they have to keep spirits of the Senator buoyed or perhaps they just don't want to bring the bad news, or perhaps they naturally think their person is more important than he is.

✓ A line that PT delivered to someone after the C-Spann talk is one he uses a lot: "It's a tough world out there."

During his DNC speech he said a couple of things about AWACS. 1) "A number of us who voted against AWACS might have voted for it if it had been put in the context of a policy that dealt with two questions--a guarantee of Israel's right to exist and a Palestine homeland."

2) On the politics of it: "The President turned around eight freshmen Republicans. He took them up to the second floor quarters of the White House and sat them down one by one. Imagine a freshman getting to the second floor--I've never been to the second floor--where the President says. My capacity to run foreign policy depends on your vote. If you cripple me you cripple the party. And by the way, that judgeship you wanted..."