

Arlen Specter

November 24, 1981

I got jammed in for about 5 minutes, into a busy schedule.

4/1/81
Re career criminal bill. "I had a terrific meeting with Reagan. Ask Paul Michel for the details. I had a great meeting. Reagan's for it. I think we're going to get it passed--if we can solve the prisons problem."

He started talking about the all night session. "I have one observation that would interest you." After the all night session I'm convinced that anyone who is willing to keep talking can run the Senate. Levin was able to get the date of the resolution changed because he threatened to stand up and talk about it, on the grounds that if we didn't terminate the resolution in March, we would never vote on the B-1 bomber. Stevens caved in. Lawton Chiles, got up at 4:00 in the morning, wanted an exclusion from the 40% cut for law enforcement. Stevens asked him whether if he got that, he would support the bill. Chiles said he would be more favorably disposed toward the bill. Stevens said 'I know but will you vote for the bill'. Chiles said I know what you are asking. I don't know whether I'll support the bill or not; but if you don't support my amendment, I'm going to stand here all night and talk about it.' Stevens caved in and Chiles got his 4% exclusion. These all night sessions are fascinating. You should stay for the next one. Anyone who will threaten to talk all night can run the Senate. Fascinating."

I asked him if he took position early and firmly on AWACS. "I did. I thought about the issue early and decided on the basis that we shouldn't reward the Saudis, on two counts--their back support for the peace process and their gouging on oil. I remember Ted Stevens making a speech very early, in one of our conferences--he ~~essentially~~ voted for AWACS--that we ought not

to sell the planes to the Saudis unless they would agree to 'wheels up' whenever our foreign policy interests required it, even if it was against another Arab state. I found that very persuasive--our foreign policy.' As you know, or maybe you don't, (I said, 'No, I don't'), I constructed my position very carefully. On August 24th the President sent it up, and on the 26th I wrote him a letter telling him I was opposed to it and urging him to withdraw it in the interests of party unity. I sent copies to Haig, Friedersdorf and Allen. I got no reply. When we came back, I took the first available floor time on September 9th to speak against it. The administration left me alone at that time. "When the President had 43 of us to the White House, I went along and listened but I did not take part in the ^{discussion} decision... Allen talked to me about it when I bumped into him. And Buckley came over the day before the vote. But they knew I was firm."

"It was the most controversial vote of the session. It was the only one where every Senator was in his seat before the vote." At home, it was very controversial, some people were strongly opposed, some were strongly for. I think this was a vote which exemplifies Burke's ^{um} dictum that there are votes which involve the national interest and votes which involve the local interests. This was a matter every Senator had to decide for himself--regardless of any constituency pressure whether it be from the state constituency, the Jewish constituency or whatever."

"One other observation. I think this was a case where the executive wrongly intruded into the affairs of the legislature. Had Reagan never been in it, the vote would have been 70-30 against the sale. I heard Senator after Senator say, 'It's a bad deal, but...' The President used ^{has} persuasion and pressure, and I would put persuasion first. He's a very persuasive person."

It was a very quick and not productive meeting. I got the feeling he wanted to talk, but he jammed me in between a meeting of his "justice gang", six staffers from the subcommittee. They were there to lay out a schedule of things for him stretching through February. They had been given several hearings dates and they were trying to tell Arlen what they wanted these dates devoted to. They also discussed a bill he should co-sponsor with Clarence Brown on anti trust and oil companies. Arlen was distracted throughout, and seemed to give them very short shrift. We all waited in Sylvia's office for Arlen to call us in. When we got in, he was reading a news clip about the "tentative" appointment of a U.S. Attorney in Philly that was neither his nor Heinz choice. He was preoccupied with the issue of Centralia, the town that is burning underneath.

When we all came trooping in he made a couple of comments directly at me. "Does Fenno have the run of this office?" Sylvia said "Yes." And he said to the others "He's writing a book, the Education of Arlen Stockman." I said 'wait till I get my tape recorder going' and he said "Fenno, I want you to know that everything I ever said to you is on the record."

While the 6 justice subcommittees people sat there, he called in Bill Wilcox and dictated a statement to Dan McKenna on Centralia saying that contrary to what Secretary Watt had said, Centralia was not just a state responsibility. He said it was a federal responsibility. And he added "If it keeps burning it may burn up the whole state of Pennsylvania and New York." Then he said "Strike the last sentence since I'm not permitted any levity under _____ Law." Dan suggested he add that he's in touch with Watt. Arlen said "No, I'm going to shift gears on that. I'll write Watt a letter and do a press release on it...Bill said "good."

Then he turned to the "Justice gang" and asked "What have you got for me?" Bruce Cohen started in talking about an anti trust bill they wanted him to co-sponsor. It said something about mergers involving oil companies. He asked what the effect of the bill would be on US Steel and Marathon. A woman on the staff gave him the answer.

He then jumped up and got Dan and Bill Wilcox and said, let's go outside and finish this Centralia thing. So the three of them left the office.

*Thurmond
relates*

While they were gone the staff chatted. Paul said he was afraid that the Thurmond staff was terrified of Thurmond. Bruce said "He really runs that committee." Paul said "I know that's what scares me." Bruce said AS has been "reading history--about what Senators wore and how they acted" and that AS considers Thurmond "a throwback", like Eastland. Paul said "It's different. Under Eastland there were no subcommittees. He decided what has subcommittees but he happened. Thurmond/tries to control the committee by using hearing dates and witness expenses and things like that--all negative things."

Bruce said "Everything in the committee goes through him. But he treats subcommittees differently." Paul said "I know. What bothers me is that we're on the wrong end of the ["]scale. We're on the shortest leash of all."

AS returns. "Is the meeting over?" Sits down and tells Paul that some paper called Heinz a "liar" on the "U.S. Attorney" thing. "That should be interesting," says Arlen.

They go back to business. Bruce talks about a billion dollar bills (same anti trust one). Arlen says "I don't want to get involved in that until I have some more information. I need to have some people as(for that before I get involved. I don't want to get out front as a volunteer if no one cares about it. I'll champion their cause, but they have to act. Why don't you get in touch with _____ and _____ in Pa."

They discuss other topics Bruce wants to take up at hearings, drugs, prisons, rehabilitation, etc.

Arlen listens and then asks them to get more information on drugs before they proceed on the other hearings. It indicates his priority among a set of subjects the staff is thinking about.

In there somewhere, Paul indicates he thinks one part of Brown bill is good and one is not.

Bruce does the talking and the other staffers are silent. So, all told, 3 of them talked and 3 didn't. Arlen dismisses them abruptly to talk to me. I was a little embarrassed to have taken up their time. But he did it, really, not me.

They want him to think ahead, clearly. He is preoccupied with present and they can only stretch him to the near future.

He indicated, in sum, some interest in having the go-ahead and talk to people about the Brown Bill and/or the "Billion dollar" Bill. And he indicated an interest in drugs.

When I went to see Sylvia, she was on the phone with a military man who wanted to accompany Arlen on a flight to LA on Sunday. She was telling the guy that Arlen didn't want anyone to accompany him. "He likes to fly alone. He won't even let the staff fly with him. That's just the way he is. He's a loner. He likes it that way. He's very self sufficient." etc., etc.

She put the phone down. "He doesn't like people to wait on him. He's not like Javits who wanted an aide hovering over him all the time--'turn on the light,' 'bring me a pen', 'get me some coffee.' He's very self sufficient. And he treasures his privacy. Maybe in a few years he'll be different. I knew we were going to have trouble from the beginning. The military can't understand that he wants to be alone. 'But we're just there to assist him.' the colonel kept saying to me." I said "He's not a Senator yet." Sylvia

say he's not a fool yet - he
laughed and said 'One day I ran out into the hall to catch him and I

yelled 'Senator Senator'. He didn't turn around. Then I called 'Arlen

Arlen' and then he turned around. It was very funny. That was a couple of

months ago. Maybe he'd answer now. I'm not sure. In five years, he will."

*add
sm*