

Pete Domenici

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I went to PD's office and spied Angela through the door. They were waiting for the Secretary of Defense to come in for a talk with PD--and the newsmen were all around. They had his room set up for TV. As we waited for PD, Weinberger, and his entourage plus the media to come in, Angela said.

"Professor, things--have--changed! The Senator has gone from a smart, inexperienced, unknown Senator into the center of things. You can tell, I'm sure, by reading the papers. And he has risen to the occasion. When he first took over the Budget Committee, we all wondered a little bit how he would handle it. But he has done beautifully. The first day Stockman appeared before the Committee, he said to him "You run the office of Management and Budget and I'll run the Budget Committee. That was just what we wanted to hear. He's been in charge ever since. But he has done it in the nicest possible way."

I talked to Lou Gallegos for a long time--or, rather he talked to me. He's a thoughtful, concerned, nice, forward looking person. I think he likes to educate me a little--and I need it. Example: his discussion of the sense that immigrants in the Southwest see the whole area of Southwestern US and Northern Mexico as one cultural entity. "They feel they have a right to be there." Or "They follow the path of least resistance and go where they can assimilate easily." He talked about corruption in immigration service.

Anyhow, he seemed to cotton to my two-pronged idea of a project. And they clearly think AEI is a good place. He said he thought Pete should think through the 1981 events and we speculated as to whether I might be the vehicle for him to talk through his role in 1981--as a stage on which we can track something in 1982. He seemed willing to help, although it's not easy to explain to them just what it is that I'm doing.

He started by saying that all the people who were "hand-wringing" about

the poor and disadvantaged did not understand that "a revolution--if you want to gradiose about it" has occurred in the direction of government through the use of the budget process. He complained that people only saw "cuts" i.e., "cut has become almost a code word", when what was really happening was a "refederalization of the government." He sees the effect of the cuts very much as one in which states and localities are being given more responsibility. (He worried later about block grants as giving the local leaders in Northern N.M. a free hand to continue their "vicious system of patronage," "of distributing benefits without 40 hours of work" and spoke of speech PD gave in Northern NM re need for new local leadership, i.e., "You love the poor so much you want to keep them poor.") His lament was very much a lament over the terms of the debate.

Later, he talked about PD's faith in economic development and jobs. "He understands poverty. He has an emotional feeling about it. He hates it so that he wants to take people's poverty away from them. That's why he is so in favor of economic development, of ways that will get people off welfare and into jobs and get them out of their poverty." He says Helen Dewar's article, where she mentioned PD's acceptance of development grants as a glimmer of a perception of what PD is all about. "If you get him off to one side he's the biggest bleeding heart you ever saw; but he doesn't think that the old welfare programs are the right way to help the poor."

"I grew up on a ranch and so I tend to think in that metaphor. For Pete, the grass always looks greener in the other pasture. He has great enthusiasms and they change. So you will have to catch one of those enthusiasms while you are here."

"Every member of Congress, especially a United States Senator wants to make
be
his mark. He wants to/remembered for something he did. Clinton Anderson made

his mark, Joe Montoya did with his porkbarrelling. Bronson Cutting did in certain ways, Mecham for the conniving he did to become Senator. Pete is not likely to make his mark by engineering budget cuts. Whether or not he will make it because of the refederalization of the government remains to be seen. But I think--and this goes back to his days on the Albuquerque City Council--that he has always had a driving desire to make his mark by bringing economic development to the state. That is not an easy thing for a United States Senator to do, because there so many competing forces at the state and local level, from the plethora of governments and groups that have a say in economic development."

His idea was that I could watch this effort in one of its forms. And he talked about a series of problems: need for water, ("the next great problem of the government"), indian jurisdiction over mineral wealth, disappearance of agricultural land, immigration policy, block grants. I think that's the order in which he discoursed about the various problems.

Lou is nice and open and not cynical and hard bitten. I have an idea that, coming in from the field--as he did--and not from refreshing Capitol Hill--he has a lack of cynicism. Though the last thing I would ever accuse Lou of is lack of realism. He's been around, but he's been around where real people have real problems not where Washington officials have political-ego problems. It's living with political problems that produces the hard bitten "Hill cynicism" I see here.