

Wednesday, March 24, 1954

In at 8 AM - Had bitter argument with Persons on Pres. up-coming comment on McCarthy at Press Conference - Jerry bitter at taking any stand on question of whether Joe should stay or not stay on committee, or whether have right to cross examine witnesses - contended it was matter for Senate and Pres should not "get into it" - Jerry so mad he didn't come to staff meeting but his argument taken up by Morgan, Martin, and Gruenther - C.D., Cutler and I, Murray, agreed Pres. was also moral leader and would get murdered if didn't express himself on question = I didn't argue too much because I knew how Pres felt = at Pres. briefing Cutler came in with Murray & I, also Persons, Morgan and Martin = Pres. stopped then dead in tracks by saying "Look, I know exactly what I am going to say. I'm going to say he can't sit as a judge and that the leadership can duck that responsibility. I've made up my mind you can't do business with Joe and to hell with any attempt to compromise" Other items at briefing included Indo-China; H-bomb on Jap fisherman; NATO commitments [sic]; Randall report; March as index for gov. emergency programs for unemployment; taxes, et al.

On way over to conference Pres laughed and said "The two Jerrys didn't look very happy this morning." When I ducked this, he said "I know, Jim. Listen. I'm not going to compromise my ideals and personal beliefs for a few stinking votes. To hell with it" - I told him "Mr. Pres. I'm proud of you."

Hill reaction good on press conference - also good reaction from Len Hall who was in at 9 to recommend Pres. praise House for their vote on tax bill - Pres. did

Senate cut excise taxes to 5% - lot of our boys went over to Dems. - yellow and couldn't stand heat like the House did - no guts in Senate leadership - How Halleck stands out.

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