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Foreign Relations Committee, 1955-1973

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## Interview #5

### Fulbright Breaks with Johnson

(Wednesday, October 19, 1983)

Interviewed by Donald A. Ritchie

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**RITCHIE:** When you left last week you said that you had gotten a call from someone in the Soviet Embassy who wanted to speak with you, although you didn't know about what. I've been curious all week as to what the conversation was about.

**MARCY:** Well, it reminds me of a practice which we developed in the Foreign Relations Committee. That was that when any member of the Committee staff met with an Eastern European diplomat, we made it a practice to send a note to the Department of State, never telling them of the substance of the conversation, but always letting the Department of State know that we were meeting with this individual. At one time, I was having a one-on-one conversation with Secretary of State Rusk, and it got a little brisk. Secretary Rusk said, "I want to say one thing to you, Carl. We know every time that you or people on your staff meet with people in the Soviet bloc." I asked why that should surprise him. And he said, "We have our special sources of information." I said, "Well, I suppose your special sources of information are your own intelligence people, because every time we do have a meeting with an Eastern bloc person, our staff reports that meeting to the Department of State. Not what we talked about, but just so the Department will know when we were meeting with

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representatives of the other side." So this last week, when much to my surprise I got a call from a man named Vladimir Zolotuhkin, who handles cultural and educational affairs for the Soviet Embassy, asking if he could chat with me for an hour or so, I called the Department of State and told them that I had this invitation. I wanted them to know that, and also whether the Department had any idea as to what might be up. The desk man I talked with had no advice, but said, "It is rather surprising. Ever since the KAL [Korean Air Lines] incident the embassy people have been keeping a low profile, and the fact that they have called you and want to talk may indicate they are now opening up a little bit." I went to the embassy and we talked for an hour and a half or so. There wasn't any particular message. It was a friendly chat. However, when Zolotuhkin got to talking about President Reagan's reaction to the incident, he said, "Your government is making us look like beasts. And when your government talks about Soviet citizens and the Soviet government as if we were beasts, how can we

communicate with a society that feels that way about us?" I think that indicated current sensitivity as well as the long history of Russia and now of the Soviet Union. They have pride. They want to be a part of the world. And for us now to treat them as we did during the time of Stalin, or even earlier periods of time, indicated to me that rhetoric hurts them a great deal more than we think it might. Well, shall we go to your questions?

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**RITCHIE:** I appreciate hearing that. I found that very interesting. But to flip back in time, we ended last week talking about the Kennedy administration, which came to an abrupt end in November 1963, with Lyndon Johnson becoming president. I was wondering what your first thoughts were when you learned of the assassination and that Johnson was president, and how you thought that might have affected American foreign policy.

**MARCY:** My wife and I were in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia at that time. We were beneficiaries of a joint fellowship which had been given to us by an organization called the Institute of Current World Affairs--a small foundation, but very generous as they had awarded Mildred and me a year's fellowship. We rented our house and made arrangements to have our children taken care of while we were away. We spent that year in some twelve countries of particular significance to the United States in the general area of foreign policy. We thought twelve countries would let us stay roughly a month in each country--longer than the casual visitor but not so long as to be taken in too much by local attitudes. So for that year we wrote monthly newsletters, which went to the Institute. Mildred was interested in the role of women in development, and that year gave her a wonderful opportunity to visit with women in development in the countries, and with officials of the United States Information Agency, with whom she had particular rapport because she was on a leave of absence from USIA at that time.

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President Kennedy's assassination came as a great shock. I remember seeing a headline in a newspaper, as we were driving towards Kuala Lumpur from Singapore, which read "Kennedy Shot." We talked about it, and thought, well Kennedy must be some local individual. So it was not until we got to Kuala Lumpur that night that we learned of his death. So any reactions that I have to the assassination of President Kennedy are reactions which were built upon what I saw and felt during the following year, looking at the United States from abroad. I will not be very helpful to you in describing what the attitudes may have been on the Hill.

**RITCHIE:** I was thinking about your own attitudes. You knew Lyndon Johnson when he was vice president, and even more so when he was senator, and now he

was president. Did you have any sense of apprehension about his presidency, especially in foreign policy?

**MARCY:** No, I didn't. What doubts I may have had were quickly resolved because after I got back in September of 1964 Lyndon Johnson was very close to Senator Fulbright, and Betty Fulbright. He continued to refer to Senator Fulbright as "my Secretary of State," a carry-over from the time when Lyndon was majority leader and Senator Fulbright was chairman of the Committee. President Johnson did look to Senator Fulbright for guidance in the general area of foreign policy, and it continued for a period of time after Johnson was president.

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**RITCHIE:** Before we move on, I'm interested in that year you spent abroad. What was your view of the United States from abroad? Did you find that being out of the country for that period of time and looking at things from there gave you a different perspective?

**MARCY:** Yes, it did. It seemed that everywhere we went the people we talked with, usually in the foreign office, and leading publicists, looked at the United States as the place to which they would come with all of their problems. Any local problem: the United States will help us. It bothered me, because it seemed to me that many of the countries where they were having difficulties, were not looking for solutions within their own countries or within their own governments. They tended to look to the United States. I had not realized before how influential anything the United States did was in almost any country in the world.

**RITCHIE:** And that began to trouble you?

**MARCY:** It began to trouble me, yes, because I could see that it was not only a big financial burden on the United States, but it seemed to me there was a tendency for countries to look outside for solutions to internal problems. Here was the United States, big AID program, militarily strong, a place to look for help.

**RITCHIE:** So it wasn't necessarily what the United States was doing that bothered you, but that they were doing so much.

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**MARCY:** Not that the United States was doing too much, but that so much was expected of us. This was prior to being deeply involved in Vietnam. I didn't feel that there was any very strong reaction against the United States. I guess I had been influenced earlier by some books about the United States, denigrating Americans who were operating in other countries. But when I saw it from those countries' point of view, there may have been "Ugly Americans," but generally the feeling was that we're in trouble and the United States can help us.

**RITCHIE:** Do you feel that the perspectives you developed that year influenced your activities on the Committee when you came back?

**MARCY:** Well, Don, it would be hard to trace that. I guess I would have to say, I did not feel it at the time. Undoubtedly, it did have an influence on my attitudes.

**RITCHIE:** I was curious in the sense that it was in January of 1965, after you had returned, that Senator Fulbright announced that he was not going to floor manage the foreign aid bill, which was a big break for him.

**MARCY:** Yes. Well, I suppose that, looking back, perhaps one of the concepts that developed was that we were doing too much, the very thing that I have been describing. That may have influenced my thinking a bit. I don't recall any specific instances. It's hard to

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know whether I was more influenced by what I had seen and felt, or by the fact that Senator Fulbright had reached the same independent conclusion.

**RITCHIE:** Well, when you came back, did you sit down with Senator Fulbright and give him a briefing on your experiences, or had you been sending him things back periodically during the trip?

**MARCY:** No, I did not send him things periodically. I sent him the letters which Mildred and I had written, which would reflect some of these attitudes. But the foundation grant we had was very freewheeling. I had no very tight program. When I did come back, I wrote an article, the title of which was something like: "It Depends Upon Where One Sits." That was published in the *Saturday Review of Literature*. In going through some papers just a few weeks ago, I came across a letter from Mr. Justice [Warren] Burger, who was then on the Court of Appeals, in which he said he had read the article. He wrote a very nice letter commending it for being perceptive. He liked the article. I think that probably summarized the attitudes that I picked up or developed during that year.

**RITCHIE:** Unfortunately, you were away during the Gulf of Tonkin incident, which is one of the things I am particularly interested in, but I was wondering if when you came back you talked to people and picked up any impressions about it. The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution

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was certainly one of those turning points in foreign policy. Did you get any feedback from people you knew on the staff or on the Committee about the resolution?

**MARCY:** I recall quite distinctly at the time of the incident, and at the time the resolution was adopted, being appalled that the Senate had acted so quickly and so unanimously. I do remember when I came back, I talked with Pat [Holt], who was acting in my absence, and made this point to him. Pat said he was appalled, too. The Committee met on very short notice, held a very short meeting, as I recall, and with the exception of Wayne Morse, I think unanimously recommended approval of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. I'm trying to recall, there was some previous incident in which a resolution had been adopted after a very short consideration.

**RITCHIE:** It wasn't short, but the resolution I was thinking of in contrast was the Middle East Resolution of 1957, the Eisenhower Doctrine, that Senator Fulbright was quite opposed to, and didn't like the idea of giving a "blank check" to the administration. Many members of the Committee talked about the "blank check," and yet in 1964 they turned around and gave the president, in effect, a blank check.

**MARCY:** I think, Don, you've picked the right words to describe it. But I felt if the Senate was going to give the president a blank check they ought to consider it a little more than they

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had. Trying to recall, it's very likely that I did have in mind the earlier experience in the Middle East, and Senator Fulbright's attitude there. As you well know, subsequently, Senator Fulbright regretted that vote very much. I have talked with him on and off over the years and the main thing that has come through in those conversations with Senator Fulbright was that the election campaign was on, Barry Goldwater seemed to be making headway, and the stance that Lyndon Johnson was taking compared with the stance which it looked as though Goldwater was going to take, inclined Senator Fulbright to say, "We cannot have Goldwater for president," and to go along with Lyndon Johnson. Who was Goldwater's vice president? Was it General LeMay?

**RITCHIE:** William Miller. General LeMay ran with George Wallace in '68.

**MARCY:** That's right, that was later.

**RITCHIE:** Part of it, I suppose is that a lot of the fears that the Committee had in 1957 really were not met. Eisenhower didn't use the Middle East Resolution as a blank check. In fact, when they sent troops to Lebanon, the administration swore that it wasn't even using the Middle East Resolution, that it was just operating under the president's powers as commander-in-chief. So one might have assumed that President Johnson would have acted with the same restraint. There was some historical precedent for that.

**MARCY:** And, of course, at that time Senator Fulbright and President Johnson were very close.

**RITCHIE:** It has come out now that the administration actually had a resolution written out months in advance of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, for which they were looking for an opportunity to introduce, and this was the opportunity. This was apparently something that they didn't tell the members of the Committee, but would it have made any difference if they had told them? I assume that most of the members of the Committee were quite on the side of the president in terms of Vietnam policy, with one or two exceptions.

**MARCY:** Oh, I don't think it would have made any difference had they known that resolution was waiting to be introduced. You really have to remember the way the media treated the Gulf of Tonkin incident at the time. I remember, I was in Europe at the time, having seen the *Life* magazine pictures of the American destroyers and the headlines, "vicious attack on the high seas." You almost had to be a Wayne Morse or a fool--and I never thought Wayne Morse was a fool--to have voted against the Tonkin Resolution. I've always thought that Wayne must have had someone in the Pentagon who was raising doubts in his mind, but I have no way of knowing.

**RITCHIE:** That's interesting, because I once heard Senator Morse give a speech at the University of Hawaii, after he left the Senate, in which he said that he had heard from someone in the Pentagon, his

source, who called him the night before the hearing and said, "Ask to see the logs of the two ships that were involved." That was the only information that he gave him. And when Morse asked to see the logs, Robert McNamara said that those ships were in the Pacific, the assumption being that the logs were on the ships. Morse didn't follow up on that, but he said that later on he discovered the logs had been flown into the Pentagon and were there at the Pentagon even as McNamara was telling him they were still in the Pacific. In fact, the logs would have indicated that these were electronic surveillance ships and they were a cover for South Vietnamese attacks on North Vietnamese bases. So he had some foreboding, but actually his policies would have been opposed to that type of a resolution no matter what.

But it always puzzles me why the administration through 1964 and 1965 acted in basically such a secretive and double-dealing manner towards the members of the Committee and towards the Congress, when in fact it had overwhelming support for its policies, and I would imagine that almost all of the members thought the same way that Dean Rusk and Robert McNamara and Lyndon

Johnson thought about the role of the Soviet Union and the role of Communist China, that North Vietnam was really just a puppet and that this attack was a surrogate attack. Why is it that if there was a consensus, that Johnson didn't use it, and let the Congress in on the policy decisions and what was happening?

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**MARCY:** I don ' t know. Looking back it seems like it was a mistake, that he could have had much more support from Congress. But I suppose at the time that Johnson felt he was going with the tide in the country and the press. It wasn't until there began to be doubts about light at the end of the tunnel that the members of the Senate began to be skeptical.

**RITCHIE:** Do you think that Johnson, having been a manipulative majority leader, thought he could continue to manipulate the Senate? That he really didn't treat them in a collegial manner but in more of a dominating manner?

**MARCY:** Well, that's speculation, although it's consistent with a point which I think I made in one of our earlier interviews to the general affect that when the administration, the executive branch, is of the same party as the Congress, there is a tendency on the part of the administration not necessarily to be more secretive than usual, but to feel there is no need to keep in close touch with the Senate, because the Senate is Democratic. In this case the Democratic Senate was expected to go along. The executive is prone to believe that party discipline is as tight--they hope it is as tight--as it is in a parliamentary system. I think we have an example of that during this last Congress. Mr. Reagan early in his administration expected Senator [Howard] Baker and the Republicans to go along with whatever Mr. Reagan proposed, and they did. But taking

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the Senate for granted is not a very safe course for a president, even when he's dealing with members of his own party who are in a majority.

**RITCHIE:** Fulbright supported Johnson all through 1964, and pushed through the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. You returned later in '64.

**MARCY:** Yes, I think I got back in September or October of '64.

**RITCHIE:** When do you think that Senator Fulbright first began to have doubts about the wisdom of having supported the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution and having supported the Vietnam policy? When do you think that he began to question the Vietnam program?

**MARCY:** I think he began to question it at the end of '64 or early '65. As I mentioned in our last interview, sometime after I got back from my year off,

Senator Fulbright said to me, "This situation in Asia is such that I guess I had better begin to pay some attention to it. I have always been interested in Europe, and followed events there, I know very little about the Far East. See what you can do to pull together information about the Far East." And we did. We got from the Library of Congress and elsewhere a number of books, usually French books about Indochina, and sometime during that year, '65, it may have been later, we had several individuals come in

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and talk with Senator Fulbright at great length. Bernard Fall, for example, used to stop by the Committee every time he came back. Fulbright developed an admiration for Bernard Fall, thought he was reliable. There were some people who suggested that Fall was an agent for the French. I don't think there was anything to that. When Bernard Fall was killed in Vietnam, his wife, Dorothy asked Senator Fulbright to speak at the memorial services that were held here for Bernard. I remember Fulbright being rather surprised that she asked him to do that, and I think he was honored. During that period Fulbright, being a person who reads and always immersed himself deeply in any subject that he was interested in, probably knew more about the history of Indochina, and French involvement there, than did even Mr. Rusk who had been Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs at an earlier time. Certainly during that particular period, Senator Fulbright had more time to look at things from a perspective based on his study of the area, than did Secretary of State Rusk or the people who were involved in the day-to-day operations. In fact, I think that's perhaps a general governmental problem we have. As soon as a person becomes a policy official of the executive branch, he becomes so involved in making quick decisions on the basis of daily inputs that it's hard to find time to contemplate, to recall history, and to see where our policies are going with any kind of perspective.

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**RITCHIE:** Did you find that you were doing more reading about Vietnam and Asia as well?

**MARCY:** Well, I wish I could say yes. But the fact is that I was so involved in the day-to-day operations that there wasn't a great deal of time to research, and read such books as *The Street Without Joy*. I participated in the meetings with Bernard Fall, and I think [Walter] La Coutoure who visited us one time and we talked with him, and other with Vietnam experience. I sat in on the meetings, but when it came time to read, to study, I didn't have it.

**RITCHIE:** Do you think this reading and studying began to change Fulbright's perspective on Vietnam?



**MARCY:** I would have to say yes, but not very positively. Senator Fulbright is a sensitive person. I think he perceived early on that we were becoming involved in a civil war among peoples and societies with which we could not empathize. It's hard to know. He could have been influenced by the rising casualties. It could have been the break with Lyndon which came along at a subsequent time. He certainly was increasingly skeptical.

**RITCHIE:** I saw a memo in your files in which you questioned the domino theory at that time. That was interesting to me because the domino theory was one of the most powerful arguments that every administration, from Eisenhower on down, used for providing American

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aid to Vietnam: that if we allowed Vietnam to fall that it would set up a rippling effect across Asia. Yet both you and Senator Fulbright began to say that perhaps the domino theory was not a valid theory. I was wondering what it was that made you skeptical about it?

**MARCY:** It's hard for me to say. I do recall that Senator Fulbright at some point felt that there must be a better way. I believe it was the senator who suggested that we take a look at the Austrian model of neutrality, asking if it might be possible to look at Indochina and try to de-militarize it and keep it neutral as between the United States and the Soviet Union, or East and West. We did commission a study, which was done at Princeton by Professors Cyril Black and Richard Falk. It was designed to be a history of the concept of neutrality, and to see if the concept might be applicable in Asia. There was some difficulty in getting any scholars to look at neutrality in the Vietnam framework. There must be somewhere in my files some indication of other educational institutions to which I went trying to find somebody to do this job. We were authorized to pay for the research. I asked two or three places and they weren't interested. But Falk and Cy Black were interested, and they did the study. We hoped that it would have some impact on the administration, but so far as I know their study just disappeared. People were not interested. The general public was not interested in doing anything except keeping North Vietnam out of South Vietnam.

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**RITCHIE:** One of the points you made in that memo was that the assumption was that if Vietnam fell automatically other nations would fall, but that perhaps withdrawing American troops might make other nations around Vietnam more dependent upon their own military resources and in fact put more emphasis on self-sufficiency. You mentioned Japan and some of the other nations in Asia. In some respects that seems to tie in with aid, that other nations were becoming too dependent on the United States and needed to be more self-reliant.

**MARCY:** Well, I hope I was that perceptive, but I don't honestly recall the connection you're making. So many of these things go on in the mind it's hard in many instances to know where an idea comes from, that you don't necessarily make the linkage between an idea and an event. Or I don't anyway; a historian may--that's one of your great advantages!

**RITCHIE:** Historians worry that they're making too much of the links, you see. We're looking for the links, but sometimes the connections are more accidental. We don't have a good way of accounting for chance and accidents in history. We think everything should be purposeful. Again, here's a linkage question. Early in 1965 in a totally different sphere, the Dominican Republic revolution broke out and Johnson made some rather extreme statements about decapitations and people firing at the American ambassador, and things like that, and sent Marines into the Dominican Republic. That

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incident seems to have raised doubts in Fulbright's mind and in the Committee, first off about the Dominican Republic situation, but also about the truthfulness of what information it was getting out of the administration in general. Some linkage has been suggested between what happened in the Dominican Republic and what happened in Vietnam. Could you talk about this from your perspective on the Committee staff?

**MARCY:** I think that it was mostly Senator Fulbright who was most concerned about our intervention in the Dominican Republic. As you know, we had some extensive hearings on it, and after those hearings the senator made a very strong speech critical--highly critical--of President Johnson. It was during that summer that I think the administration began to worry a little bit about what Senator Fulbright's attitude was. He was a bit too independent for them. It was that summer also when Fulbright was still very close to Johnson. To what extent he may have talked with Johnson about the Dominican Republic, I don't know. Have I told before about Johnson asking Fulbright to go to Rio?

**RITCHIE:** No.

**MARCY:** Well, let me make this connection, diverting from Vietnam for a moment. I believe it was in August 1965 that Senator Fulbright called me on a Monday morning and asked how would I like to go to Rio the next weekend. I said, "Fine, what's up?" He said,

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"Well, Betty and I were having dinner last night with Lyndon and Lady Bird, and Lyndon said, 'Betty, how would you like to go to Rio next weekend?'" I recall he also said, "It's a wonderful place for you to go, Betty, because you can get jewels

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in Brazil at a very low price. It's a wonderful place to shop." All I can say about this is that this is in my mind, and it would be second or third hand, but I don't know how I could ever have gotten this idea had I not heard it from Senator Fulbright. And Lyndon said, "Take Air Force One." So the next weekend, we took Air Force One, and had a long weekend in Rio.

**RITCHIE:** There was no business attached to this trip?

**MARCY:** Well, yes. I think Lyndon felt that it was important for Senator Fulbright to talk with the Minister of Commerce. And we did, and we had a good briefing from the American ambassador and his staff.

**RITCHIE:** The four of you flew on Air Force One all by yourselves to Brazil?

**MARCY:** No. I remember when we got on Air Force One, Fulbright was quite surprised, because Lyndon had filled the plane up with the Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs, with the head of the Export-Import Bank, and miscellaneous others. It was a relatively full plane. But if you are familiar with the contours of

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the plane, it was Senator Fulbright, Betty, and I who had the executive compartment at the front of the plane. These lowly assistant secretaries, the head of the Bank, and people like that were at the tail end of the plane. We flew back through Brazilia. On the way back, about the time we were over Miami, the captain of the crew came back and spoke with me privately and said, "We're going to be about a half hour late. We've lost all power in the starboard outboard engine, but don't tell anyone." Well, we made a safe landing, and nobody was fearful. Events like that have a tendency to focus the mind more than drawn out briefings. The reason that I avert to this now was because it shows that in August of that year Senator Fulbright was very close to Lyndon and was doing work for Lyndon. Most of the secret Dominican hearings were over by that time. Pat and Seth Tillman, shortly afterwards, put together the statement which Senator Fulbright delivered on the floor, which was highly critical of Lyndon, and that was what broke the relationship between the two.

**RITCHIE:** Fulbright, from what I understand, had hoped that that speech would not break their relations but would cause the administration to reevaluate their policy and change some of their gears. He hadn't anticipated it, from what I gather, being such a dramatic break. But Johnson took it in less than the spirit in which it was offered. Was it just that Johnson could not tolerate disagreement and dissent?

**MARCY:** I suspect that was part of it. Johnson was never a person who much liked dissent, even when he was majority leader, and maybe even earlier in his history. I remember quite well the discussion that I had with Senator Fulbright before he delivered that speech. Have I recounted that? I've recounted it several times and have seen other accounts. When the speech had been finished but was still in draft form, Senator Fulbright called me to his office one day. Present were his assistant, Lee Williams, as well as Pat Holt and Seth Tillman, who had done most of the work on the speech--just the four of us. We'd all read the speech and Senator Fulbright asked what we thought of it and whether he should deliver it. Both Pat and Seth said yes; Lee Williams and I thought he shouldn't. I said I thought if he delivered that speech it would bring about a severe break between him and President Johnson and that I thought it more important for him to keep a close relationship with Lyndon than to do anything that would break that relationship. I felt Fulbright still had access to and influence with the president, something one does not throw away lightly. But Fulbright cut me quite short. He said, "All I want to know, Carl, is whether you think this is a fair statement of what we found out during the hearings." And he added that he, the senator, would make the political judgment as to whether it was wise to make the speech. Lee Williams took the same position that I did. I think it was Lee who said, "The least you can do, Senator, is to send a copy of your speech to the president before you

deliver it." But Fulbright had the speech in hand and delivered it the next day. I'm reasonably sure that no copy got into Lyndon's hands before the speech was made, and I doubt if the president would have had time to read it anyway. Continuing that incident, some months later, when it was clear that relations between Fulbright and President Johnson were in very bad shape and getting worse, I had a session with Secretary Rusk. I think there is an account of it somewhere in my notes. Secretary Rusk was very bitter about Senator Fulbright. He said, "You know, Fulbright would make a wonderful president of a university, but it's terrible to have him as chairman of the Committee." He was referring not only to the Dominican incident, but to a session at which Rusk had been present when there was a good bit of wrangling among Committee members. But in connection with the Dominican incident, Rusk was quite adamant saying, "All Bill had to do was to call me up and I would have given him the facts. Instead of that he's relying on these hearings you had." From then on, things went from bad to worse. There was never an improvement, although Senator Fulbright tried several times. One incident that I recall is that sometime later when Lyndon went to the hospital with some minor ailment, Fulbright used that as an opportunity to write Lyndon a note saying that "I've been in the hospital, too," or "Betty has been in the hospital and we understand, best wishes." He never got a reply from the president.

**RITCHIE:** Would you think that there was a strong link between Fulbright's speech on the Dominican situation and his growing skepticism about Vietnam? Do you think that he saw any parallels between the two situations?

**MARCY:** I don't know. I cannot recall any incident or conversation or statement that would suggest that. And in my mind the Dominican incident was quite separate from his attitude toward Vietnam.

**RITCHIE:** The only connection I can see to it, and the reason why I brought up the question, was because the gist of the Committee's report, and of Fulbright's speech was that the facts did not jive with the administration's position. This was quite a statement to make: that we're not getting the truth from the administration. I wondered then if the next step was: are we getting the truth from the administration on the Gulf of Tonkin and other things related to Vietnam?

**MARCY:** Don, I don't think so. It may have created a skepticism in Senator Fulbright's mind, but I don't remember any incident when Senator Fulbright ever questioned an executive branch witness on Vietnam in which he implied or said, "Are we getting the full story?" To continue, the only reason that Senator Fulbright got interested in investigating the Gulf of Tonkin incident was because of a small newspaper article which appeared in the Arkansas Gazette,

in which some seaman had come home and said it didn't happen quite the way it had been reported. That was some years later. It seems to me that Senator Fulbright's quarrel with the administration about our involvement in Vietnam was based on his concern as to whether the United States, by sending troops to Asia, could by military means handle what he more and more and more thought was essentially a civil war. It may be somewhere in the record that he expressed the view that he was not getting accurate information when Rusk and the Chiefs of Staff and [General William] Westmoreland testified, but I don't recall any such incidents.

**RITCHIE:** In January and February of 1966 the Committee held some very well publicized hearings, that turned into sort of "educational hearings" on Vietnam. It was the first real focus of attention, the first debate I guess, public debate on Vietnam. George Kennan testified, and Rusk, and administration and antiadministration spokesmen. I was wondering if you could give me some of the background of those hearings, how Fulbright and the Committee decided to launch these hearings?

**MARCY:** As I recall they started almost by accident when Secretary Rusk appeared before the Committee in connection with an aid bill. Fulbright took that opportunity to launch into a series of questions about our involvement in Vietnam. And there was quite an acerbic exchange. Mr. Rusk was obviously uncomfortable. I don't

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recall the sequence immediately after that, except to say the witnesses that I would have brought together only on at least the general instructions of Senator Fulbright. He probably said to me, "We ought to look into this further, get some views of people outside the government on the nature of our involvement in Vietnam, where we're going, what the future is." I'm sorry I can't be more helpful in making that connection.

**RITCHIE:** Was his purpose in part to educate the Congress and raise the issues, or was he hoping to spark a national debate or a national questioning of what was happening? This was still prior to the anti-war movement. If anything it was probably the launching of anti-war sentiment.

**MARCY:** Don, I think you used the wrong words when you suggest that Fulbright ran the hearings that we're talking about in order to "educate the public." What Fulbright was trying to do was to educate himself. *He* wanted to learn more. He wanted to learn more about what these other people were thinking and what they had to say. I don't think he contemplated the public attention those first hearings attracted. Now, I know that Fulbright later in his career talked a good deal about educational hearings and the use of the Committee for educational purposes, but I don't believe as of that time that he was thinking of using the hearings for educating anyone but himself. I don't mean by that to imply that he was a very selfish person, I

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think he was rather surprised that in the process of educating himself and those few members that he expected would come, that they would attract TV, press, and public attention. His feeling generally about hearings of this kind was, "Well, I doubt if any members will show up, but I want to learn what George Kennan has to say." The fact that they attracted attention at that time was because people were beginning to be worried. The press paid attention, which meant that senators showed up at the hearings--senators attract the press, and vice versa. Some members probably showed up because they thought, "Well, this Fulbright has got to be watched, checked up on." But I don't think that Fulbright's thoughts went beyond educational purpose for himself at that time.

**RITCHIE:** The media, CBS, took the unusual stance of actually televising the hearings live, at least the first ones when Kennan spoke. Was that strictly the media's decision?

**MARCY:** Oh, absolutely.

**RITCHIE:** There wasn't any lobbying on the Committee's part to try to get that kind of coverage?

**MARCY:** No. During the time I was with the Committee the myth got started that somehow I or someone could get the television people to come, or get the press to be there. I can't remember any instance when I ever tried to get the press there. There may have been a case

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when some senator said, "Gosh, can't you get some press coverage, or television coverage for this?" But I don't recall any such incident. The myth persists that the staff can manage hearings so as to get television people to be there. No, I have no doubt but what there are instances when somebody has said, "We're going to have a bang-up witness today, you guys better be there. " I never did that. They came. Once it started, it kept on rolling.

**RITCHIE:** The most famous thing about that wasn't what they televised, but that they didn't televise after a while. CBS got cold feet and ran an "I Love Lucy" rerun instead of one of the witnesses. I think that was when Fred Friendly resigned from CBS News as a result of that decision in 1966.

**MARCY:** I suspect, if you look into this, that you will find the reason CBS stopped covering the hearings was because of pressure from the administration. Someone there said, "Look, you fools, this is an unpatriotic thing to do," something like that. It's only a guess.

**RITCHIE:** The other interesting thing was that those hearings were published as a paperback edition.

**MARCY:** They published them almost verbatim.

**RITCHIE:** I can recall when I was teaching, in 1968, a course on contemporary United States history, we actually used those hearings

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as one of the readings in the class, because it was the verbatim testimony of both administration witnesses and anti-administration witnesses, for a classroom situation it was one of the few books that treated both sides relatively evenly and

wasn't too biased. But certainly it was unusual for congressional hearings to be reprinted in a commercial press. I think it was Vintage Press of Random House that published it.

**MARCY:** Who was the author who did that?

**RITCHIE:** Someone edited them, and I think that Senator Fulbright had an introduction to it. I'm really sorry that the volume isn't here.

**MARCY:** Well, I know the volume you're referring to, because I was interested for the same reason that you were interested. It was highly unusual for any commercial publisher to pick up and publish hearings that were already going to be published by the Government Printing Office [volume under reference: *The Vietnam Hearings*; with introduction by J. William Fulbright; Random House, 1966].

**RITCHIE:** That there was that much demand for them.

**MARCY:** There was that much demand for them, yes. I don't know whether Vintage Press made any money out of it or not.

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**RITCHIE:** Well, on college campuses it sold very well! I was wondering if you could spend a little time talking about some of the other members of the Committee at that period, some of your observations on them. We've talked a lot about Wayne Morse, for instance, one of the two senators who opposed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. You've mentioned him in passing, but could you tell me a little more about Morse as an individual and as a person to work with?

**MARCY:** In the framework of hearings, senators are in and out, not consistent in their attendance. The chairman usually has to be present. I knew Wayne Morse quite well, probably as well as any senator. I was never an intimate of his, but when he would sit down and talk with me about what he was going to do next it was clear he knew his own mind. I guess he tended to be viewed by members as a gadfly. He knew he was considered a gadfly, but he was considerate of other members. I remember one conversation with him, he said "I make long speeches," but he said, "when I make a long speech I try to do it late in the day, when there won't be any roll calls, and other senators can go their way, but I just want to get the material in the *Record*." He would stand on the Senate floor hours at a time putting material in the *Record* and expressing his views. I suppose maybe that's, as with some people, that's the way he thought. He thought on his feet.



If you want to move ahead to the time of the Gulf of Tonkin hearings, I can pick up Morse on that. Much of the material was secret--gathered in executive session. One of our last hearings, for example, was with Robert McNamara just a few days before he left to go to the World Bank. That was a secret hearing. But on the basis of the work which had been done by principally Bill Bader on our staff, classified documents, and the hearings, and other people we had talked to, we did produce a committee report which was classified. Senator Morse came to me after the report had been circulated in classified form, as I recall, and wanted to know why we could not make this public. I said that we had a commitment to the administration that we would not publish it because it included classified material. Senator Morse said that he was a United States senator and he could do what he wanted, but he did not want to jeopardize the security interests of the United States in any way. He asked me to go over this confidential report and take out anything that I thought would be damaging to the national interest. He said that he would then put the report in the *Congressional Record* as his own account of what the Committee had found, which was what he did. So the Wayne Morse speech at the end of the Tonkin hearings is a case in which a senator consciously declassified and made public something that the Committee had made a commitment in a sense to the administration not to do. Normally, if a classified committee report was to be made public, the report would be submitted to the executive branch

so it could excise material they felt was of a security nature. In this case, Morse was very clear. I was not to submit it to the administration. It was going to be my judgment as to what should be taken out. And as I recall there was very little taken out of that report.

**RITCHIE:** How would you describe Morse's influence on the Committee?

**MARCY:** Not particularly effective. Respected by other Committee members, but I'm sorry to say that I don't think he was very effective in influencing members on their votes. He did some interesting things in the way of amendments he put in at various times on the aid bills. I recall at one point he said, "If we're going to have military assistance to the Latin American countries," which was where he was particularly interested at the time, he said, "let's have an amendment that says all this military aid must be provided by the United States Corps of Engineers. They can build dams and they can build roads, and that's a good thing, and it does not mean they're going to load the recipient countries up with weapons and teach them how to engage in military operations. They're the best engineering corps in the world. Let the aid be in that pattern." I don't remember what happened to that amendment, but that does stick in my mind as one of the things he tried to do.

**RITCHIE:** Morse strikes me as a very intelligent man, who was often right on the mark when it came to issues, but I get the feeling that he squandered the influence he could have had by his public antics and gadfly approach, and perhaps his personality. Is that a relatively reasonable interpretation?

**MARCY:** I think that's fair. I don't know that I would add to it. In an interesting way, he and Senator Humphrey were much the same. They were both men who had so much to do in life they could never get anything done, which I suppose is a characteristic of a gadfly.

**RITCHIE:** What qualities, do you think, in a senator really were appreciated and made them effective as a member of the Foreign Relations Committee?

**MARCY:** One of the most effective senators on the Committee during the time that I was there was Senator [Jacob] Javits. He was effective because he had an organized mind. He could organize the miscellany of conversations that went on. As you will have seen from the transcripts of executive and mark-up sessions, a lot of things are thrown on the table and then usually the discussion would get to the point where the chairman would turn to me and say, "Well, Carl, write it up," or "include it in the report." And it was very confusing to know what in the dickens the Committee had really done! Often times Senator Fulbright was more considerate of me and would

ask Senator Javits to summarize the discussion, put it in a form that could be used. Javits was very good at that. Now, I realize that's not quite in response to your question of influence.

**RITCHIE:** But there's a member of the minority party who was of service to the majority.

**MARCY:** That's right.

**RITCHIE:** I get the feeling that George Aiken, while perhaps not an idea-man, was an influential member of the Committee, from looking at the way his comments were used.

**MARCY:** Yes. Well, this is a hard question to answer, Don. Most members were influential in different kinds of way. Senator Symington had a certain kind of an input, and Senator [Albert] Gore had another kind. The chairman and members of the staff realized that they all had very significant inputs. Some senators would participate but never seemed to have very much effect. Senator [Frank] Lausche, for example, loveable, but I don't think that you see his imprint in anything that

the Committee might have done. But yet a Symington might throw out an idea, or a Javits, or a Gore, and it would be picked up and incorporated in whatever the Committee was doing and would have significance. But during all the time I was there, there were very few instances in which--now I'm thinking legislatively--in which an amendment was introduced and adopted and

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thereafter became known as the so-and-so amendment. Senator [Charles] Percy did it at one time, there is a Percy amendment. Is there a Symington amendment? Or is there a Morse amendment? Or is there a Gore amendment?

**RITCHIE:** There was a Hickenlooper amendment. That's a famous one.

**MARCY:** Yes. That's about it. Considering the time I was there, it's rather unusual that there have been only a few instances.

**RITCHIE:** Do you attribute this to Fulbright's idea of the Committee as a totality?

**MARCY:** I do, yes. I think the members thought of themselves as a totality, and there was a very freewheeling exchange between them. Minds were changed. Very few members enunciated an idea, and stuck with it, and by golly you couldn't change them. One could almost always predict where Lausche would come out, but Morse was persuasive and Morse could be persuaded. So there was a camaraderie, freewheeling, very little dogmatism. When Fulbright began to worry about the role of foreign aid in foreign policy, he tried to persuade the Committee members. But real acrimony never developed as a result of that.

**RITCHIE:** That certainly fits the things that I've been reading in the executive sessions. About the only time that I've seen a

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really acrimonious debate--and I've only read up through 1961--was the report over the U-2 incident, and I think that has largely come down to a political issue of support for the Republican president in a presidential election year, and criticism by a Democratic majority, and concern over official lying in public, and things like that. There's the only place that I've gotten any sense of short tempers and breaking down of the bipartisan mood that prevails over so much of the hearings. But I haven't read the Vietnam era transcripts and I wondered if the mood changed at all when Fulbright broke with the administration and Vietnam began to divide the nation?

**MARCY:** No, I think the mood stayed very much the same. I attribute this not only to the quality of the membership, but to the fact that Senator Fulbright was

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an educator, in a sense. As I mentioned earlier, Rusk said he should be a college president. I think maybe Rusk did hit it right. Fulbright educated the Committee, slowly. I never heard him cut anyone off. This business of the powerful chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, implying that the chairman was a tyrant who controlled everything, when would the Committee meet, what subjects would come up, how people would act, what would come out. He wasn't that kind of person at all. He listened, he'd try to educate. At some point I remember Senator Symington coming to me after he had changed his attitude with respect to our involvement in Vietnam and said something to general effect that "Carl, I've changed my position, and the reason was because Bill

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educated me. I've learned." For a former secretary of the Air Force to have been exposed to the Fulbright school of foreign policy and admit that it had an impact on him, says much about Fulbright-Symington is not the kind of person anyone would be inclined to whip around at all; Senator Gore was very much the same way. What happens in a committee, or happened in that Committee, was that judgments are developed about how particular people, how senators will act in given situations. Senator Fulbright at one point said to me, "You can't count on Frank Church. You can count on Senator Gore, you can count on Senator Symington." What he meant was that if Symington or Gore or Hickenlooper said they were going to do so-and-so, they'd do it. They would support him on the floor on an amendment or whatever it might be. Fulbright was never sure of Senator Church. Always the implication being, without his every having said it, that Senator Church was a bit of an opportunist. If that meant that he had to change his position or create a doubt about something maybe Fulbright had been led to believe he was firm on, he'd shift. I don't think of any others. Maybe that should stay off the record.

**RITCHIE:** Oh, I think that's a very good observation.

**MARCY:** I might leave that.

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**RITCHIE:** We've been talking now for about an hour and a half.

**MARCY:** Oh, let's stop, I'm hungry!

[End of Interview #5]