

BOB DOVE

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I asked him about Monday strategy - Republicans wanted to bring in a modification of the resolution. You can't modify a resolution once any action is taken on the resolution. So Republican had to prevent the Dems from even being in a position to order the yeas and nays (which constitutes action). If the Dems had ever gotten in such a position, then the original resolution with the 40B social security provision in it would have been open to Democratic amendments. And they would have had a political field day. So, the Republicans had a quorum call "The Republicans had to keep the quorum call going unless they got an agreement from the Democrats not to ask for the yeas and nays. There is nothing in the rules which says how long a quorum call must take. It can go as slowly as the majority leader wants. And that can be very very slowly. The Republicans were prepared to have it continue all night if necessary... It wasn't until late Tuesday night that the deal among the Republicians was finally completed, with phone calls."

On tabling - "When I first came hre, tabling was rarely used. It was considered an insult. It was deliberately offensive to the Senator who offered it. That's not true any more. To me there is no difference between killing a motion by tabling it or voting it down directly. But it is thought to be different in the way it is reported. The Democrats used it a lot and I don't think they were saved by the publicity they got because of it. Sometimes there are strategic reasons for tabling. You may want to shut off debate--which wasn't the case in this instance. Or you may want to table, because if you lose, you are still alive and can regroup for the final vote... It is still considered an offensive way to deal with a motion. Senators don't like to have it done to them. Every Senator wants a straight up or down vote on his motion."

He talked a little bit about the Sasser amendment. Said he wanted to table Jepsen which he did. But he said that motion helped Republicans more because it showed them where the votes were and gave them a chance to regroup for the next day. Why Sasser tabled Domenici the next day, he couldn't say. "Ask Sasser." But he did not dispute my 2 bites of the apple idea--which he suggested in the first place. He did say that "The Republicans thought the Sasser amendment was going to cause them to lose the whole resolution. They thought the dam would break, unemployment compounded pass, and the whole resolution would go down. Whatever they did to contain the damage, they were very successful." The way he spoke of that, it seemed as though Sasser was a pivotal point for Republicans.

"I was more involved with both sides on strategy, last week than I have been at any time since the Natural Gas Bill of 1977. That was high stakes poker out there."

Said he couldn't talk about it, but said that Monday conferences were key to putting it together. That a lot of people went along holding their noses. "It was amazing to me that only Weicker and Helms voted against the budget. A lot of Republicans went along holding their noses over that 116B deficit. That we passed the budget was due once again, to the skill of the majority leader. His job is to do just that, and he did it again this year... The majority leader has so little to give out that parochial interests usually win out. But here you had people willing to put parochial interests behind a view of the national interest as they saw it... It's like Dr. Johnson and the Dog. The wonder is that we passed any budget at all."

He said he planned to be out by 2:00 Friday because the Dems had their retreat.