

MINUTES OF THE TENTH MEETING OF THE JOINT REPUBLICAN
CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS CALLED FOR MARCH 29, 1961, AT
8:30 A.M. IN THE OFFICE OF THE HOUSE MINORITY LEADER,
CONGRESSMAN CHARLES A HALLECK

Members Present:

Representatives Halleck, Arends, Byrnes, Brown, Hoeven
Senators Morton, Dirksen, Bridges, Saltonstall, Kuchel

Also Present:

Bryce Harlow, Robert Humphreys, Mark Trice, Harry Brookshire,
Robert Allett

The Presiding Officer, Senator Thruston B. Morton, called the
meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

The agenda for the meeting, as previously agreed to by Senator
Dirksen and Congressman Halleck, is as follows:

Budget

Independent Agencies

Other Legislation

Recess Projects

Budget

Senator Dirksen read his statement for today's Press Conference
on the President's Special Message on the Defense Budget submitted to
Congress this week. After a general discussion of the Defense Budget
message Senator Dirksen's statement was approved. A copy of the
statement is included at the end of these minutes.

Senator Bridges labeled the President's Defense Budget as dishonest
and added it will give the President \$3 billion to "play around with
in 1962".

During the discussion of the President's Special Message on the
Defense Budget, Senator Bridges referred to the crisis in Laos and
said the Republicans should let the country know "the U.S. will not

go it alone" in Laos. While the U.S. should work very closely with SEATO powers any suggested action by SEATO in Laos should be cooperative action.

There was general discussion regarding the 14 Power Conference on Laos. Mr. Harlow said the 14 Power Conference will include Red China. The U.S. has for years opposed this 14 Power Conference, Harlow stated, and if we would participate with Red China it would be capitulation to the U.S.S.R. Senator Morton added the U.S. has never participated in a high level conference with Red China and at "the 1954 Geneva Accord", which included Red China, the U.S. did not participate. Senator Dirksen stated and Senator Bridges concurred President Kennedy should not have met with Prime Minister Macmillan at Palm Beach. Instead, the meeting should have been held at the White House and the President should have insisted upon it being held in Washington.

It was suggested Senator Bridges and other Republican Senators should comment on the Floor today on the Laos crisis, pointing out the danger of the U.S. agreeing to a cease fire in Laos on Communist terms; that undoubtedly for the Communists to agree to a cease fire they would demand Communists be included in any free neutral government set up for Laos.

Senator Bridges said this is typical procedure for the Communists - it was followed in Czechoslovakia, and attempted in China. In Czechoslovakia, after they got their foot in the door the Communists took over the government. Senator Bridges added, if there is a "cease fire" and a neutral government is to be formed in Laos, the U.S. should stand pat against avowed Communists being named as members of the ruling Cabinet.

Senator Saltonstall added everyone wants "cease fire" but the U.S. should not agree on "any conditions" set down by the 14 Power Conference or the 3 Power Commission headed by Nehru if it means our agreeing to naming avowed Communists in the new Laotian government.

Independent Agencies

Congressman Halleck read his statement for today's Press Conference on the President's recent Directive, Letter or Memorandum to Independent Agencies, instructing them to keep the President advised "on important policies and administrative actions taken or proposed" and of his particular interest in having "major problems of the agencies flagged for his attention".

After general discussion of the subject, Congressman Halleck's statement was approved and is included at the close of these minutes.

Other Legislation - Depressed Areas

There was limited discussion of Kennedy's Depressed Areas legislation pending in the House. It was generally agreed by the House Members present there was little chance of passing the more moderate Widnall Substitute Depressed Areas bill because the Administration bill had been toned down by including some of the Eisenhower Depressed Areas recommendations which the last Congress refused to pass.

Recess Projects

Senator Morton asked about meeting next week and after some discussion it was agreed, due to the House being in recess, there not be a meeting and that the next definite meeting would be April 13. There was some discussion between Senator Dirksen, Congressman Halleck and Mr. Humphreys, but no general agreement, that if something of sufficient importance happened prior to April 6

and enough Members are in Washington for approving, a Joint Leadership statement might be issued.

Mr. Humphreys suggested that during Recess possibly a statement could be worked up opposing the President's Farm bill which all Republican Members of Congress - both Senators and Congressmen - could sign. Congressman Hoeven said such a statement should contain "some proposal as a solution to the farm problem".

Mr. Humphreys asked the Members to advise their office staff of telephone numbers where he could reach them during recess in the event a statement might be issued on the President's Farm bill or some other subject.

Mr. Humphreys also suggested starting some formalization of these meetings so as to establish better identity of the Joint Republican Congressional Leadership group. He suggested stationery for correspondence, as well as news releases.

Congressman Halleck suggested having press photographers take pictures of the group some time in April when the meetings are held in Senator Dirksen's office. Congressman Brown said the newspapers would appreciate having a picture of the group because the press reports had generated sufficient interest throughout the country that the first group picture would be on file in every newspaper's "picture morgue" for future use.

Mr. Harlow reported that in a recent phone conversation with President Eisenhower in California the President was agreeable to a meeting with the Leadership group in Gettysburg when he returns in April.

The Presiding Officer adjourned the meeting at 9:45 a.m.


Acting Secretary

Approved by the
Presiding Officer