

Paul Tsongas

July 18, 1980

phil.
ADD

Town Meeting is on tape.

Left Truro about 5:00 to drive to Harwich to pick up Paul and drive him to Hyannis town meeting.

We chatted about his trip to Switzerland where he made a speech and where he got his wife out of the U.S. for a vacation. Idea seemed to be that it was better for her than for him.

I asked him for a blow by blow description of the Foreign Relations seat. He gave me one that was quite superficial--compared, let's say to what BC once gave me about his W & M selection.

"I decided in my own mind to keep the committees I was on. Energy was my major interest. And on the Banking Committee I had gotten into the Chrysler problem and other things. I wanted to be the Chairman of its International Trade Subcommittee. I went to Proxmire and told him of my interest and asked for his opinion. He said he thought no one else was qualified, that I had come to more of the subcommittee meetings than anyone else. Then I started making inquiries among the other members of the committee more serious to me. For awhile, it looked like no one wanted it, till I got to Sarbanes. He said he wanted it. That meant I would stay chairman of consumer affairs, which did not appeal to me. At that point the committee grew less attractive to me. One day I was presiding over a subcommittee meeting when a note from Rich was passed to me. It said that Muskie had been named Secretary of State and that his slot (on the F.R. Committee) was open. I was supposed to be asking questions, but it was hard to concentrate. I went back to the office and got out the list of the Steering Committee members and wrote each one of them--
25--a note. I said, I'm interested in it and I'm asking you not to commit to

see 3/17/80
in epw's
file with (two
copies)
when he asked he
left Bank.

See 10

anyone else until you talk to me. Seven of them said to me immediately. "Don't say another thing. As far as I'm concerned you've got it." By talking to some others, I got the number of committed people up to eleven, maybe twelve--if I wanted it. But I had not decided to go for it. I had stated publicly that I would stay on the Banking Committee. Then one of my friends came to me and said that two or three other people had expressed an interest in the vacancy and that if I wanted it I had better go for it seriously. As soon as I heard that someone else was interested in it, I knew I was serious, the others dropped out, and I won. It was a combination of things. But mostly it was a matter of having gotten to know the people on the Committee during the two years I have been there. They knew I had a serious interest in the area, so no one was surprised by my interest. No one questioned my competence. Also, I had come second two years ^{ago} when Zorinsky got on the committee. And there is an idea here that you should stand in line. I also argued that it was a New England seat being given up by Muskie. John Stennis spoke against me in the committee. He argued for a Southerner. But that was all the opposition there was."

Career-wise, the important thing is that he placed most emphasis on the 2 year stay there--that people needed 2 years to see what he was like. Even if he "claimed" the next vacancy in 1978, had he turned out badly, his "claim" would not have been validated. He placed prime emphasis on contact with his fellows--a cyclical phenomenon.

"I know more about Africa than anyone else on the Committee. But on everything else --no. Take someone like Jack Javits. I'm trying to do as much studying as I can. It's an enormous range."

He said Chris would do Africa and Europe and Dennis would do Asia. And he seemed to think that staff arrangement would be fine.

I asked him about media treatment. "The Globe editorialized and encouraged me to take Foreign Relations. The Herald was critical. _____ Luce criticized me, but that's nothing unusual."

I then asked about the Nyhan article. "He hadn't been around to talk with me in 5 months. He came to the interview with a theory and then he proved it in the interview. If he had bothered to keep up with what I was doing, he wouldn't have been surprised. The people who cover me regularly didn't see any big change. I'd been talking like that all along."

✓ The press people can't believe that, with me, what you see is what you get. I wasn't supposed to beat Guzzi! I wasn't supposed to beat Brooke! I'm not supposed to be here! That's their problem." nice.

|| But I have to say that Paul gives me almost nothing that he doesn't give the papers. And that shows a great deal of self-control on his part. The Foreign Relations story is an example. He wouldn't name who were the seven solid supporters. Who did he work on? Who was his "friend" that told him to get on the stick? These things he keeps to himself--deliberately. He's frank and open--to a point--and that point is more to the side of privacy than revelation. This, too, must intrigue reporters. It does me too. They see it as lack of warmth. But his constituents, I think, are very happy with his analytical capacity and his humor. Even his humor serves to hold people off. One guy got up in the meeting and said he had had hard time voting in 1978, had voted for Tsongas and had even written to Brooke explaining his vote for Tsongas, because he felt so torn and that Paul had done a great job in answering all his letters--very complimentary--and ended by asking "what can we do to help you." Paul said "I thank you for your comments, but I'm not sure I agree with everything you said. The other day Howard Metzenbaum had a party. Nikki and I went, and Ed Brooke was there with his new wife. As we stood

there together, he looked just great, rested, relaxed with an open shirt, looking better than I've ever seen him. And there I was, rushed and haggard with bags under my eyes. I'm sure if anyone who didn't know was asked 'which one of those men was the electee' they'd have pointed to him and not to me! (laughter) So I'm not sure who got the better of it. But I appreciate what you say."

He was a little uncomfortable with the comment and turned it into a self-deprecating comment. It was a John Kennedy maneuver. But I see it as protecting an area of vulnerability. It was an intellectual reply but not a warm one.

What he does talk warmly about are his children. And that probably is where he does display vulnerability. He made them both kiss him before he left. Which they did a couple of times. Katrina wouldn't. He said "I'm not going to leave till you give me a kiss." She wouldn't--he got to the car and she came running. Ashley hoisted her up to the window and she gave him a big kiss. "I feel much better now," Paul said to her. And with another round of kisses we were off. In the town meeting, he talked a lot about "hugging" our children, etc. There is real feeling directed toward them.

The other subject we talked about on the way in was his ADA speech--moving from the Nyan article. He said it had gotten more publicity than anything else he had done. I asked him if Nyans idea that Chrysler was a metamorphosis was right.

"Yes, it was the first time I had had to take the heat from my natural constituency."

The rest of what he said became jumbled. But what he said was that on several issues he seemed to be going with his head rather than with his old inclinations and he was beginning to think through "a new philosophy"--I don't know what you call it." He's going to write it all down and get it published. He sees the Democrats as not offering an appropriate alternative

to the conservative drift. "I'm onto something" he said. Again, on way home (before we got Reagan on the radio), he said he wanted to write it down and publish it. The issues that have coalesced to bring him to this point are Chrysler, nuclear power and the gas tax. Said he debated the gas tax with Jim Shannon. (He was one of 10 Senators to support the gas tax.) They are all cases where his old instincts (and his constituency) don't provide answers that face up to the long run problems. Part of what he's doing is thinking less short run and more long run. Another part is that he is trying to look at the world the way it is. Talks about "a cold eye" or "That's the way it is" and uses "Darwinian" and "survival" and "natural selection" a lot in his speech. It's a gloomy picture he paints mostly--with some humor--both self-deprecating on the personal side and grim on the substantive side.

MX missile description ^{draws} ~~does~~ laughs when he told of rejected plan to keep missiles in the air. "TWA comes into Logan, Delta comes into Logan, the MX Missile comes into Logan. The TWA leaves, Delta leaves, the MX missile leaves. If you think the people of East Boston are upset with airport problems now, just wait!" (laughter)

There is a cool realism about Paul - part of it comes from looking coolly at Massachusetts. In the resource rich parts of the country there is more of a boom town mood.

"No geologist will tell you that the oil supply is infinite."

From Interview before the Town Meeting.

"My speech to the ADA got the most attention of anything I've done. There was an incredible reaction, mostly positive. I knocked it off in two to three hours. Of course, I knew what I wanted to say. Compare that to the incredible amount of time put in by 45 people--my whole staff in one way or another--into the Mass. Plan (for energy). It has managed to penetrate to the energy sensitive

✓ people. The nuclear component caused some alarm. But in terms of having the effect of turning the corner, it hasn't happened. I hand it out at town meetings. We've sent it to all the selectmen and other ~~op~~pinion leaders. But there is no crisis, there's a surplus of gasoline, and in that situation, there's no constituency. My argument is that getting ready, having a blueprint, is what's important. It's disappointing... The reaction is Gee, very comprehensive, very well done and yawn---a combination of the three. I took copies to my commencement speeches. I made my speeches on energy, so that if they got into that mind set, they would wade through the report.... It's remarkably nonideological. It says, "this is the world as I see it. You may like it or not like it. But it won't go away. It's similar to the way I approached the Chrysler situation and the gasoline tax."

! ✓ What he said was the problem with the Mass plan. "We didn't prioritize. We just presented a mass of material. If I did it again, I would have been more of an editor."

He said the result was that since he posed the nuclear-coal option, people have become much more sensitive to the problems of coal. "I've gotten people to think in terms of nuclear vs. coal."

✓ "Nuclear is a sensitive issue. I've been known as an environmentalist; so in most people's minds, it didn't click. Some thought it was a betrayal. With those we sent them a copy of the plan. Many of them said they saw it in a different light."

✓ He's aware of "the constituency" problem. He's a kind of cool-eyed preacher and lecturer, trying to bring his constituency along. In the meeting, "When I first started talking about these problems--when I was a congressman--I spent most of my town meetings debating whether there was an energy crisis. We've passed that point now." But he said at some point that

50% still don't think there is an energy crisis. Not in Mass--where consciousness is certainly raised. But he still sees no constituency for the Mass plan and he's trying to create one. "We have no consensus."

"The problem lies in convincing people of the urgency. Once you do that the problem is solved. Until you get the constituency convinced, nothing will happen.

✓ People may not enjoy my commencement speeches, but they've been told what the solution is. Once people see the crisis, they'll ask 'what can I do.' Then you hand them the Mass Plan" a little too formulaic and pat--but there's the preacher there. "Look at the gas tax. There were 10 of us who voted for it. That's where it is."

✓ "I'm increasingly dispossessed of the notion that government can do anything effectively. You can't take government regulation away. You can't find anyone in favor of no regulation. Ask someone about zoning if you don't believe me. People are motivated by self interest. You can't regulate a mass movement or appeal to patriotism to create a mass movement. You have to appeal to their self interest. A solar bank is more appealing to an individual because it is in his self interest. The large enterprises, you have to regulate."

✓ Re Seabrook. "My attitude is one of benign neglect. There are 5 major estuaries along the NE Coast. The utility planted Seabrook in the middle of one of them. To be supportive of Seabrook is to accept the notion that 'you can do any damn thing you want.' My argument is that the utilities have got to be sensitive to these things."

✓ He argues that energy supply and demand have to be brought into balance by reducing demand and emphasizing "renewables" (solar, wind, biomass, low head hydro) wants "aggressive campaign on renewables and conservation."

He'll rate utilities in "a report card" re their record on renewables and conservation.

✓ "No one argues that oil is not a finite resource. No one--except Ronald

Reagan--thinks you can produce your way out of the crisis."

✓ "Any cold eyed view of the situation indicates a crisis is coming and when it comes, we will be decimated by it. It's a Darwinian view of survival."

! ✓ "If you phase out nuclear, you commit yourself to coal and the Ayatollah's oil. You'd better know what those costs are: acid rain, carbon dioxide build-up, toxic waste caused by coal ash, black lung disease. Do you want acid rain? People aren't willing to do this. They deal with things in isolation. "If there's an oil shut off in the Persian Gulf and senior citizens come to this center freezing, how are you going to convince them that shutting down the nuclear option makes sense. You can't."

"Quality of life is not a fringe issue. It's a resource issue. In the long term, Massachusetts should preserve fishing and tourism. Drilling on the George's bank is a short term fix."

There's kind of autarchy argument here. Massachusetts by itself and not national. Paul's view be correct, but what is he going to ask Mass. to do for the country? Part of his answer is "lead the country." When the man asked him "what can we do" he said export Mass. people to rest of the country to give them the message. It was an interesting reply--because it highlights an essential parochialism about this view. He won't drill on George's bank, because it's not in Mass. long term interests. The special vulnerability of Mass. is an important ingredient in his developing thought. In NM or Ala. survival is not the issue--except in national defense sense.

He sees Reagan's appeal is fact that people feel "old programs are inappropriate to this age." RR fills the vacuum. But RR will not work in the real world. People rejecting old views and not given new views will go toward R. Is a need for people like to reassess the views of Democratic party."

✓ Re Chrysler. "When I came out with Richard Lugar and put together the compromise, I was criticized as anti-labor. It does you no good to have no labor sacrifice in it, because it means no company. You do the workers no favor whatsoever. The old assumptions are going to lead you down blindly and know one follows you. You get into a minority and out of power."

✓ The "pro nuclear," "anti-labor" kinds of charges are the ones he has to cope with and which come out of older assumption. "I'm still in the process of trying to get it straight in my own head. Political philosophy is nothing more than your view of mankind, your basic view of human nature. You match that with the current situation and you took the views and values you want to foster. If the work changes and you are stuck with the old assumptions, you move away from decision makers, who say "what you say makes no sense. The world has changed. Any athlete who does well in the 100 yard dash and who returns the next year without training, will lose. If you don't keep up, you get out of shape." That's the problem with "liberals," gotten lax and out of shape because of changed situation. Values don't change, but if world does, then some of your assumptions have to change.

✓ Asked what he would tell Cape leaders. "Think of what you would like the Cape to look like in 20 years and start moving toward that." Again the long view. He talked about mass transit in here.

He also spoke of "natural selection" occurring among communities on the Cape. Rt. 28 will become blighted. Others will prosper.

✓ He's really not a preacher in all this but a lecturer. He's not exhorting; he's telling it like it is. He does not involve images of the greatness of the country. The image is one of the survival of the country in a changed world.

On way home, he asked about Steward[†]. "How is he at home. Is he folksy."
"Yes, folksy and analytical."

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Said he was not going to go to convention, but that he got upset by Republican platform and decided to go. Interesting that it would be the platform that bothered him. In meeting he said that Reagan platform was "frightening to him." "If it's Carter against R. there's no doubt in my mind what I have to do."

I went into his house and watched Reagan for a while with Paul and his wife and then went home.

✓ An observation about town meetings. You tend to get questions in areas that interest you. It was clear that energy oriented people had been attracted to that meeting. Some were activists, some just interested. But Kennedy would not have gotten questions like that. One man asked him about health and people murmured approval of that question. Paul dispatched it in 2 minutes by saying he supported national health, it wasn't going to come, catastrophic was best you'll get, cost containment was defeated in House committee and that 21 people who voted vs. it received total of 83,000 in contributions from AMA. Very simplistic and not interesting to him.

More startling - not one question about inflation. Which dominated Stewart's Q and A periods.

His issue orientation and the Convention, "Are you going to the convention?"
"I wasn't going to go, but now I've decided to go."

"Why did you change your mind?"

"The Republican platform. It scares the hell out of me. The big problem was my family. I had decided I should go, but I didn't know how to break it to them. We were watching the Republicans one night and Nikki said, "Paul, you really ought to go to the Democratic convention." "I jumped at the suggestion. It worked out just fine. (smile)"