

Use AWACS
for media +
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MARK ANDREWS

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Public media
may

I met Bill Wright in the cafeteria and we talked a little.

"I know he was disappointed, and I was disappointed, that he didn't get a call from the President. Since he was one of the three or four who was pivotal, he thought the President would call--or Max Friedersdorf."

"Immediately after the vote he was interviewed by NBC and CBS, and I think by ABC. Then he did the McNeil Lehrer Report. When he got back to the office there were 15 calls from media outlets in the state asking him for a statement. He worked his way through about half of them till he got hoarse and then he stopped and went home. In the morning, he did a live interview on the Ted Turner network. On the day of the vote NBC had a camera crew that camped in the office all day; and ABC was around a good part of the day."

"He cancelled a dinner engagement the night before the vote and he and Mary talked it out back and forth for two hours. I'm sure she was a big influence. He does that when he's troubled about something and needs buttressing."

He said he knew how MA would vote but didn't have confirmation till the morning of the vote when he and MA ran into the guy Fred(?) Läscher who had been assigned by the Jewish Lobby to work with (on?) him. "The conduit from the Jewish lobby the guy who also had been ^{assigned} ~~assumed~~ to work with us during the campaign. We got a fairly large sum of money from Jewish groups, although some of it is pretty hard to trace." Anyhow, Bill says "I felt sorry for Mark, having to tell this guy, no, when it meant so much to him. They had actually become pretty good friends."

I talked with Mark.

"The whole AWACS drill is an indicator of how the Senate works. There was no groundswell and no bandwagon. Each one of us--and we talked about

There are some
names when the
Senate works "the
old the Senate works"
high public, high drama,
focus on the
...the Senate

it a little bit with Bill Cohen, Slade Gorton and I--each one of us agonized over it and gradually came to our own decision on the thing. (There was very little peer conversation on the thing. said later) For one of the issues changed from being just another sale to a question of the President's ability to conduct foreign policy. There was no arm twisting as far as I was concerned. I had a very pleasant conversation with the President. I told him we were used to horse trading in North Dakota but that he had traded a horse for a rabbit. He smiled and said he guessed so but we were stuck with it. Then we talked about his trip to *Concun*, his talks with the Saudis, his talk with others. At the end I said "Mr. President, you've spent more than the allotted time with me and I've enjoyed it. I wish I could say I'm with you, but I can't. All I can say is that I'll keep thinking about it!" *? The way we are - really* Those guys are capable of that. But they didn't do it with me and I know they didn't do it with Bill Cohen or Gorton. Actually what had more influence on me that my talk with the President was the story the next day concerning the garrisoning of Soviet troops in 21 Polish towns. This could be a Bay of Pigs for us. The President has got to have credibility in foreign policy. The whole issue changed in the last week or ten days. The media began to play it up as a question involving the President's ability to conduct foreign policy. No one thing brought me to that conclusion. It was something I felt changing gradually. On Tuesday night I sat down with May who is, as you know, the political advisor in the family. We made a checklist zip zip zip on one side, zip zip zip on the other side. She asked me 'Well, what do you think it adds up to.' And I said 'It looks like I ought to support the President.' She said 'I've been wondering why it took you so long to reach that conclusion. And she knew that it was not a good political vote. Then I called Bob Packwood and told him of my decision. He said he was

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disappointed, but that he understood. He thanked me and said he was surprised that I would call him. I said I thought I owed him that because he had been counting on me. I didn't call Howard Baker or the White House.

"On the day of the vote NBC followed me around all day. After the vote, we kept a phone line open for a call from the President--but no call. (I said "Shame on him") and Mark shrugged and continued. "To tell the truth I wasn't really expecting a call because I didn't feel I did it for him. I did it for the institution. And I would have cast the same vote for a Democratic President."

"The national media treated me fine. They did a job on Roger Jepsen, but not me. They didn't know me from Adams off-ox--even though I've been down here for twenty years. A congressman from North Dakota isn't very newsworthy from a national point of view. The state media were very good to me. With them I have an established reputation as someone who is independent, does as he god damn pleases and can't be pushed around. That helps. It gives you room to cast a vote like this without people saying that you've been had. It's not easy to climb down from your position and take another one, in the full glare of national publicity. But the state media treated me like I knew what I was doing."

Reaction at home. "I went to a football game and all the people who came up said they liked my vote. At the dinner, it was the same. The main reaction was 'we say you on the McNeil Lehrer Report. We saw you on the news national/broadcast.' It's the first time we've ever seen a North Dakota Senator on national television."

I went to the 50th wedding anniversary of the most prominent Jewish couple in North Dakota. Even these people came up and said they approved of my vote. The others who came up said they understood it."

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Did fact of being pivotal make a difference. "Looking at it on reflection, I suppose it should have, with the media. It's pretty hard for a Senator from North Dakota to get attention. And when people see you on the national media, they figure you must be effective. That's what's happened. So I suppose I should have been angling for publicity. But I wasn't. I was working my way toward doing what's right."

He said the letter from the President "just gave some senators an excuse. Gorton and Quayle think it helped. But I got far more reassurance from the fact that the plans won't be sold for 5 years. That's a long time in the Middle East. We've got fighter planes sitting on the tarmac because of the way Libya has performed."

"I've seen bandwagon votes in the Senate--on the budget and taxes. But this was not. There was very little peer to peer conversation."

I heard him talk to Alan Boyd to get Roth not to put in an amendment asking for another stop for a train in Delaware because it would open up things on the floore.

"We've got a good agreement to have only 2 hours of debate. But the transportation bill is like a piece of meat hanging out there and the longer it's there the ^{more in it} better it looks." (I doubt that metaphor!) Anyway, he asked Boyd to "fill him full of bullshit...and lay some magic words so he will think he's being listened to and that he won't have to offer his amendment..." (And) get me on the arguments here by morning so that if I have to play hard ball on the floor I can do it." But he wants to avoid that.

I told him I watched McNeil-Lehrer. "How did it go. I didn't prepare for it. I knew Tuesday I was going to do it, but I walked in and saw John Glenn with all his notes in front of him. I said to myself, "Shit what are you doing here playing with the big boys."

Marge said they got 400 phone calls on day of vote. "It was the craziest day yet--400 phone calls. And from all over the country as well as the state. The ones from the state were in favor of the sale, the ones from out of state were against it."