

BRUCE COHEN

December 3, 1982

I had tried a couple of times to get in touch with Bruce, but he's up to his ears in 2411 and 1688--mostly 2411, the Justice Assistance Act.

I saw him the last day and we had a brief talk. The upshot, for me, is that the two bills are getting linked slowly, "inexorably" in Bruce's words.

"It's fascinating. 1688 is the engine that is driving 2411. The only reason Arlen is interested in 2411 is because he knows the success of 1688 is tied to the success of 2411. Implicitly and inexorably, it is becoming clear that the fate of one bill is linked to the fate of the other. Arlen hasn't actually come right out and said it yet; but I think he would if you asked him. When I talk to Hughes' guy, I'll say to him 'You and I know what forces are at work here.' And he'll say to me, 'Don't worry, we're moving your bill.' Right now; it's one big mish mash."

I said tht I could have seen this linkage coming from the beginning. Hughes wants 2411 and doesn't care about 1688. Arlen is the reverse. It's a natural, especially where the two guys represent adjacent areas and have similar background.

Bruce spent most of time cursing and shaking his head at the justice department on 2411. He thinks they do not understand the legislative process. ("They don't understand its a process. Senator East may hear something tomorrow and change his position. That's a process.") and that they want to protect their bureaucratic structure or else they won't play.

"The Justice Dept. people say that if they can't have their structure, they won't support the bill. It's a completely bureaucratic mentality.

They want to aggrandize their own position. They don't understand the

Congress. They don't think there is a Congress. They think ~~they~~ are the Congress! They certainly don't understand the legislative process. When I have to compromise, they think there's some kind of conspiracy going on. I'm besieged from the right, the left, from above and below. And all I'm trying to do is preserve a little room to move so that we don't get grid lock. For a while, I thought the right wingers were going to get us--the Symms anti gun control amendment. He withdrew that. Now I think the Justice Department will get us. They don't understand that you ask for 100% and accept 80% or 70%. They want all 100%. And little bureaucrats way down at my level are saying things to me like 'The administration wants' or 'We will veto the bill.' Where do they come off talking and thinking like that? I'm working my head off trying to keep the Democrats in line. Justice won't be hurt by me, they'll be done in by the Democrats, who don't owe the administration zilch. They don't trust us. Relations are so bad. They tell me they know I have a final compromise already drafted and in my pocket. How could I possibly be that far ahead. I'm two steps behind trying to keep from being six steps behind."

He says admin. threw whole new Justice Assistance Act on the table instead of presenting amendments, as the committee asked them to do. They hoped that by tossing in a whole new bill at the last minute, the committee would be forced to take it. But Bruce etc. stayed up and redrafted the Department's proposals into amendments. "We drafted the amendments we had asked them to draft."

He says Arlen had "wild idea" to split Justice Appropriations off from State and Commerce to give him Justice. Would love to get a line into their money. Bruce says he'll be "ex officio" of the Justice Subcommittee. Wants to let 'em know he's there.