

November 30, 1953 (BLACK MONDAY)



1. Staff meeting of White House staff called by Hagerty. Unfortunately neither Persons nor Adams present. Hagerty opened up by mentioning the recent Reston, Folliard and Harsch pieces each one of which contained anonymous attribution to White House personnel. He cautioned against talking, saying that it inevitably was embarrassing to the President, etc., etc. Incidentally, Hagerty was very low pitch and temperate about whole thing.

After moment of dead silence, I said that I had told Reston on the telephone the item he had in quotes, namely, that McCarthy had declared war on the President -- and that this gave me an opportunity to say some more on the subject.

I went into the matter completely, including going back to Campaign speech in Milwaukee when Marshall reference deleted. Warned them that this Three Little Monkeys act was not working and would not work, and that appeasing McCarthy in order to save his 7 votes for this year's legislative program was poor tactics, poor strategy, poor tactics, and poor arithmetic, and that unless the President stepped up to bat on this one soon, the Republicans would have neither a program, nor 1954, nor 1956.

Immediately Jerry Morgan, Homer Greunther, and to a lesser degree Jack Martin, jumped in on the opposite side. Only two to speak up on my side were Willis and Harlow.

Also I made proposition that the President substitute television appearance Wednesday for his scheduled press conference and face up before the nation to this declaration of war. Was appalled to discover that it had been planned to cancel the press conference and have the President go to Bermuda having said nothing. Big rhubarb. Finally agreed to have press conference. The men have really separated out from the boys.

2. OCB special staff on exploitation of Wheaties.
3. Ted Streibert on various matters, including John Begg. Didn't get much of anywhere on Begg situation. Streibert apparently just doesn't like him, and has no confidence in him.
4. Seydoux brought in Senator Dulin and Deputy Faure. Both pro-EDC but both rather pessimistic and feeling that recent debate and phony vote of confidence had lost ground for EDC. Most emphatic that some new element had to be introduced, and they suggested British

participation through some form of mild general guaranty to the French.
They both denounced England's position roundly.



5. Lunch -- Flemming
6. Livingston Hartley -- on Atlantic Union.
7. Prexy meeting on Wheaties. Present -- the Dulles brothers, Wilson, Kyes, Radford, Strauss. Two agonizingly awful hours. Kyes read a 6-page memo as a substitute for the speech which was in effect his plan to budget defense on a three-year instead of a one-year basis. This was going to restore confidence at home and abroad and solve all problems

Wilson proposed doing nothing, since the Soviets were now ~~educating~~ beginning to educate their youth, and an educated youth would overthrow the Soviets.

Foster Dulles at his most judicial, and therefore straddling fence. Strauss considered himself merely atomic expert. Radford absolutely silent.

I carried fight as much as possible, but couldn't avoid certain words which Kyes, for instance, could take exception to, such as telling the President that the Kyes proposal was fascinating but had nothing to do with the matter at hand. Kyes overstepped himself by making a reference to somebody handing the President an umbrella if he offered in a speech to turn any fissionable material over to a United Nations pool.

Finally passed note to Allen Dulles saying I couldn't fight this alone, at which he got into the act with startling vehemence. Meeting broke up on note that President would re-read Wheaties that night.

Episode unhappy per se, but also in context of morning session, Joe Dodge's report on no firm hand on Defense budget, all the other undecided things swirling around Presidential head, make it look as though he actually did not understand what was going on and didn't care to do anything about it.

P.S. -- only moment of comic relief was when ZLewis Strauss' alarm wrist watch went off right in the middle of a Presidential statement .