

Bill Cohen

May 23, 1979

"It hasn't changed much. I like it."

"Armed Services dominates my time. I'm going over now to put in an amendment on the MX to try to force them to make a decision. The hawks won't like it and the doves won't like it for another reason. They don't want to vote for it because they ~~don't~~ want to have to vote on it before the SALT treaty. So I'm having some fun rattling cages and learning. I'm still learning acroynyms and missile system. Those missiles in the mock-up over on the ^{shelf} ~~staff~~ ^(USA) are symbolic of where my time goes. ^{Those gray missiles are the bad guys. (Russian)} The white missiles are the good guys. [^] But I don't know anything yet."

"The volume of requests we ~~get~~ is overwhelming. I'm being very arbitrary about it cutting out almost everything except where I'm doing someone a personal favor. I'll ^{stop} ~~skip~~ by the Capitol Hill club for Guy Vander Jagt but I do very little of that. It's gotten to the point where the regrets are more numerous than acceptances. Here's a card that tells me what I regretted today (Two pages of regrets.) Look at what I was invited to and regretted this evening. (National Pharmaceutical Alliance, American Optometric Association, Congressional Round table on World Food and Population, ^{Election} ~~Stillson~~ Night in Canada at the Canadian Embassy.) They just keep pouring in. I got ^{on} the plane coming back to Washington and I met a guy who said "Are you coming to our luncheon?" "I said, "I'll be in Washington." He said "Our luncheon will be in Washington, at the Hyatt. That's right around the corner." I said "I have to stay close to the Senate because we have votes." He said "But it's just around the corner." I'm not going down to sit at some luncheon--it was the Public Radio Broadcasters--just to make some guy feel good. I don't do any of that--unless they are all from Maine. Maybe when Diane goes back to

Maine I'll accept some of these just to get fed. I'll get sick of TV dinners. The armed services people would be in here all the time if I let them. They want to send every Lieutenant General and Colonel over here to talk to me. I close the door and keep them all out. I like it that way. I'm being very arbitrary--out, out. I never had any problem with invitations in the House. There weren't that many. Here, it's like a huge wave that comes crashing in on you."

Shortly thereafter the phone rang and he said no thank you to someone. "Secretary Brown wants me and Diane to go to the ballet with him in the President's box. No way. Impossible. Diane likes the ballet; but I'm not going to do it."

Then he put his T-shirt in his brief case and said he was going to work out later. I asked him if he had found the Senate gym. "I sure have. They have a new piece of equipment--a small universal unit. And they're getting more people over there than ever before. Last night I had five of them lined up showing them how to do the exercises without hurting themselves. It's been great." And I added that it has made things "bearable" and he said yes.

"I never go over to the House. It seems a world away and yet it's just down the corridor. Yesterday I did go over--to a meeting with Bob Strauss--and on the way back I dropped into the House. I asked the guys where I went to get on television! It's not that I deign the House or have been lifted to a lofty--it's just that there isn't any time. I'm completely absorbed over here. This damn card keeps me busy." He pulled out the card and started to talk about the invitations.

He said Tuesday he went to policy committee and Wednesday to the Wednesday group. "I always go to those. It gives me a chance to meet the guys and hear about what's going on in their committees."

On expertise, he said he couldn't trust any of the military, but that the staff was his primary source of information. Good staff. "I play it straight with them and they play it straight with me."

He's less than enthusiastic about draft and he says "All the flakey groups are with me, but for different reasons--the Women's League for Peace, the Quakers. I don't see them or talk to them--but I get associated with them."

Re SALT "I'm neutral but I'm not very impressed with it. There will have to be some changes made. That's what I'm trying to do with my amendment on the MX missile--get ^{things moving} ~~this~~ through."

In some connection, I don't know what, he said "In US News the other day I was quoted on SALT. It sounded like I had given them an interview. But they had taken an excerpt from an article I wrote. They made it read like an interview. So I have to be very cautious about what I say." Tom Bright said US News had a camera ^{crew} ~~view~~ in committee shooting all morning for one picture in there.

Cindy said that's in House ^{He B.11's} personal secretary and appointments secretary ^{were} ~~are~~ same person. In Senate you need two people to do the job--because of the invitations. Pryor has only one person.-- *melinda does both.*

Tom Bright - Cohen's Press SecretaryMay 23

"It's slow over here. Nothing is happening. It's hard for a press secretary Maybe that's post-campaign letdown. But there's an institutional, structural difference. The Senate is supposed to take the long view, the constitutional view of things. And they do. There is not the urgency over here that there is in the House. In the House, we were always up to something. There's much less of a temptation to take a cheap political shot over here. All kinds of people want to know what the Senator thinks--on all kinds of subjects he never was asked to comment on before. In the House, you could stand up on a chair and shout and no one would listen." The sense was that in the House you gasp for air.

He talked about the relation of staff to member. And he saw it as compensatory where the member is weak. They had 5 LA's in the House. "Our office was set up like a Senate office in the House--except for the support people." He sees Bill as "not very interested in detail. He wants people to come to him when it's time to do something and tell him what to do. He doesn't learn the standing rules of the Senate. They just don't interest him. There are other things he'd rather be doing. But he's a very quick study. So if you have specialists in various areas who know what they are doing and can give him things to do, he'll go from one thing to the other, boom, boom, boom--Henry Hyde, over in the House, had been speaker of the Illinois legislature. He had no LA's. He was used to doing it all himself and he knew what he wanted to do legislatively."

At another point he said "The Senate is a legislative assistant's paradise. The Senators are in so many subcommittees you need lots of Legislative Assistants to keep them from looking like idiots. And the Senate exists to keep the Senators from looking like idiots."

So staff, 10 in district, 5 district offices, 11 came from House staff
(all of 'em) take on your five fin campaign.

5 people in Maine Room (all projects) ^{very similar to Tsongas} - all casework done in
the district. Cohen has 2 people on Government Affairs and 2 people on Indian
Affairs.