

## Pat M. Holt

Chief of Staff  
Foreign Relations Committee

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**Interview #4**  
**Latin American Specialist**  
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Interviewed by Richard A. Baker

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**RITCHIE:** We've been talking up to now about the 1950's, and I wondered if we could start today with a general description of what you were doing as a committee staff member during that period. What were your functions on the staff?

**HOLT:** There was a lot of variety. You know, the staff was very much smaller then than it became later. It grew a little bit during the 1950's. I started, as I think I said in one of the earlier interviews, sort of as Connally's guy, when he was chairman. I did a lot of press stuff for him, speech writing, and handling mail, and even some Texas politics before he decided not to run in '52. So I was sort of all over the lot. I went to almost all of the hearings and committee meetings and so on. Then I worked into doing substantive things on foreign aid bills as they came along. When Wiley became chairman in '53, he put on a big pitch for the St. Lawrence Seaway, which had been around for twenty years and had always been bottled up. Connally was strongly opposed to it because of the Texas ports,

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but Wiley really pushed it, and I handled the St. Lawrence Seaway legislation as the staff member. I also did a lot of work on the Bricker Amendment, which was not a Foreign Relations Committee matter--it came out of the Judiciary Committee--but since it went to the heart of the treaty-making process the Foreign Relations Committee was much interested in it. Wiley was also a member of the Judiciary Committee and was strongly opposed to it. I did a lot of things to help him with that.

**RITCHIE:** What type of things did you do?

**HOLT:** Well, speeches and arguments or talking points. There was a long process in which the Eisenhower administration tried to find some language that would satisfy [John] Bricker and his people without doing what in their view was unacceptable damage to the treaty-making process. There were *endless* hours spent fooling around with words, you know, what hypothetical situations would this particular formulation apply to, and so on. In this process there were a good many meetings in the White House with Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles and various senators who were interested in it. Wiley's principal function in these

meetings was to stiffen the spine of the Eisenhower administration and keep them from agreeing to something which they would

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probably later regret. I never went to any of these meetings but I wrote an awful lot of talking points for Wiley to use in them. Then I sat with him on the floor of the Senate during the debate on the Bricker amendment, which was eventually defeated by one vote.

**RITCHIE:** Why was Wiley so strongly opposed to it?

**HOLT:** Well, I think he just had a gut feeling that it would do violence to the Constitution, that it would change fundamentally the way in which the United States conducted its foreign relations, and that it was generally a bad idea to have called into question a large body of treaties which had been regarded as standard and unexceptional would no longer be possible.

Wiley, I think, had an unfortunate public image, in that the popular conception of him was sort of as an intellectual lightweight, and a buffoon, and a guy who was clowning around promoting Wisconsin cheese and that sort of thing, which really did him an injustice. He was not the greatest intellect that ever came to the Senate, nor the best lawyer, but he was by no means the worst either. He had a very considerable degree of political courage. There was a substantial mail campaign generated by the supporters of the Bricker Amendment, and Wiley was upon the receiving end of a lot of this. I remember him saying once, "I've got 10,000 letters supporting the Bricker

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Amendment, but three million people voted in Wisconsin in the last election, and I haven't heard from the other 2,990,000 of them." You know, I think if it had not been for Wiley, Eisenhower would have caved in on this thing with Bricker. He very nearly did anyway in connection with the substitute which George finally offered for it. In assessing senators and members of Congress generally people say "his name is on this particular piece of legislation" or so on, I think one of Wiley's greatest accomplishments was something which did not become law, namely the defeat of the Bricker Amendment.

**RITCHIE:** Do you think that Wiley reflected the sentiments of the rest of the Foreign Relations Committee, even though they weren't handling the amendment?

**HOLT:** Well, the Foreign Relations Committee was all over the lot on that thing. Let's see, by the time it came along Connally and Elbert Thomas and Claude Pepper and Millard Tydings and Brien McMahon were gone. Knowland leaned

towards Bricker. Taft really didn't think much of it, but Bricker was his colleague from Ohio and Taft did not get himself in front on that particular issue. And George of course was sort of in the middle, as it turned out. Sort of concurrently with the debate on the Bricker Amendment there arose the issue of the NATO Status of

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Forces Treaty, which was a treaty to regularize the legal status of members of the armed forces stationed in NATO countries. It recognized the fact that the government of the foreign country where these troops were stationed had criminal and civil jurisdiction over them for crimes or other actions taken off the base and off duty. Up to that time, sort of as a hangover from the war, the American army, navy, air force, but the army was mainly involved, had exercised exclusive jurisdiction. Well, that was a situation which could not be sustained over a long term peace time, so the Status of Forces Treaty was negotiated, and it really set off the Brickerites and people who claimed that we were abandoning our boys to Saudi Arabia where they would cut off their hands for stealing a pair of pants in the barracks or something. Saudi Arabia wasn't involved in this, but we did have troops in Saudi Arabia then, air force personnel. Turkey was a member of NATO. So there was a big, big fuss about this.

I did the staff work on the NATO Status of Forces Treaty, and Bricker offered a reservation to it, the effect of which would have been to gut the treaty, to negate it. Taft came up with a compromise which everybody could live with. I remember going into Taft's office as majority leader, I guess this was really the legislative thing that Taft was involved with; he died shortly

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thereafter. But I went in to see him to talk about the problem which this treaty and the Bricker reservation presented. He called in a secretary and sort of off the top of his head dictated a compromise or substitute for Bricker's reservation, which was rather artfully done. It had a lot of good words in it and didn't say very much! And when he was through he very off-handedly said to me, "Let's try this on Bricker." He said, "I think Bricker is so tied up with his amendment that he really won't push this other thing too much." And indeed that turned out to be the case, and Taft prevailed upon his substitute. In large part because of Taft's personal prestige in the Senate and particularly among the Republicans--you know, nobody could accuse Taft of selling out the United States. Then very shortly after that he went to the hospital for the last time.

Let's see, what else did I do? I did some work on the subcommittee which spent '52, '53, studying the overseas information programs. That subcommittee was followed by one to study technical assistance programs, and I was the Principal staff man on that. We wrote some staff studies, we got some good help from what was then the Legislative Reference Service, we organized some hearings with

outside people, we did some traveling. The subcommittee made a report in '56, I think it was, which I think would stand up pretty well today. Mansfield was the chairman of that

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subcommittee. During most of the '50's everybody on the staff was a kind of a utility infielder, because of the smallness of the staff, and so most of us at one time or another got involved in everything major that came along. For purposes of the committee calendar and also for purposes just to be sure that somebody was paying attention, we did rather grandly parlay out the world among ourselves and say so-and-so will be in charge of Europe, so-and-so the Far East, and what not. I handled the Middle East for a while during that. I did some work on NATO, I mentioned the Status of Forces Treaty. I made a long trip in '57 I guess with Senator Green, during which we visited every NATO country, beginning with Canada and ending with Turkey.

Then in 1958 Al Freeman of the staff left to go to one of the United Nations agencies. He had been the fellow who handled Latin America, to the extent that Latin America was handled at all, which wasn't very great. So we were casting about for somebody to inherit Freeman's assignment. Somebody said, "Oh, give it to Pat, at least he's been there. There's nothing happening there and it won't add anything to his workload." Well, this was about January or February and in April or May Nixon made his famous trip to Latin America as vice president and was stoned and spit upon in Caracas. Wayne Morse, who was then chairman of the Latin American subcommittee, said, "We're in

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trouble in Latin America. We've got to make an in-depth study to find out why and what to do about it." So I was put in charge of that study, and spent most--by no means all--of my time on Latin American affairs for the next fifteen years.

**RITCHIE:** Didn't you work previously with that subcommittee when Bourke Hickenlooper was chairman? You mentioned something about that earlier.

**HOLT:** I had been assigned to it earlier, yes, during the Hickenlooper period and the Guatemalan affair. In those days we used to trade these off every couple of years or so, and Al Freeman came on the staff in the meantime. Al really had a background in Latin America which I didn't have. I just came in cold. Al had lived there, held been with the United States delegation to the Inter-American Court of Justice, or something like that, and he spoke Spanish--which I did not in those days. So he did it. But there really wasn't all that much to be done. I remember in those early days during one of the arguments over what staff size ought to be, somebody made the point that the committee did not really need an expert on everything, that if we were organized that way on the staff the poor guy who had

the Far East would work nights and weekends, while the guy who had Latin America would go out and play golf every afternoon.

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**RITCHIE:** Am I right in thinking that the senators picked their subcommittees in terms of the potential publicity that would be involved with them, that certain subcommittees had a lot more glamour to them than others, and that the junior senators got committees like Latin America?

**HOLT:** No, I don't think that's right really. Certainly not to the extent that its the case now. Subcommittees in those days didn't really amount to all that much, and since in the beginning certainly just about all their meetings were executive and off-the-record there was not very much potential for publicity anyway. This was not universally the case. I mentioned at an earlier time the difficulty we had finding somebody to be chairman of the African subcommittee. But I suppose it was not until the study of Latin America that Morse pushed, inspired by the Nixon trip, that the consultative subcommittees began to receive very much attention. The reports of the subcommittees studying the information program and the technical assistance program attracted attention, but that was pretty much a one-shot deal. Those subcommittees also held some hearings which attracted some attention, but not enough to make that a determining factor, I don't think.

**RITCHIE:** What type of a person was Wayne Morse to work for?

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**HOLT:** I always got along with him very well. He gave the staff considerable freedom. He relied on the staff to a considerable degree for ideas and suggestions and how do you implement an idea which Morse himself had, or which had been suggested to him from outside. He was given to lavish praise of the staff, particularly in public, which usually preceded some particularly onerous assignment. He had a kind of pixyish sense of humor. With a straight face at some point he instructed me to draft articles of impeachment against John Foster Dulles! I reminded him that under the Constitution that had to originate in the House. He prided himself on being a constitutional lawyer, and said rather ascerbicly: "I know that; draft them anyway!" So I really did spend some time--or had the LRS spend some time--looking for precedents on how articles of impeachment were drafted. I don't think I'd ever seen any up to that point. Then it turned out he wasn't serious about it anyway.

At one point, I guess, he was chairman of the Committee on the District of Columbia, he was certainly very active on it. He became outraged one time because the Senate defeated an amendment he offered to include laundry workers in the District of Columbia under the minimum wage law. I've forgotten

what the minimum wage was then, but you know it was not as much as it is now. So as a con-

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sequence of the Senate rejecting this amendment, he offered a resolution to reduce the salaries of all the Senate staff to whatever it was that was the average wage of laundry workers in the District of Columbia, which was even less than the minimum wage. He came into the Foreign Relations Committee room late one afternoon, just so pleased with himself and said, "Well, I've fixed Holt and Marcy now," and told us what he had done. I said, "If you'll pay time and a half we'll still come out ahead!"

He used the staff to get rid of importuning constituents or other people. He would frequently call up and say, "Come over to my office right away," or sometimes he would come into your office with somebody in tow, and say, "This is Mr. So-and-so who is a valued friend of mine, he's done outstanding work in this that or the other thing, and he's got this problem in Argentina or wherever." Then he would introduce you to Mr. So-and-so as the greatest living expert on Argentina or whatever his problem was, and say, "I want you to take care of it and report to me." After a few occurrences like this it became plain that he never wanted to hear the God damn problem again and you weren't really supposed to take all of this build-up seriously. He never said it, he just made it plain by his lack of interest thereafter. He was very supportive of that staff.

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In 1967, I guess it was, he conceived the idea, at least I guess he conceived it--it certainly didn't originate with the staff--of a major study of the Alliance for Progress and why it hadn't worked any better than it had, and I was also in charge of that one. Most of it was done by outside contractors or consultants, but one of the segments dealt with labor in Latin America and the relationship with labor in the United States, and we couldn't find what I thought was an adequate outsider to do this, so we hired temporarily a young fellow from the OAS Secretariat, named Bob Dockery. Dockery spent about a year doing this study, went around talking to a lot of people, and it came out to be quite critical of the AFL-CIO and particularly an organization called the American Institute for Free Labor Development. This was something very dear to George Meany's heart. By this time, Morse was involved in his 1968 reelection campaign, which turned out to be unsuccessful, and he'd always had strong labor support in Oregon. I said to him, "You know, I think this is a good study, it's objective; the study itself did not really criticize AIFLD, but it said a lot of things about what AIFLD had done that hadn't been done before, and I said to Morse, "George Meany won't like it worth a damn, you ought to know that." He said, "I don't care what George Meany likes or doesn't like. If you think this is accurate,

print it." So we did, and sure enough George Meany didn't like it worth a damn. Morse was very polite to Meany, he even had a hearing of the subcommittee in which Meany could come and spread his objections on the record, but he never backed off an inch from what was in that study. He was a very courageous guy, also astute as hell as a politician, which I guess is how he got away with it!

**RITCHIE:** That first year that you became a specialist in Latin America started out with Nixon and ended with Castro's revolution in Cuba. All of this seems to have come as a great shock to the committee, they seemed very perplexed with what was going on. Was that your sense of their reaction?

**HOLT:** You mean in Cuba?

**RITCHIE:** Yes.

**HOLT:** No, I don't think so really. Going back even to '57, that subcommittee in '57 and '58 held a number of these private, off-the-record consultative meetings with Dick Rubottom who was then Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America, and I don't think the senators who paid attention, this being mainly Morse, Hickenlooper, and Aiken, were under any particular illusions about what was happening down there, or with respect

to Castro. Now, a lot of the popular discussion of this period has been in terms of whether or not Castro was a Communist or an "instrument of the Kremlin," and who recognized this at what point in time, and that kind of thing. That was not really the issue as it was seen, either by the subcommittee or by Rubottom. The other side of the issue in public discussion had Castro as a sort of Robin Hood figure up there in the mountains. Herbert Matthews of the *New York Times* contributed a lot to this, a romantic figure who was going to overthrow this son-of-a-bitch Batista and bring democracy--in the Anglo sense--to Cuba. Neither the subcommittee nor Rubottom had any illusions about that. Castro was viewed, whether he was a Communist or not, as a mercurial, very unreliable, and largely unknown quantity, and the dilemma with which the subcommittee and Rubottom wrestled was that in their view--which I think was correct--Batista had no future in Cuba. It would not be in the United States' interest that Castro run Cuba, therefore the problem became to find somebody other than either Batista or Castro and see if the United States government still had enough influence to bring him to power in Havana. It proved to be impossible to find anybody, but God knows they looked. The committee didn't look, the State Department did and reported to the committee about it, and the committee hemmed and hawed and

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stroked its beard figuratively and so on. The triumph of the Castro revolution on New Year's Day 1959 was generally greeted with approval in the United States, and indeed throughout the hemisphere, not because of Castro, but because of Batista. Everybody was glad to get rid of him.

This consensus of approval was very short lived, and I guess the first guy to break it was Wayne Morse, who became very upset over the summary executions that shortly followed in Cuba, and made some speeches about it in the Senate. Morse also strongly encouraged the State Department and the White House to get an American ambassador in place in Cuba. The guy we'd had down there had left, but Morse said we needed an ambassador in Havana, and fairly promptly--there was a delay of two or three weeks--the White House sent Phil Bonsai, who was one of the better old Latin America hands around the State Department. The committee, I think by this time the full committee was getting interested in what was going on down there, brought Luis Munoz Marin, the Governor of Puerto Rico and one of the grand old liberals of the Caribbean, up to talk about it. Munoz's message was: "Be patient, give this thing a chance," which sort of impressed Fulbright, but was very rapidly taken over by events. The Eisenhower administration was being much more stand-offish, to put it mildly, towards Cuba than was the

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committee, and was resisting suggestions that Castro be invited to Washington, or that contact with him be established at a higher level than simply having Phil Bonsal as ambassador to Havana. This was taken out of the administration's hands by the American Society of Newspaper Editors who invited Castro to address them at their spring meeting in 1959. So Castro and this bearded, guntoting entourage in fatigues, with hair down to their shoulders, and so on, descended on Washington.

The Foreign Relations Committee invited Castro to an off-the-record meeting, and he came with a large entourage. A lot of senators turned out, including a number who were not members of the committee. The meeting was less satisfactory than it should have been, because although interpreters were available and present, Castro insisted on speaking English which he then did very poorly, so that it was difficult to understand what the hell it was he was trying to say. He made the point that Cuba wanted to diversify its foreign trade, it was too dependent on sugar--you know there's nothing very revolutionary about that thought. The atmosphere of the meeting was somewhere between warm and friendly on one hand and hostile on the other. Currect but a little bit at arms' length and reserving judgment, which was really not too different from Munoz' advice to be patient and give it time. And then things began to go downhill.



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Disillusionment began to set in, not just in the United States but throughout the area. I made a trip in the fall of '59, a long trip--actually it was two trips unbroken by a return to the United States--around Latin America. I started out with Aiken and went around and then put Aiken on an airplane home from Panama, and the next day Morse came through Panama and I joined him and we went around in the other direction. This was the fall of 1959 and people like Romulo Betancourt in Venezuela and Pepe Figueres in Costa Rica were saying in effect that the "bloom is off the rose," of the Castro revolution. They were then saying it privately; they came to say it publicly later. This impressed both Aiken and Morse, but they didn't really do anything about it that I recall then, not that I suppose there was a great deal to be done.

**RITCHIE:** How did you go about making yourself a Latin America expert in those days?

**HOLT:** Well, in the beginning I read a lot. I talked to a bunch of people in and out of government. The study that resulted from the Nixon trip was very largely if not entirely done by outside contractors and consultants, most of whom were academics, and in the process of looking for people to do these things and negotiating contracts, and so on, that process gave me

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entree into the world of academia dealing with Latin America. I began to study Spanish. I didn't really learn very much until later when I lived in Latin America. And of course I traveled a lot. I mentioned that long trip with Aiken and Morse. I had been around Latin America before with Green and with Hickenlooper and I went again with Hickenlooper. By that time the committee was allowing its staff to travel by themselves, and I did a good deal of that.

**RITCHIE:** What kind of a perception did you have about United States relations with Latin America at that time?

**HOLT:** This is the late '50's you're talking about?

**RITCHIE:** Yes.

**HOLT:** I think I was sort of caught up with the then prevailing--or what shortly became the prevailing view in the United States that we ought to do something, for God's sake. The 1950's were a period of political change in Latin America in the sense that a series of dictators were replaced by democrats, or at least popularly elected governments. Dictators acquired a bad name. Peron was overthrown in Argentina in '55 and guess that started it. Odria in Peru went out in '56. Rojas Pinilla in Columbia in '57. Perez Jimenez in

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Venezuela in '58. Batista in '59. A little bit later Trujillo in the Dominican Republic. Some of the people who followed these dictators were really very impressive in terms of their vision and perception and leadership qualities, particularly Alberto Lleras Camargo in Columbia and Betancourt in Venezuela. A lot of people around the United States, including me, thought that it was very much in the national interest of the United States for these people to succeed in establishing viable, open, liberal political systems, and that the alternative to this was social turmoil and probably Communism. We were still pretty much influenced by the atmosphere of the Cold War at that point. There was a book at that time by Karl Schmitt and David Kirks on this whole thing and they gave it the title *Evolution or Chaos*, and that pretty well summed up the way I and some other people were thinking.

**RITCHIE:** Up to that point the only real activity I can see in the Foreign Relations Committee annually was Senator George Smathers of Florida would come up with a multi-million dollar development loan proposal for Latin America that never got anywhere.

**HOLT:** Well, what did get somewhere were two or three Smathers' amendments for relatively insignificant sums, like fifteen or twenty-five million, for demonstration projects for water, or sewers, or health,

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or education, and for housing guarantees or self-help housing projects. This reflected the view which a lot of people had then that if you could show people how to do something so that they would be better off then this would be sort of contagious and they would do more of it on their own. The history of the last twenty or twenty five years makes that seem sort of naive, but there were a lot of people around, I'm afraid including me, who thought it was a valid idea at the time.

**RITCHIE:** Just moving a little bit off the Latin American subject but also on the subject of aid, it seemed that the largest share of the committee's time was spent on foreign aid in the 1950s. That seemed to have the most extensive hearings, which went on and on forever, when you're trying to read through them. What would happen there--would everyone who specialized in a different area pool their resources for the foreign aid discussion? It seemed like there was a large number of staff sitting in on foreign aid meetings. Did each baliwick then try to shape the final outcome and distribution of funds?

**HOLT:** No, not really. There were a lot of staff people involved in it, but it wasn't divided up as neatly as you suggest. I had started working on foreign aid legislation I guess the first, or second, or third

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year I was on the staff. At some point during the '50's I became the member of the staff primarily responsible for foreign aid legislation, which was in addition to all these other things I did that we've been talking about. My concern was with the whole damn bill worldwide, but I had help from other people on the staff. There were, and still are although they handle it differently now, essentially two broad problems involved here. One is the program itself, what does the administration intend to do with all this damn money they're asking for, and are these the right things and the right amounts, or should you go off in one direction or another. And the other is the framework of legislative authority and restrictions in which this is done. Some of the legislative framework gets extraordinarily complicated, it's become much more complicated over the year as there has been an accretion of barnacles added to it. But in the process of committee consideration of foreign aid bills this distinction was not really made all that clearly; these things sort of blended in with each other.

**RITCHIE:** Well, there had to be a lot of compromises made. Everybody couldn't get everything they wanted, and be happy with what came out.

**HOLT:** That's right. I suppose it's fair to say that very rarely was anybody completely happy with what came out.

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**RITCHIE:** You had to deal with the House on that, unlike a lot of other foreign policy issues the House was very much involved in the money end of it.

**HOLT:** Right.

**RITCHIE:** As a staff member did you have to deal with the staff or the members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee?

**HOLT:** Oh, yes. These contacts were not as frequent or as extensive as one might think. They revolved mainly around conference committees and the writing of conference reports and that kind of thing.

**RITCHIE:** Every once in a while I find the various members of the committee saying something like: "We can't cut this amount too much, because when we get to the conference we're just going to split the difference with the House." Is that an accurate summary of the way the decisions were made?

**HOLT:** Well, in the period we're talking about, yes. There was a kind of a charade in which senators in the mark-up sessions, which were then held privately, would say, "This is going to be cut on the floor." And the implication of that was, "Let's

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not cut it very much here." The other side of the argument was, "if we don't cut it here to some extent, it's going to be cut even more on the floor." Then of course there was the problem of how do you adjust it in conference. Money issues in conference were almost always split down the middle. The really difficult issues in new money problems. The Senate in conference concerned non one of those years voted to finance the program with public debt transactions, which would bypass the appropriations; process, and there was the long argument with the House about that. The House ultimately prevailed. This had to do I guess with the creation of the Development Loan Fund. The Senate got on a kick for a while of favoring multi-year authorizations, which the House very strongly resisted, and generally prevailed on. There were very, very long and tedious conferences through a good deal of this period. House conferees generally seemed to be more devoted to upholding the House position, one could say stubbornner than Senate conferees. They were almost always better briefed with respect to the details and minutia involved than were senators. They spent more time on it, and they did their home work on it.

**RITCHIE:** Why do you think that was?

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**HOLT:** Well, I think the basic reason is that a member of the House didn't have as much to do as a member of the Senate. In those days members of the House served on only one committee. Senators served on at least two. Members of the House have more frequent elections, but they have fewer constituents involved in the elections.

**RITCHIE:** I know the senators seemed to rely very heavily on the staff for those minutia. Large portions of the executive session transcripts seemed to be taken up with just trying to find what paragraph it is they are talking about, what page in the bill. And there were very elaborate briefing books.

**HOLT:** Yes.

**RITCHIE:** Although some of them came in very well briefed on the items they wanted to add into the bill, a lot of them seemed to have pet interests that they pushed from Congress to Congress.

**HOLT:** Yes.

**RITCHIE:** I also wanted to ask you about what role the Senate Appropriations Committee played in all of this, and whether or not you had to deal with them. Once you passed your bill, didn't it depend on how much money they were going to appropriate?

**HOLT:** Sure, there were a series of whacks taken at foreign aid money every year, in the Foreign Relations and Foreign Affairs Committees in authorizing legislation, in the House and the Senate in the authorizing bills, and then again in the appropriations committees, and again on the floor of the House and Senate. Most of the time the Foreign Relations Committee sort of left the Appropriations Committee alone in this connection. There were some overlaps in membership--I don't at this point remember who those overlapping members were in the period we're talking about, but there were two or three. Every once in a while, with respect to a particular item, a member of the Foreign Relations Committee would lobby the Appropriations Committee or some members of it, but there was not really all that much contact.

**RITCHIE:** Some of the Appropriations Committee staff members took particular interest in questions of foreign aid. Just recently there was an article in the *Washington Monthly* on William Jordan, who has spent some twenty years or more overseeing the AID programs. It must have seemed somewhat frustrating after all the work you did on a foreign aid bill then to have in effect a final arbiter beyond you.

**HOLT:** I didn't think Bill Jordan had been around that long. Certainly I didn't know him

then. The staff member of the Appropriations Committee that we dealt with was Tom Scott, who was the staff director, and whom you also ought to interview. Tom was a thoroughly professional fellow and there was never any friction, conflict, frustration, or anything else. No, I don't think it bothered me in the sense that you suggest. I guess it did a little bit in the early days, and you know there were debates in the Senate over foreign aid appropriations just as there were over authorizations. People were mainly trying to cut them, but sometimes trying to raise them.

**RITCHIE:** It seems fairly consistent in that period that the House would make severe cuts in the foreign aid program and the Senate would be the agency to restore the cuts, usually after a lot of administration urging.

**HOLT:** I think that's right. Of course, that's true with appropriations generally. As a matter of fact for a long time the Senate Appropriations Committee acted mainly as a body to which the administration could appeal House reductions in appropriations, whether we're talking about foreign aid or the forest service. The Senate Appropriations Committee wouldn't even consider an item in a House bill that had not been reduced or that the administration wasn't appealing something about. I guess maybe it's still that way, but I'm not sure.

**RITCHIE:** All this period we've been talking about, '58 to '59, was when Theodore Francis Green was chairman of the committee. He was chairman for about a year.

**HOLT:** A couple of years as I recall. I think he left in '59, and became chairman at the beginning of '57 when George left.

**RITCHIE:** Green was at that time close to ninety years old.

**HOLT:** He had his ninetieth birthday in 1957, yes.

**RITCHIE:** Was he too old to be chairman of the committee? Was he still functioning effectively?

**HOLT:** I think one would have to say no. There might be a little question about the month of January 1957 when he became chairman, but no it was all down hill from there on.

**RITCHIE:** Can you give any examples of the problems his age caused? And how did the staff cope with it?

**HOLT:** A part of the problem was that Green was always, or at least for so long as I knew

him, a demon about minutia. This particular preoccupation became much more pronounced as he became older. It was just increasingly difficult to get him to focus on what the damn substantive problem was, as distinguished from whether one uses "that" or "which" in a particular part of a memo dealing with the problem. He once took up a considerable amount of time arguing that the word refugee, was incorrectly used. That it ought to be "refuger," referring to one who had taken or sought refuge, and that the refugee would be the situation from which the refuge was taken or sought. Well, I suppose linguistically he had a point, but it was the kind of thing that would just drive other members of the committee absolutely through the ceiling.

**RITCHIE:** He also seemed determined to make everyone live up to the ten-minute rule in asking questions. That drew a lot of friction from senators who felt themselves cut off from questioning.

**HOLT:** I don't particularly remember that, but it's certainly in character.

**RITCHIE:** At this time the committee seemed to be getting some bad press. There was a lot of criticism that it was doing increasing amounts of its work in closed session. Was there any sense that Green

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was a detriment to the committee and to the Democratic majority on the committee?

**HOLT:** Well, yes there was, but I don't think it had much to do with closed-door sessions. The committee, the Congress as a whole for that matter, has always had a bad press on that point. Some of it deserved, some of it not. The problem has been ameliorated with the passage of sunshine rules and things like that, which have created other problems of their own, but that's a separate issue. I suppose that there was some reluctance to expose this old man in public, to provide the spectacle of his trying to preside over something that he really wasn't quite up to. But along that line a much more acute problem had to do with managing legislation on the floor of the Senate. You know, he would--and I guess most of the legislation in the two years we're talking about had to do with foreign aid--he would be given a set speech, which he would go over fretting over the difference between "that" and "which" and such things. He didn't see too well or hear too well by this point. He'd get up in the Senate and mumble-stumble through a speech and was not very well able to respond to questions or to deal with amendments as they came up. This just sort of had to be very informally parceled out among other members of the committee, and Lyndon Johnson, who was then majority leader.

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His age caused a couple of other problems, particularly for the staff. After a closed door meeting, Green was really not up to the task of briefing the press. The staff in those days was much more reluctant to talk to the press than it is now, and yet some part of the story had to be gotten to them if the reporting was going to be accurate and not misleading and cause a lot of unnecessary confusion. The problem of arranging the committee's agenda and scheduling meetings and that kind of thing largely fell to the staff. It just got less guidance from the chairman than it was accustomed to before or since.

**RITCHIE:** I notice that the difference between hearings in 1958 and 1959 was almost two to one. There were almost twice as many hearings in '59 as there were in '58.

**HOLT:** Really?

**RITCHIE:** And I wondered if that was another reflection of Green's chairmanship?

**HOLT:** Well, it might have been. I wasn't aware of that difference.

**RITCHIE:** Can you relate the way about how they finally came to convince Green to step down as chairman?

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**HOLT:** Oh, yes. This was a brilliant example of Lyndon Johnson's talent to manage people. It began with an editorial in the Providence, Rhode Island, *Journal*, which was headed "Step Down, Senator Green," or something like that. Anyway the point was that Green had gotten too old for the job. What particular incident provoked the editorial I no longer remember, maybe it had been an accumulation of things. Green was always given to fairly blunt and forthright comments about things. He was really very liberal. He was very sympathetic to what is now known as the Third World and anti-colonialism, and nationalism and so on. For a long time he from time to time offended our friends in Europe with remarks, not to mention a lot of people in the United States. As he became older and his hearing failed he would frequently say things like this that were really *non sequiturs*. There were a number of *faux pas* of this nature in '58. Whether that is what provoked the editorial, I don't know. I suspect the editorial might really have been inspired by Carl Marcy in a conversation with one of the *Journal's* Washington correspondents. You ought to interview Marcy as part of this series and get his version of these events as well.

Anyway, Lyndon Johnson seized on the editorial to call Green and tell him how outraged Johnson was by the editorial. The burden of Johnson's message was "Gee whiz these people in Providence have no idea how much work it is to be chair-

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man of the Foreign Relations Committee and what a heavy burden you're carrying. A man who has had your distinguished record of public service really ought not to be subjected to this at your stage in life. You've earned respite and relaxation and here you are with the burdens of the world on your shoulders and these ingrates in Providence are saying you ought to quit." The point was, Green really did have a pretty crummy job that he didn't have to do. I guess Johnson sent Bobby Baker over to make the same point to Green. Over a period of days, or a few weeks, this seed began to grow in Green's mind, and he said, "Well, maybe I don't have to be chairman. I can continue in the Senate and on the committee and let somebody else do all this dirty work.

So Johnson grabbed this before the old man could change his mind, and although he wasn't even a member of the committee he called a meeting of the committee to deal with this. Johnson presided at the damn meeting. All the committee was there, as I recall, certainly most of them. Johnson went through this spiel again, about how Theodore had come to him and asked to be relieved and Johnson had



plead with him to continue this noble work he was doing, but Theodore was adamant and Johnson had in fairness to recognize that he did deserve some relief despite the added burdens that it would throw on Johnson as Majority Leader, he would no longer have Theodore to rely on for

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foreign policy or managing legislation, but he hoped he'd still get his advice, and wisdom, and judgment. Oh God, it was pretty thick! But this was a matter Johnson thought that the committee ought to decide. He called on every member of the committee to express their views on it, and they went around the table and every member repeated one way or the other what Johnson had just said. They almost laid it on too thick, because the old man began to waiver. He was really quite touched with this display of affection and support and asked leave of the committee to retire into the inner room, over there in the Capitol, and consider the matter briefly. Well, the committee granted him leave to do this, and he got up to go, and Johnson turned around to Marcy who was sitting behind him and said in a whisper: "Go with him. Don't let him change his mind!" And Marcy went out with him, and in the inner room was Eddie Higgins, who was Green's long-time administrative assistant. Green said to Eddie: "They want me to continue as chairman, what should I do?" And Eddie said: "Don't do it Senator, don't let them talk you out of this." So he hemmed and hawed a little bit and came back and said well, he really felt he must be adamant in his desire for relief. And everybody present breathed a sigh of relief. Then the transition was delayed for three or four weeks as I recall, because Fulbright would become chair

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man of Foreign Relations, but Fulbright then was chairman of what was then called Banking and Currency. He would be succeeded at Banking and Currency by Willis Robertson of Virginia, and there was a housing bill coming along which Johnson wanted and Fulbright supported but which Robertson opposed. Johnson didn't want the change in chairmanship of Banking and Currency to occur before the housing bill was through the Senate, so that delayed it a little bit. In the process of accepting Green's resignation as chairman, the committee voted to create the office of "Chairman Emeritus" and bestow it on Green, and he reveled in this title--so much so that a couple of years later, when he left the Senate at the end of his term he used to show up unannounced for committee meetings and complain bitterly to the staff that he no longer received notices of the committee meetings, and there was a tricky period of some months before he went back to Rhode Island.

**ITCHIE:** Well, with Green's retirement as chairman, Fulbright became chairman and that started a whole new era for the committee. I think we would be best to begin our next interview with Fulbright.

[End of Interview #4]

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