

Budget Markup

November 10, 1981

Hollings - "How can I get worried if the President isn't worried?"
Question is not are you lily or cons. Question is one we headed in the right direction?"

Go to lunch with Sid Brown, Bob Fulton, Pete Davis, Gail Forsler and Pierre. Also met Bill Stringer.

Two funny stories at lunch. One Henry Bellman goes from Connecticut hunt to City Bark - with hunting clothes, knife and jar of honey (gift from people he hunted with). He drops the honey in revolving door and his aide has to come downstairs and claim him--so he can go up and raise money from the Republican "fat cats."

Maurice Stans wants to go hunting from OBM - loads car with rifles and bags in trunk - driver is rearranging guns, gets fascinated, assembles one and aims it into the air - car is near West wing of White House. Guy is flat on his back with a man on each arm and each leg--just like that. And Stans spends afternoon trying to get him out of to get him to airport.

Then I went to Pete Davis' office to watch Reagan on TV.

Bob Fulton: "He didn't help us much."

Reagan wants to put Budget committee on hold - no new taxes, no cuts via reconciliation, no action or entitlements just lean on appropriations committee or on continuing resolution.

Impressions of meeting - I go through all my gyrations to get a 'good seat' with the staff; and Washington Post guy up in back of me says, after Presidential Press Conference, 'Jesus Christ, here we are stuck on the the most irrelevant story in Washington. They aren't going to do anything.' Is that worse than picking up the Washington Post on "Black Thursday" and finding the meetings you had wanted to go to had already been held.

My other main impression had to do with Moynihan and press. From the moment he walked in, he played unashamedly to the press. He went to the head of the table and mugged at the cameras while sticking his head next to Domenici's. He waved to the cameras over and over. Then he would turn around to the press behind him and repeat to the press what Domenici had said to him. "Dismay and consternation" are the key words." He was the only senator to bring in a pile of press releases. But when he spoke, he spoke in hyperbole saying that the administration's mistake "would take a decade to repair" and that they were the result of "calculated deception." He was featured on both CBS and ABC (nightly news that I saw making that statement. And he got his picture in the Post talking to Domenici before the meeting. He also got on CBS nightly news talking to Domenici before the meeting. He walked over during the long delay in the morning and talked to the reporters especially Martin Tolchon of the Times. "I cleared my desk so that I could give all my attention to the meeting and here we are waiting around... We should have a 2 year budget cycle. We can't do it in one year. This is the second budget resolution. It's supposed to be done by Sept. 15, and here it is Nov. 10th. etc., etc. He had cut out a newspaper article discussing the Senate diningroom and he brought it over to the press group to show them and to talk about it. He introduced Stockman article and keyed off of it. Budget committee staff had not even seen the article and it wasn't in news store. So Moynihan got a jump there PD--when Moynihan was mugging finally said "Go sit down" like teacher. He is finally attuned to the press--Tim Russart, after all, is both press guy and AA and he knows how to get press. I watched him on both ends--in the committee it was unabashed solicitation. But he made himself into good copy. And so few Senators were there that he could nab the spotlight.

But even Metzenbaum got on CBS and ABC news with a statement that country was "leaderless". And the budget group had thought that he was very "tepid" in his comments. CBS featured Moynihan, Gorton, Metzenbaum and Quayle (as only defenders of RR). Story was that the Budget Committee was frustrated with President's attitude. But real story probably was that Committee would go along with the President.