

Pat M. Holt

Chief of Staff

Foreign Relations Committee

Interview #2

Tom Connally and the Foreign Relations Committee

(Thursday, September 18, 1980)

Interviewed by Donald A. Ritchie

RITCHIE: We left you off at the last session on Christmas eve, 1949. You had just been told that the Washington bureau of the *Reporter* was being terminated., and from there you moved to the Foreign Relations Committee. The question then is: how did you get onto the Foreign Relations Committee at that time?

HOLT: Well, it wasn't Christmas eve, 1949, it was a week or two before Christmas. Anyway, it was the Christmas season. Well, how I got on the Foreign Relations Committee: in the course of looking for an escape hatch from CQ I had talked to Senator Connally. After the Democrats recaptured the Senate in the 1948 election, Connally knew he was going to be chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee again. By this time the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 had gone into effect and committees presumably had professional career staffs, and the Foreign Relations Committee really did. But Connally, I guess maybe even then with his eye on what he thought would be a campaign for reelection in 1952, was looking around for somebody who knew Texas, knew the press, and at least

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knew something about foreign affairs. He talked to Les Carpenter about this. Les was a newspaper man in town, and Les wanted to stick with a career in journalism.

RITCHIE: Was that Liz Carpenter's husband?

HOLT: Yes. But he mentioned it to me and I guess maybe he mentioned me to Connally. Anyway, Connally and I had some conversations about it. This was in the winter of 1949, and I was about ready to come up here when the *Reporter* job opened up. So I somewhat reluctantly went to Connally and sort of backed out of that. Then a year later when the *Reporter* job ended I went back to Connally and said, "OK, I'm ready now." He said, "Are you sure? I don't want you up here for two or three months and then going off someplace else." I said, "Well, I'll agree to stay for a year if you'll agree to keep me for a year. Well, he didn't want to do that! Anyway, I went and stayed for twenty-seven years.

RITCHIE: Did you have any reluctance about leaving your career as a journalist at this stage? Or did you anticipate that you were going to go back to being a journalist later on?

HOLT: I didn't anticipate one way or the other. I didn't have very much reluctance about

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leaving journalism. As a matter of fact, I don't recall that I seriously looked for a job other than the Foreign Relations Committee. This took, I guess, a couple of months, during which I was unemployed and during which I did some odds and ends of freelancing. It did my ego an awful lot of good to discover that I could indeed make a living that way. But it was a very nerve-wracking thing because you never knew where the next assignment was coming from and therefore you were reluctant to turn down any assignment that came along, and therefore you found your self working harder than I like to work. I did miss journalism for a few years after I was on the staff, and indeed from time to time I thought about going back to it, but I never thought hard enough to do anything about it.

RITCHIE: Can you describe what the Foreign Relations Committee was like back in 1950? I know it was considerably different than it is now.

HOLT: Well, it had thirteen members. I got there in February of 1950. This is easily checked, as I recall there were eight Democrats and five Republicans. There were eight people on the staff.

RITCHIE: That included secretaries?

HOLT: It included *a* secretary. We used to send stuff out to be typed commercially, for

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God's sake! The entire staff was in the two rooms that the committee still has in the Capitol, plus one room across the hall where the Democratic Policy Committee is now.

RITCHIE: That was it?

HOLT: That was it. The committee was really loaded with the barons of the Senate. Going down the majority side, Connally was chairman [Walter] George was next to him, and George was chairman of the Finance Committee. I've forgotten the order of seniority after that but Elbert Thomas was a member of the committee and he was chairman of the Labor Committee. Millard Tydings was on there and he was chairman of the Armed Services Committee. There was Brien McMahon, who was chairman of the Atomic Energy Committee. There was Claude Pepper, and [J. William] Fulbright. was junior Democrat. That's only seven. Maybe the eight to five ratio was wrong. Maybe I forgot one.* On the Republican side You had Vandenberg; you had [Bourke] Hickenlooper, who had been chairman of the Atomic Energy Committee in the 80th Congress; you had Henry Cabot Lodge.

RITCHIE: And Alexander Wiley.

*Theodore Francis Green

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HOLT: Oh, yes, you had Wiley who had been chairman of the Judiciary Committee and who was to be chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. I'm not sure whether Arthur Capper and Wallace White were still there when I got there or not. Time blurs from when I was covering the committee and from when I started to work for it. They would sit around that big table in S-116, at that time the chairman sat at the end of the table with the members along each side, instead of the way they do it now with the chairman in the middle and the members spread around him. The relationship with the executive branch was much closer and more intimate then than it was later. The committee later on developed more of an idea of doing its own things. But when I first came up there, somebody from the executive branch was always present when they marked up a bill and would argue with them about why a particular amendment ought not to go in there and that kind of thing. They later rigorously excluded all executive branch people from mark-up sessions; and then still later of course with the "sunshine" rules and what-not they began marking up in public, which meant that the executive branch was right back there again, although the executive branch did not speak up as much as it once did.

RITCHIE: In those days Francis Wilcox was chief of staff.

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HOLT: Francis Wilcox was the chief of staff, yes. He had been hired by Vandenberg, with Connally's concurrence, when Vandenberg became chairman of the committee in the 80th Congress, which coincided with the effective date of the Reorganization Act. Francis, at that time, was working for what was then called the Legislative Reference Service, now the Congressional Research Service. He had been detailed from LRS to the committee at some point during the war, I'm not sure when but it was at least prior to the U.N. conference in San Francisco, which he attended along with Vandenberg and Connally, and did the staff work on the U.N. charter in connection with the advice and consent of the Senate, and all of that. He went to the early meetings of the U.N. General Assembly with Vandenberg and Connally, and it was the natural, logical thing for him to be the first chief of staff, when they got around to having one.

RITCHIE: How did the staff operate in those days? You had seven staff members and one secretary.

HOLT: Yes, at the time I got there, besides Wilcox there was Thorsten Kalijarvi, who had also I think been with LRS, there was Carl Marcy, who had been with the department of State in the Office of the Legal Advisor--the Legal Advisor in those days handled

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congressional relations--and there was Morella Hansen, who was sort of a junior professional who handled files and looked things up, did research, that kind of thing. Cy O'Day was the chief clerk, he had worked for Vandenberg on Vandenberg's personal staff before. Emmett O'Grady, who had come I think from Connally's office, but I'm not sure, was the receptionist, answered the phone, and so on. Isabelle Smith was *the* secretary; and I think that was it. So, with no more people than that, everybody sort of had to do everything.

I had been hired because I fit the description that Connally was looking for that I mentioned a while ago. I had not before then known any of the staff at all well. I guess I had a casual acquaintance with Morella who was very good at searching out documents for the press and that kind of thing. Maybe with Wilcox and some of the others, but for all practical purposes I was sort of thrust on them. Later, when I was chief of staff, I had people thrust on me and didn't like it very much, but I must say that Wilcox behaved admirably towards me, notwithstanding this. And I did take some of the burden off the rest of the staff, after they came to trust me a little bit. I did most of Connally's speech writing! I also did a lot of stuff with the press, at first limited pretty much to the Texas press and by no means confined to foreign relations. In the beginning, Connally trusted me more than Wilcox did, which

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was natural, but we reached a point where there wasn't any difference. I did an awful lot of answering Connally's mail, and went to most committee meetings, and hearings.

At the time I got there the committee had a subcommittee, headed by Senator Thomas of Utah, which was reviewing the U.N. charter--the charter wasn't very old at that point but it hadn't worked like people really had expected in '45. The Cold War had intervened and there was groping and grasping and fumbling around looking for ways to amend it to make it work better. Carl Marcy was doing the staff work for that subcommittee. The Marshall Plan had to be reauthorized on an annual basis. In 1950 the committee got around to considering Truman's Point Four program, which he had proposed in his Inaugural of the year before. This represented a considerable departure and broadening in foreign aid. The United States had sort of fooled around with technical assistance in Latin America, going back to the days of Nelson Rockefeller's role as coordinator of Inter-American Affairs in World War II, but Truman's vision was global and the committee was sort of timid to jump in that particular swimming pool. It dabbled its toes for quite a while before it did.

I remember at one point in the hearings when somebody from the executive branch was saying that one of the objects of the exercise was to improve the climate for foreign investment and stimulate foreign investment.

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Connally thought that this was not a very good idea, that it wouldn't work, that to the degree that it did work and the investments went sour the people who had made the investments would come running to the government to bail them out--a certain amount of foresight involved in this, but that's getting ahead of the story. Anyway, I remember him asking this witness, "If you had a hundred thousand dollars, would you invest it in Ethiopia?" But the committee was persuaded, and Connally was a pretty good soldier.

He viewed his role as chairman of the committee differently from some of his successors. He thought a part of his job was to help the president and the president's program. In the Senate debate on Point Four somebody, I think it was [Leverett] Saltonstall, who also had doubts about this business of encouraging private investment, asked Connally, "What do these words 'favorable climate' in the bill mean?" And Connally shot back, "Warm in the winter and cool in the summer." [Kenneth] McKellar of Tennessee, who was then chairman of the Appropriations Committee said, "Where are we going to get the money for this?" Connally said, "We're going to get it out of your committee, that's where!" But the damn thing was approved by the Senate by only a one vote margin, I think it was 36 to 35, a real cliff hanger.

But the two main things that happened in my early days on the committee were: one, I think it was the

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week before I started to work, Joe McCarthy made his famous speech in Wheeling, West Virginia. I think it was the first Saturday I worked for the committee (hell everybody worked on Saturday in those days) that the committee had an interminable executive session on how to deal with McCarthy's charges, and out of that came the appointment of the Tydings subcommittee, which investigated them. The Tydings subcommittee had its own staff and really operated pretty independently. The rest of us didn't have very much to do with it. The other big thing that happened that year, of course, was the outbreak of the Korean War. The role of the committee and the American response to this, or more accurately the lack of the committee's role and the American response, is quite striking in view of the present way things are done up here now. In effect the committee didn't have any role. It gave no particular evidence of wanting one. I think it's fair to say that the committee generally supported what Truman did, and was content to let him do it. I think later on when the Korean adventure began to turn sour, there were some members of the committee who regretted their passivity in the beginning. But, anyway, that's the way it happened.

RITCHIE: So, in other words, you jumped into the fire when you came on the committee; 1950 was a pretty hot year.

HOLT: Right.

RITCHIE: I just want to go back on a couple of things. The Foreign Relations Committee seems different from most of the committees. It really hears most things as a unit rather than in subcommittees. They have consultative subcommittees, but they were relatively powerless. They can't meet without the approval of the full committee. Doesn't the full committee handle most issues as a body?

HOLT: Well, it certainly did for a long time. That has broken down somewhat in recent years. But at the time I got there, and for a number of years thereafter, the committee had a very strong tradition of acting as full committee and not having subcommittees. The stated rationale for that was that foreign affairs was indivisible. That you couldn't fragment the jurisdiction of the committee into neat little blocks, as for example the old Labor Committee--it was easy to separate its jurisdiction over labor management legislation from its jurisdiction-over say education bills. This was less applicable to foreign relations. The example was frequently cited of the Finance Committee, which also operated as a whole and I guess still does to a considerable extent. I think an unstated reason for Foreign Relations procedure was that the people who run the committee, Vandenberg,

Connally, later George, wanted it that way. It enhanced, made things easier to control, enhanced the power of the chairman.

In the '50's the committee went through several rather sharp organizational debates, specifically on this point. Hubert Humphrey came on the committee at some point in the '50's [1953] and almost immediately manifested his dissatisfaction with that way of doing things. When Humphrey was dissatisfied, everybody around him knew it! Humphrey was also dissatisfied with staffing arrangements. He felt that the staff was too much answerable to the chairman and not enough to individual members. In point of fact, the staff tried assiduously to avoid that, but it never really fully satisfied Humphrey on that score. As a result and as a matter of fact, you know things were run the way the majority of the committee wanted them run. Humphrey, God knows, had a fair and open opportunity to press his case, and he just got voted down in the committee. As a part of this process, at some point the committee appointed a subcommittee [in 1958] to consider the question of the staff, whether it ought to be enlarged--that was the first thing Humphrey was getting at. By this time the staff had grown slowly and incrementally, I don't know how many people it had but it was bigger than it was when I got there. The chairman of that subcommittee was

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John Kennedy. I don't remember who else was on it. I was assigned to do the staff work, such staff work as it needed. I produced a draft of staff regulations, and a draft report for the subcommittee. The report said that one person ought to be added to the staff. This one person would handle matters involving interparliamentary contacts and the reception of foreign visitors, which the committee was just beginning to get serious about. And then the other thing the report said was that the committee ought to formally adopt the following regulations for the staff. I wrote the draft, Kennedy thought about it some and fiddled with it here and there, and presented it and argued it to the committee. The thrust of these regulations was that the staff as a whole worked for the committee as a whole, and that any member of the committee could call upon it for anything relating to committee business. And that the staff was supposed to keep a low profile in public. Those weren't the words in it. The words I used went back to the Roosevelt administration, which were that the staff ought to have a "Passion for anonymity." The committee knocked that phrase out. I remember George Aiken said "let's leave the passion out of this." But the staff was specifically prohibited from writing for publication or speaking in public without the express permission of the chief of staff, or in this case the chairman of the committee.

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The staff was abjured to be non-partisan, not to concern itself with partisan political, activities outside of working hours, and so on. That in effect sort of institutionalized and formalized what had been the practice earlier, and continued to be the practice for a long time.

RITCHIE: There was a staff member of Wiley's, I think, who gave a speech at a Republican Women's Club. Wasn't that what prompted this?

HOLT: Ah, yes, yes. I've forgotten where he gave the speech. When Wiley became chairman in 1953 he thrust on the committee, on the staff, Julius Cahn, who had previously been on Wiley's personal staff, and insisted that Julius have the title of counsel, which the staff never had anybody with that title before. Wilcox didn't like this a damn bit. He liked it even less than he did my appearance three years before. I think he saw Cahn more as a threat to him and more as a threat to the traditional staff-committee relationships and methods of operating. Cahn was more aggressive and ambitious than I was. I'm not sure how long Julius stayed, but I think he stayed after Wiley reverted to ranking minority member. Anyway, at one point he did make a speech somewhere, which was reported by the press, in which he spoke of John Foster Dulles as being a "moral force," or something to that effect, which offended the hell out of Fulbright; he found

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Dulles' moralizing offensive to begin with. Fulbright made a fuss about this in the committee. It did not lead to Julius being fired, but it sure as hell led to him being muzzled, and provided an example for all the rest of us to keep our mouths shut.

RITCHIE: One reason I wondered why the committee was able to meet as a whole on all these issues was that there was a sort of basic unanimity to the committee. They were all for the most part internationalists and had a similar world view.

HOLT: Pretty much so. As a matter of fact, in the very early days the committee was not really representative of the Senate. I don't want to over-emphasize the extent to which the committee always acted as a whole. There were ad hoc subcommittees from time to time, there simply weren't. any standing subcommittees. I mentioned that when I got there Elbert Thomas had a subcommittee on the revision of the U.N. charter, the McCarthy charges were investigated by a subcommittee. There was an ad hoc subcommittee appointed about 1952 to make a study of the United States information programs abroad. Fulbright was chairman to begin with and when the Republicans took over Hickenlooper was chairman. The committee was always studying something. It avoided the word investigation, which was so popular with other committees, and still is, on the Hill.

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The committee seemed to think that investigation implied some kind of raucous washing of dirty linen, whereas study was a more sober, serious, responsible exercise.

Investigation did have sort of a sensational connotation in those days, because McCarthy was investigating everything in sight. And indeed it was McCarthy's investigation of the information program--it was one of the things--which led the Foreign Relations Committee to do a study of the information program. One reason the committee was so fussy about its staff was that McCarthy had his staff members Schine and Cohn, David Schine and Roy Cohn, chasing around the world and leaving a trail of horror stories behind them. The committee was aghast at this and you know damn well its staff wasn't going to be caught in anything like this.

But back to subcommittees, early on in my service there, the committee established this framework of consultative subcommittees. I first heard about the idea of consultative subcommittees from Francis Wilcox. I'm not sure whether the idea originated with him or whether somebody in the State Department suggested it to him, but any way he sold it to Connally and to the committee, and these were established. The original idea was that there would be a subcommittee

for every assistant secretary of State, with whom the subcommittee would meet irregularly as required, for a totally off-the-record discussion for what-

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ever it was in their particular geographic or functional area. The idea being that this was a way of keeping at least some members of the committee currently informed about every Goddamn thing that was happening, and would reduce the burden of so many full committee meetings to deal with the same things. The system worked indifferently at best, or spottily at best. Some subcommittees and their chairmen took it seriously, others didn't. Some in the nature of things had more to consult about than others. In time the system got skewed because the number of assistant secretaries of State proliferated faster than the majority members of the Foreign Relations Committee, and things had to be reorganized. My recollection of this is that in the early days the Subcommittee on Latin America was one of the more active. I remember during the period from 1953 to '54, whatever Congress that was, Hickenlooper was the chairman of it and Henry Holland was the Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America. Holland was really very good about taking the initiative in telling the committee things and in consulting with it. I remember particularly the developping crisis, or we thought it was a crisis, in Guatemala, which led to the covert intervention and overthrow of the Arbenz government in 1954. On several occasions Holland would call up and would say, "Gee, I need to see that subcommittee," and we had very good luck about getting them

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together in the back room over there in S-116 in the Capitol, at around five o'clock in the afternoon. Holland would come up and tell them what was going on, and they would figuratively stroke their beards.

RITCHIE: Was he altogether candid about the American role in Guatemala?

HOLT: Well, I was coming to that. He was, by the then standards of candor and congressional access to information, which were much lower than they are now, Holland was pretty candid. He reported the intelligence that a Polish ship was bearing arms to Guatemala. He reported the deployment of the United States Navy in the Gulf of Mexico at a minimum to watch it but with the option of intercepting it if that was decided. He reported the surveillance of the unloading of the ship in Puerto Barrios. He reported the activities of the Guatemalan exiles in Honduras. He did *not* report, but he strongly implied that they were getting help under-the-table, which sort of gave the subcommittee pause. I don't recall that they threw up any caution flags to Holland, but I do remember one afternoon, after Holland had left, Hickenlooper stayed behind talking to Wilcox and me. He said, "You know, it's all very well when you're an assistant secretary of State to talk about going in to a country." He said, "What worries me is how the hell do you get out."

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Which, coming from a good, otherwise conservative midwestern Republican struck me at the time and I remembered it. Anyway, it happened and it worked, at least it worked on a short-time basis. Congress immediately appropriated at fifteen million dollars or something to help the new government in Guatemala, and so on. I guess that was about the only example worth recording of the activities of the consultative subcommittees, at least in the early days. Later on, the State Department--I guess this required an amendment to the Foreign Service Act, and Congress did it--created an additional assistant secretary. In the early days, one assistant secretary handled Africa, the Near East and South Asia. There began to be agitation for a separate assistant secretary for Africa. Questions of blacks in the United States became involved in this, and some political sensitivities were touched--which is sort of curious in view of the fact that not very many blacks voted in the 1950's, we hadn't had the Voting Rights Act yet. Anyway, this was done and so pursuant to custom it was thought necessary or at least desirable to have a subcommittee on Africa, not only to match the organizational pattern of the State Department but also as a public indication that the Foreign Relations Committee was more serious about Africa than it had been in the past. Well, by God, we couldn't find anybody to be chairman of it! There was a great search and every Democrat

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on the committee had a great excuse not to be. Finally, Marcy put it to Kennedy who was a pretty junior member then. Kennedy said, "Well, if I take it, will it ever have to meet?" And Marcy said no. So Kennedy took it, and then when he was the Democratic nominee in 1960 he was criticized for being the chairman of a subcommittee that never met.

RITCHIE: I've only found one transcript for that subcommittee, in looking through the executive sessions. In 1959 they had Paul Nitze reporting on his trip through Africa, but it was more of a conversation than a hearing.

HOLT: Well, in those days, consultative subcommittees didn't keep transcripts anyway. And indeed I don't think their meetings were even recorded in the committee calendar.

RITCHIE: There's a note in the minutes, but that seems to be about the most.

HOLT: I guess that would be as far as it went, yes.

RITCHIE: Just to go back a minute when you talked about the Guatemalan situation. I haven't seen very much reference in the early records of the committee to the CIA. It doesn't seem to have been until

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later in the 1950's that Allen Dulles came to testify. Was it that the committee couldn't get the CIA to testify, or didn't they recognize the CIA's role in foreign policy in those days?

HOLT: When I first went on the committee in 1950 you never heard about the CIA around the place. But fairly early on I remember Walter Bedell Smith, when he was director of the CIA, came before the committee from time to time for a general briefing about things. I don't remember if transcripts were kept; if they were, they're in the custody of the CIA, because that was the procedure. I don't remember much of what Smith said, and as a matter of fact I'm having trouble distinguishing between his appearances before the committee as director of Central Intelligence and his appearances as Under Secretary of State later on, when we saw a good deal more of him. Coming into the Allen Dulles era at CIA, the committee by this time was getting to be more curious about those things. Allen Dulles was a very reluctant witness, making the argument that he reported to the Armed Services Committee, which had jurisdiction over the legislation which had created the CIA, and also the Appropriations Committee, and that was it, period. And this is the way Congress had wanted it done. Well, the Foreign Relations Committee

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didn't like this very much and indeed complained to the State Department and specifically to John Foster Dulles about it. John Foster originally, I had the impression, was reluctant to get involved in this particular squabble, although to us, anyway, he gave the impression that he thought his brother was a little too stand-offish. Well, at one point Allen went out to San Francisco and made a speech, which was reported in the press, and John Foster called him and said, "Allen, you can't go around the country making public speeches and refuse to meet privately with the Foreign Relations Committee. You can do one or the other, but you can't do both." So, Allen came up and then he came back again on numerous occasions. So the foot was in the door, so to speak, but it wasn't very far in the door. Allen had an enormous talent for talking a lot without saying very much.

RITCHIE: Someone else on the committee once said that Allen Dulles never told the committee anything that they couldn't read in the *New York Times* that day.

HOLT: Well, I hadn't checked that out, but that's the general line. Towards the end of his career, when he was sitting there with some of us waiting for members of the committee to appear, to come back from a Vote in the Senate or something, he remarked about how

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valuable it was to smoke a pipe. He said, "You can think of a whole answer to a question while you're trying to light the damn thing." And he went through a lot of matches!

RITCHIE: Going back to one other question I had, would you say that there was a spirit of bi-partisanship on the committee when you came? Was there a basic unanimity between the two parties?

HOLT: Oh, yes, as a matter of fact, for a long time the only strict party line vote that committee took was on an amendment to the Mutual Security Act early in the Eisenhower Administration. The Administration wanted the authority to fire, without regard to the Civil Service Act, people working in the Foreign Aid program above the level of GS-9. The Democrats all voted against it and the Republicans all voted for it, and it was on that earthy political basis that the committee split. On the important issues they were sometimes divided, but they never split along partisan lines. When I got there, there was a division in the committee over China policy. Old Senator H. Alexander Smith of New Jersey in particular was pushing greater support of Chiang-Kai-shek, and Connally was resisting. Other members were somewhere in between. Then of course later on Bill Knowland of California came on the committee and

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also took up the cudgels for Chiang. The committee wasn't always unanimous, but it was never partisan.

RITCHIE: Was that true of the staff as well? Were they basically bi-partisan internationally-minded?

HOLT: Oh, yes. The staff generally kept its personal opinions to itself. We didn't even talk to each other very much about these things. There were differences in approach among staff members. Kalijarvi was essentially a Republican, Marcy and I were essentially Democrats. I don't know where the hell the others were. But we really didn't talk to each other very much about those things. We didn't particularly try to push the committee to come out on one point or another. I think we were all pretty much personally pleased with where the committee came out most of the time. You know, gee whiz, if we hadn't been there, there would have been more turn over on the staff, because you're not going to work for an institution that you think is going in a mistaken direction.

RITCHIE: Could you give an assessment of Tom Connally as chairman of the committee? What kind of a person was he? And was he up for the job of being chairman? I know he had a hard act to follow, following Vandenberg.

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HOLT: Well, yes, I think he was up to the job of being chairman, as the job of being chairman then was generally viewed. Connally, as I indicated earlier, sort of started from the premise that he was a Democrat and Truman was a Democrat and they ought to pretty much go down the same road, and that the president had a preeminent role in foreign policy. This did not stop Connally from opposing the president when he disagreed with him. I don't off-hand think of any major issue of foreign policy on which Connally did so. He did so on a lot of domestic issues. Connally had great influence in the Senate. He had been there a long time. He was a member of the "Inner Club." He was a very strong personality, witty and sarcastic as hell in debate, thought very well on his feet. He had a different situation as chairman than Vandenberg had.

Even before Vandenberg became chairman, Vandenberg took a position which was somewhat more internationalist than had been the traditional position of the Republican Party. Vandenberg had to manage things so that he brought other Republicans in the Senate along with him on this, which is one reason he negotiated so hard and so skillfully with the Truman Administration about the organization of the Marshall Plan, and who would run it, and so on. Connally did not have this situation to deal with, so far as the other Democrats in the Senate were concerned. I

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guess what I'm saying is that Connally had more troops than Vandenberg had. You know, if you just think back about the other Democrats I mentioned who were on the committee when I came there, these were powerful men in the Senate in their own right: Walter George, Millard Tydings, Brien McMahon, and so on.

RITCHIE: Well, there was a year or so after Connally became chairman that Vandenberg was still on the committee. How did Vandenberg operate in the minority having been on the majority? I get the impression of him as being a dominating personality.

HOLT: Well, I think that impression is correct. He was certainly a strong personality. By the time I started to work for the committee, Vandenberg was sick. If I remember I started in February and Vandenberg died about July or sometime that summer. He was not around the committee very much after I joined the staff. I had of course known him some what before I joined the staff. I had seen him and Connally operate together. That's a pretty good example of some of the personal relationships that I think make the Senate such a great institution and make it work as well as it does. Connally and Vandenberg really didn't like each other very much, but they each knew that they damn well had to get along with the other one and that nothing

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would be gained by having a fuss. This was more a difference of personality than it was a difference of view about policy. They were both pretty vain and had large and fragile egos. But in this respect they weren't any different from any other person in the Senate. You know, by definition senators are vain and have large egos. Geez, if they didn't they'd never go through what they have to do to become a senator!

But I think Connally was a little jealous of Vandenberg's publicity and public image as a statesman and so on. And I think Vandenberg probably thought he was smarter than Connally. I never heard any of this from Vandenberg. I did hear some of it from Connally in very private, unguarded moments. In public and even in dealing with each other in small groups they put these things aside, and each one knew that he couldn't do very much without the concurrence of the other one, and took steps to get the concurrence. They were very correct in their dealings.

RITCHIE: You said that Connally originally approached you on the issue of coming on the staff to help him with his reelection campaign.

HOLT: Yes.

RITCHIE: But as it turned out he didn't have a reelection campaign.

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HOLT: That's right.

RITCHIE: In effect, politics passed him by in Texas in that election. And the same thing happened to Walter George in 1956. What is it about being chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee that doesn't appeal to voters--especially in southern states that reelect every other chairman?

HOLT: Mainly, as a result of the Connally and George experiences, and I guess also Wiley who was defeated, although he had ceased to be chairman by that point, there sort of grew up some conventional wisdom around here that being chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee was the kiss of death. I'm not sure that's right. What happened to Connally and what happened to George, and indeed what happened to Fulbright in '74, I think, is more readily explicable in more basic political terms. Here's a guy who's getting pretty old--Fulbright wasn't as old as Connally and George, he was sixty-nine when he was defeated and he didn't look that--but anyway he's getting old, which means he's been out of the state for a long time. He tends to lose touch. Your last election ortwo has been pretty easy, and as you put it a while ago, politics just sort of passes you by.

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I think the Foreign Relations thing maybe had more influence in Connally's case than it did in the others, because this was 1952, the Korean war was still going on, it was unpopular as hell at that point, nothing like Vietnam became, but people didn't like it. There had been all the hullabaloo only the year before about the firing of MacArthur; the McCarthy thing was still in full swing; Millard Tydings was defeated in '50. Connally was sort of tarred, or at least stained with this. But the main thing was that there was a whole new generation of politicians in Texas that were ambitious as hell, and just passed him by. The same thing happened to George in '56, and George didn't have the baggage of Korea and McCarthy and all of that that Connally had, but he could see the handwriting on the wall.

RITCHIE: So basically Connally tested the waters and realized there was no chance for him and then decided not to run.

HOLT: Yes.

RITCHIE: When Connally stepped down as chairman, and at the same time the Republicans took control of the 83rd Congress, did you wonder about your future with the Foreign Relations Committee?

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HOLT: Oh, hell yes, we all did. At some point in that interregnum, Wilcox said, "You know, if I have anything to do with it I want you to stay." I guess Connally also put in a good word with Wiley. I remember the first meeting the Foreign Relations Committee had after the Republicans took over in '53. They ran all the staff out of the room. We were sitting there in that back room in the Capitol, and geez it seemed like it was going on interminably. Marcy or Wilcox or somebody said, "I haven't been so nervous since my Ph.D. orals." It went on and on and on, and finally somebody dared to crack the door and peek into the room, and hell they had all gone--which is typical of senators, you know, they'd never think to tell somebody waiting on them that they're through; they just walk out the damn door. I don't know how long they'd been gone, but Wilcox ran Wiley down and Wiley said, "Oh, yes, we're not going to make any changes in the staff except that I want Julius Cahn on the staff."

RITCHIE: Did you notice any changes in the way the committee did business under the Republicans than under the Democrats? Was there any noticeable change in the tempo or the tone of the committee?

HOLT: No, not really. They instituted a rule that they wouldn't consider a nomination

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until they had a letter from the Secretary of State or the president or somebody saying that the nominee had been subject to a full field FBI investigation on the basis of which he had been cleared and soon. This was to sort of plan a backfire against McCarthy. The first big issue I remember before that committee while Wiley was chairman was over the nomination of Chip Bohlen to be ambassador to the Soviet Union. The Republicans made a big fuss about it. I guess however it was mainly McCarthy. I don't remember any Republican who was on the Taft, who had committee who was making much of a fuss. come on the committee that January, was sort of privately and quietly outraged by McCarthy with respect to Bohlen, and it was Taft who primarily carried the load getting Bohlen confirmed.

RITCHIE: He was a man of principle.

HOLT: Yes. McCarthy kept making a fuss about what was in Bohlen's FBI file, and the Eisenhower Administration was following the practice of the Truman Administration and was adamant in refusing to allow anybody on the Hill look at an FBI file. Finally the committee said to them, "Look, if you want this nomination confirmed somebody up here has got to look at that damn file." So an arrangement was made whereby a subcommittee of two, which turned out to be Taft and

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Sparkman, went down to the White House and read the file, and came back and reported to the committee. Sparkman said there's nothing there on any conceivable basis to turn this thing down. Taft was more outraged than Sparkman over the scurrilous character of a lot of the stuff that was in it. They never did describe it in detail. But Taft was very influential in all this.

RITCHIE: Did the committee feel any particular kind of pressure from McCarthy directly?

HOLT: No. He was making speeches in the Senate. He was getting a big play in the media. There was a climate of opinion that was being created. I don't recall that McCarthy came around to the committee. He might have testified, I just don't remember.

RITCHIE: I didn't see very many references to him in the committee's transcripts, even in 1954 when he was the number one national issue. And yet he was spending a lot of time attacking foreign service officers. USIA libraries. Were they keeping a sort of hands-off policy?

HOLT: Well, they weren't going around looking for direct confrontations and that kind of thing. You know they had created the Tydings subcommittee, which pretty well discredited McCarthy's charges, and then

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Tydings was defeated as a consequence. McMahon was a member of that subcommittee and he was reelected that same year, but the Tydings thing sort of shocked a lot of people. The committee dealt with this, to the extent that it did deal with it, indirectly. While McCarthy was investigating USIA, or whatever the hell it was then called, the Foreign Relations Committee was more quietly and less flamboyantly studying the same thing. One of the conclusions of this Foreign Relations subcom. mittee study was that Congress ought to leave it alone for five years, which of course was the opposite of what McCarthy was then doing. Congress then left it alone for fifteen years, which was maybe too long. And the committee did essentially cosmetic things, like the rule I mentioned requiring FBI clearances for nominees.

I don't recall anything else directly having to do with McCarthy, and I don't recall, bearing out what you said, much discussion in the committee. The committee was reasonably passive in the early years of Eisenhower and Dulles and the personnel actions that were taken in the Foreign Service. Scott McLeod, who was a protege of Styles Bridges, went down to be Assistant Secretary for Administration, or whatever they called it then, and cut a pretty wide swath through the Foreign Service. That was the period when the old China hands, John Paton Davis, John Stewart Service, and so on, were sort of drummed out

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of the Foreign Service, and the Foreign Relations Committee really didn't pay much attention to any of this. In retrospect I think they probably should have, but they didn't.

RITCHIE: Did you ever have any personal dealings with McCarthy?

HOLT: After I joined the staff of the committee? No, not really. You know he and I were both around and we would run into each other here and there. Oh, there was one other thing. I guess it was still during the Truman Administration. Truman appointed a fellow in New York, Phillip somebody, and I think it was to be a delegate to the General Assembly about in 1952.

RITCHIE: That wasn't Phillip Jessup?

HOLT: Phillip Jessup, that was it, thank you. McCarthy was reasonably quiet about this, but Harold Stassen made a hell of a fuss, on "soft on Communism," security grounds. Foreign Relations had a subcommittee of which Sparkman was chairman, which went into this. They heard Stassen at length. They heard Jessup. remember Sparkman at the time saying it was the hardest job he'd ever had in the Senate. Of course, he hadn't been in the Senate too long by then, whether held

still say that, don't know. But anyway, as of that time. The upshot of this was that the committee did not act on the nomination.

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Back to my personal dealings with McCarthy, I remember at one point when George was chairman, during a foreign aid debate, McCarthy was heckling George in McCarthy's own inimitable, obnoxious way, about some relatively minor and complicated point in the bill. I was sitting with George on the Senate floor. As I said, it was a relatively minor and complicated point and George really didn't know very much about it. Given the constraints under which the staff operates on the Senate floor in situations like this, I was trying to explain the damn thing to George, with McCarthy keeping up his drumfire of questions. I was whispering in George's ear. McCarthy looked over at me and said, "Let the senator answer. I want the senator's answer, I don't want yours." Of course I couldn't say anything to McCarthy, but silently I looked at him and framed with my lips so he could read them: "You son of a bitch!" George had sufficient presence and prestige in the Senate that he could stare down anybody including McCarthy on a confrontation like that. Damn few senators were going to desert this grand old man from Georgia.

RITCHIE: Well, we've gone only from 1950 to 1954, and I still have a lot of questions left to ask, so I think the best thing would be to hold off now until we can have another session.

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HOLT: Well, some of the stuff we talked about stretches on, I mentioned Kennedy and the subcommittee, and Kennedy didn't come on the committee until 1957.

RITCHIE: But just running on a chronological basis--and there are so many issues in foreign policy in that period. It's probably one of the busiest periods in American history in terms of international relations, so we still have a long road to go here.

[End of Interview #2]