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Interview #3:
Congress and the Cold War
(Wednesday, March 21, 1984)
Interviewed by Donald A. Ritchie

RITCHIE: Today I'd like to continue on where we left off, in 1950, and I was wondering if you could tell me anything about the Tydings subcommittee that the Foreign Relations Committee created in 1950 to investigate the charges that Joseph McCarthy was bringing against the State Department. It was in February 1950 that he made his speech at Wheeling, West Virginia and shortly after that Senator Connally appointed a special subcommittee with Millard Tydings as chairman, and Brien McMahon, Theodore Green, Henry Cabot Lodge, and Bourke Hickenlooper as the other members. Did you work on that subcommittee in your role as staff director?

WILCOX: You've raised a question that I haven't thought of for a long time. As staff director I had something to do with the subcommittee. I don't remember now how precisely we divided up the responsibilities, but the task was a fairly important one and I think that several of us had a hand in it. A suggestion was made at the outset that a special investigative staff should be hired to conduct a thorough-going investigation of the charges. But this idea was sidetracked. Only a few names were ever produced and only a very few individuals were ever investigated. None of the charges were ever proved. But I know that the investigation got Senator Tydings,

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because he lost the election when he ran the next time. He was one of the few people in the Senate who had the courage to stand up and say what he thought about Senator McCarthy and the harm that he was doing to his country and to our foreign policy. I think it's a tragic admission to say that he had to pay the penalty for that courage of his, because the people of Maryland apparently didn't like to condemn or criticize Senator McCarthy at that time. But there weren't very many senators who had the courage to stand up in the early days of McCarthy's rampage and denounce him as they should. Senator [Margaret Chase] Smith was one who did, Senator McMahon, Senator Fulbright; Senator Tydings was I think the principal one, and he paid the

supreme penalty. In any case, most members of the Senate didn't want to be accused of shielding or protecting any Communists that might be in the Department of State.

RITCHIE: Could you tell me a little about Millard Tydings and what kind of a person he was?

WILCOX: Well, he had a pleasing personality. He was very articulate. He did not hesitate to speak his mind on the floor of the Senate. His political philosophy was on the liberal side. I thought on most foreign policy questions he was farsighted and intelligent, and responded in what I thought was a reasonable way. Of course, when I say that, I have to realize that most of the members of the committee were inclined in that direction, too. He was not

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alone in taking a reasonable attitude, because as I said earlier in our discussions, during Senator Vandenberg's tenure as chairman he succeeded in getting a unanimous vote on almost every occasion. This was to a certain extent true of Senator Connally's chairmanship. But I would need to go back in the records in order to recall the procedures used by the Tydings subcommittee. I know we had some hearings and a few who were charged by Senator McCarthy were investigated. In the final analysis, however, the committee got bogged down in politics and never did carry out the "full and complete" investigation of disloyalty in the Department of State it started to do.

I recall on one occasion Senator Knowland's wife being present. There was some question about Senator McCarthy and charges that he had made with respect to Philip Jessup, I think it was. Mrs. Knowland was sitting right next to me. When a book that Philip Jessup had written was referred to, she excitedly said, "Oh, we must get that book, we must get that book right away!" I told her that of course we would get any material that we needed in order to pass judgment on it. But it was a ridiculous sort of thing, because here were people in the Senate who belonged to organizations, for example, the senator from Michigan, who later became a judge, Senator

RITCHIE: Homer Ferguson?

WILCOX: Senator Ferguson. He belonged to the Asia Society, and a number of other responsible people belonged to the Asia

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Society. Senator McCarthy charged, of course, that this was a Communist dominated organization, and when it was pointed out that responsible

Republicans like Senator Ferguson—who was no flaming liberal, he was a capable person but very conservative—when it was pointed out that he belonged, of course this began to take some of the wind out of the McCarthy bag. But this was true of the McCarthy charges generally, as you know—guilt by association. When we were able to show that responsible people belonged to the organizations that these other individuals who were charged with being Communists belonged to, of course it began to show up Senator McCarthy in his true light. It was a terrible period when all kinds of improper things were done in the State Department and on Capitol Hill, when few people had the courage to stand up and speak the truth. Unfortunately a couple of years went by before he met his own fate, I think by drinking too much and gradually losing his supporters.

RITCHIE: His charges were that there were "x" number of alleged Communists in the State Department, which involved quite a bit of investigation of lists and characters of different witnesses, and so on. Did the State Department provide assistance to the committee to try to sort out these charges? How did you make any sense out of this list of supposed Communists?

WILCOX: Well, it was difficult to do. The fact was that the charges were based upon false information, and it was not easy to

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take these lists and prove in each case—and they weren't for the most part, as I recall, made public—he would hold up a piece of paper and say "I have on this sheet a list of 207 people in the State Department who are Communist." This list wouldn't be released. There were a few names that leaked out, but I think in most cases he would just wave the paper and suggest that there were a lot of people on the list who were Communists. It was the threat of exposure and the charge that was involved, and people began to be suspicious of the State Department and of a lot of other organizations where there were supposed to be Communists in hiding, according to McCarthy.

RITCHIE: I was just wondering if the State Department opened up its personnel files and other records for you to examine?

WILCOX: Only to a limited extent. As I recall the executive branch was willing to turn over to the committee their confidential loyalty files of departmental employees who were charged with being Communist. There really was no opportunity to check each individual and go down the long list of people involved. This would have been a tremendously complicated job, and I think most people realized that the charges were flimsy ones and had no substantiation in fact. But it was the way he did it and the pressure he

put on his colleagues in the Senate, and the threat of exposure that was so detrimental. Also he was able to get into the State Department some people on the security side who were sympathetic to his position and who took a

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very damaging position in the Department in persecuting people who were considered a little too liberal for his way of thinking.

This was extremely bad because when I went into the State Department in 1955 there were still some remnants of this fear and concern. McCarthy had, of course, subsided prior to that time, but I remember very well Herbert Hoover [Jr.] saying to me one day, just after I had come to the State Department and had taken over the Bureau of International Organization Affairs, "Fran, I want you to look over your staff pretty carefully. They're a bunch of One Worlders in that staff of yours. I think you ought to be aware of that and be careful how you deal with them." I said, "Well, Herbert, I have not found anything like that among my staff members. All I have found is extremely able, dedicated people. I would not call them One Worlders. They're interested in furthering the foreign policy objectives of the United States, and I think they're extremely capable." That ended the discussion, but it reflects a bit of left-over sentiment about the suspicion that people had for State Department personnel that was created largely during the McCarthy period.

RITCHIE: Did you think that there was any validity at all in McCarthy's charges?

WILCOX: No, because I knew a good many of the people who were charged. For example, I knew Philip Jessup well as an academic. I

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had been in the academic world when he was a leader in the academic community, a professor of international law at Columbia University. I knew him as an extremely able, dedicated, loyal individual, and nothing could be wilder than the charge that he was a Communist. And I knew some of the others who were charged. If I had a list before me I could recall them, but I remember particularly Philip Jessup and John Carter Vincent. McCarthy was inclined to pick out a number of academics who had written in the field of international relations. His staff, I guess, saw some of these writings and didn't like some of the things that were said, so they immediately charged them with being a Communist.

RITCHIE: Owen Lattimore was another one.

WILCOX: Owen Lattimore was one. He was at Johns Hopkins University.

He was—shall I say—somewhat more liberal in his thinking than Philip Jessup, and some people had the feeling that his association with the ideas of Communism were closer than they liked, but I don't think he was every proven guilty of being a Communist. His career was hurt very badly, but I'm proud to say that Johns Hopkins stood by him in his time of need, and did not discharge him as some people said they should. But this was a sad period in our Nation's history, and one that I would like to forget. It was not in keeping with our general philosophy that one is innocent of a charge until he is proven guilty.

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RITCHIE: I was wondering what your impression was of McCarthy when he appeared before the Tydings subcommittee to defend his charges. How did you size him up as an individual?

WILCOX: I felt that he was a blustering sort of person who had a good deal of braggadocio about him and who obviously was making charges that were false, and I think he knew they were false. I think he felt he had something that he could capitalize on politically in the way of an idea, capitalizing on the fears of the American people about Communism. The Russians had not been behaving very well and the feeling of anti-Communism was fairly strong in the country and he just got on the horse and rode it. I thought he was an uncouth sort of person who probably had no business being in the Senate except for the fact that the people of Wisconsin were foolish enough to elect him. Certainly he had no scholarly qualities about him. He was brash enough and brazen enough and was able in the Senate to reach a lot of people with his speeches. I attribute some of this to the news media because they played up his charges and his Senate speeches and all with front page stories.

After his news value began to deteriorate and he was taken off the front page, we had a joint hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Armed Services Committee one day, and there were some television cameras at the door, as there usually were on such occasions. He came dashing over waving a press release and

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saying to the news people who were there, "I have a news release I want to share with you." They just turned their backs and paid no attention to him. He stood there with the paper in his hand without any takers. Now, this showed what could happen when the news media caught on to the falsity of his charges and were not willing to pay any more attention to him.

RITCHIE: The report that the Tydings subcommittee put out was particularly severe, I thought when I read it. It stated flat-out that McCarthy was perpetrating a fraud. And yet it didn't seem to have an impact on his momentum. You would think that when a body of senators judges a colleague a fraud and a liar it would have diminished him. Why do you think that the Tydings subcommittee report didn't have more of an impact?

WILCOX: I think it was just due to the temper of the times. People weren't ready to accept the truth or the fact that they had been misled by all these charges that the press played up. The Tydings committee report just didn't catch up with this sentiment that was fairly rampant in the country—and McCarthy knew it. He was able to carry on in the Senate with his charges, and there weren't too many other senators who were willing to stand up and denounce him. This was true of his Republican colleagues particularly; as I recall, the Republican leadership even endorsed McCarthy's cause at one stage.

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RITCHIE: The Republicans on the committee, Lodge and Hickenlooper, objected to the report that the Tydings subcommittee put out. Did you have some problems writing the report as a result of the fact the members were so divided on how to respond?

WILCOX: I wish I had known you were going to ask me about this, because I would have gotten out a copy of the report and read it, but I'm sure there was considerable difficulty, as there always is when you have a minority on the committee who isn't willing to share the views of the majority. You have to compromise, you have to get language that will satisfy each side, unless you attach a minority report to the body of the main report. This is always a difficult procedure.

RITCHIE: In this case, it doesn't look like Tydings wanted to compromise.

WILCOX: No, I don't think he did, because he felt strongly about McCarthy as he clearly indicated in his speeches on the Senate floor.

RITCHIE: What was the sentiment inside the committee among the senators? Did they express frustration over the issue, or outrage, or annoyance? Did you have some sense about how they talked about the issue when the doors were closed?

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WILCOX: Well, this was mixed, as one would expect. Some of Senator McCarthy's colleagues were inclined to be apprehensive. They did not want to

stick their necks out; they did not want to get on the wrong side of public opinion. They were hesitant, in other words, about taking a political risk that might be harmful to their future. This was more true on the Republican side than on the Democratic side. A few others had the courage to speak their mind. Senator Fulbright was among those who took an early stand on the McCarthy issue—so was Ralph Flanders. But there was this mixture of feeling in the Senate till it became clearer that he was a phony and he needed to be put on the shelf. I should add that there was a good deal of heated discussion in the Foreign Relations Committee about the Tydings subcommittee, its procedures, and how the report should be submitted to the Senate. Senator Lodge especially had strong reservations about the way the subcommittee conducted its hearings.

RITCHIE: Jumping ahead just a little bit, in 1953, when the Republicans took control of the Senate, and the administration as well, McCarthy became chairman of the Government Operations Committee and began his crusade, a lot of which seemed to spill over into foreign policy issues, particularly the investigation of the United States Information Agency and the tour that Roy Cohn and David Schine made. What was the feeling on the Foreign Relations Committee about McCarthy's spreading over into foreign affairs?

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WILCOX: There was a good deal of criticism in the Foreign Relations Committee. I think if Senator Vandenberg had been in charge you would have seen a greater willingness on the part of the committee to strongly assert itself. The staff was very apprehensive about Cohn and Schine going abroad and engaging in all kinds of irresponsible behavior, bringing discredit to our country, to our foreign policy, and to the idea of the professional staff. Those of us who were interested—Bill Rogers, for example, was the head of a subcommittee staff concerned with the war and its aftermath. He and I and others felt strongly that the Government Operations Committee had no business sending unqualified people like that abroad. They were bringing discredit to our country and it was a gross interference with our foreign policy and with the work of the Foreign Relations Committee. There was a good deal of comment and sentiment about it, but McCarthy was riding high at the time and I think the Republican members of the Senate were hesitant to take the action that they needed to take to reprimand him or discredit him.

RITCHIE: Well, the chairman of your committee at that time was Alexander Wiley, who was McCarthy's colleague from Wisconsin. Did that complicate matters?

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WILCOX: Yes, of course. He had some hesitation about taking very vigorous action against his colleague. This is understandable because usually you have a fairly close relationship between the senators from a particular state—especially if they belong to the same party—I'm sure he did not approve. As I recall his comments in private, he didn't approve of what McCarthy was doing, but had some hesitation about going to the floor of the Senate and denouncing him.

RITCHIE: I know the Foreign Relations Committee did conduct its own investigation of the USIA in 1953, I think Senator Hickenlooper chaired that special subcommittee. I assume that was in part an attempt to reassert authority over international affairs.

WILCOX: Yes, I remember the concern that the Foreign Relations Committee had, and the Senate generally. It was an interesting period because our efforts in the information field were just beginning and the Senate had to be convinced that they were worthwhile and they were accomplishing a useful purpose. Senators would often ask during the course of the hearings: What evidence do we have that our broadcasts are being heard and are being listened to behind the Iron Curtain? And at that time there was very little in the way of sampling polls or hard information to go on. The administration could not say that 50,000 people or 100,000 people in the Soviet Union or in Hungary or wherever were regular listeners of the Voice of America, because they didn't have any data to prove it.

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In sum, it was hard to convince senators that they should spend a fairly large amount of money when they didn't have any hard evidence that the efforts were effective. It wasn't until later on, of course, that we were able to accumulate a good deal of evidence that Radio Free Europe and the Voice of America were behind the Iron Curtain and being listened to by a good many people. Radio Free Europe is not under the United States Information Agency, but the Voice of America is. But these agencies have had a considerable amount of influence in recent years and now there is no question but what there is enough hard data to convince members of Congress that it's in our national interest to do these things. At that time they were very skeptical. They asked a good many questions about that, and if the executive could just bring forth some slight bit of evidence that these things were having an effect back of the Iron Curtain, this was what they needed. But the hearings were extensive and, I think, were helpful. The senators did generally go along with the program. But I remember the difficulties that we were encountering all the way along the line.

RITCHIE: Every once in a while McCarthy seemed to be hinting that he was interested in a seat on the Foreign Relations Committee. Were you aware of any pressures on his part to get on the committee, and any attempts to keep him off of it?

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WILCOX: No, certainly he didn't ever talk to me about it. I don't think he would have gotten anywhere talking to Senator Connally about it. He might have had some words with Senator Wiley, but there was an unspoken rule, generally speaking not to put two members from the same state on the Foreign Relations Committee. This wasn't always true because we had two senators from Iowa on the Foreign Relations Committee at one time [Guy Gillette and Bourke Hickenlooper]. It's too important a committee and the tendency has almost always been to abide by that rule, to have only one senator from a state. Now, whether he exercised any influence with the leadership in the Senate at that time, I don't know, but I'm sure that the members of the committee would not have approved. There would have been a big row if he had been put forth as a formal candidate for the job. I am sure Senator Wiley didn't want him.

RITCHIE: Did you have any personal dealings at all with McCarthy?

WILCOX: Very few.

RITCHIE: I've heard that in private he was a much less threatening individual . . .

WILCOX: Yes.

RITCHIE: . . . and in fact was actually liked by a number of the members.

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WILCOX: Oh, yes. I talked to him on occasion, but he didn't ever come to me for basic help about foreign policy problems, or consult with me as some of the other members of the Senate did who were not on the committee. Always in conversations he could be very pleasant. You wouldn't have thought, merely talking with him, that he was the phony that he was. I suppose it's easier in hindsight to say these things now that history has put its judgment on him, but I never was very much impressed by Joe McCarthy.

RITCHIE: When the Senate came back in special session after the election of 1954, specially for his censure, what was the atmosphere like? It had to be one of the major historical moments of that period.

WILCOX: Well, I guess it is fair to say that most members of the Senate by that time had become convinced—and I've forgotten what the vote was

now—that his true character had emerged, that his charges were false, and that the time had come to censure him for what he had done. The impact of McCarthyism abroad was extremely significant. Countries that were allied with us and were friendly with us wondered why we weren't able to take the kind of action that we needed to take in a democracy to curb this kind of insidious influence. So it was, I think, a great relief to a lot of people, including a good move, to come to the time when the Senate was willing to take this important step. This is what President Eisenhower

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thought should have been done earlier. McCarthy was a senator, and the Senate should have taken the proper steps to punish him at an earlier date. I think the country at large by that time was relieved.

RITCHIE: You mentioned this earlier when you talked of your conversation with Herbert Hoover, Jr., but what in general do you think was McCarthy's impact on foreign policy and on the State Department? How severe was the reaction and response to his charges, and how did it affect the way foreign policy was conducted?

WILCOX: There was no question but what it had a very debilitating impact on the Department of State, particularly after Scott McLeod was made the principal security officer in the Department. He considered it his job to look at the record of anybody who might possibly be considered suspicious; this sent a chill, a fear through the Department among many people who were very able officers, who were concerned about their jobs and about the effect of being put on the blacklist, so to speak in the Department. It had an adverse effect on our policy too because it tended to move policy in the direction that McCarthy thought would be proper. This had a negative influence in the Senate and it certainly did abroad, there's no question.

Senator [H. Alexander] Smith of New Jersey and I took a trip abroad in 1953 at the request of John Foster Dulles. We went through South and Southeast Asia and around the world, visiting some sixteen

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countries. Smith was then the chairman of our Asia subcommittee of the Foreign Relations Committee. We talked with prime ministers and foreign ministers and legislative leaders all over the world. The question we got everywhere we went was: Why doesn't somebody do something about Joe McCarthy? Why doesn't the Senate take appropriate action? Why doesn't President Eisenhower put him in his proper place? We think he's doing a

great deal of harm to your country and to your foreign policy, and it's a very curious thing that somebody isn't in a position to do something about it. This was the reaction we got all over the world. We reported this to President Eisenhower on our return to Washington and he said this was comparable to reports he was getting from other sources, but that he was not going to lower the status of the presidency by getting down in the gutter and fighting with Joe McCarthy. This was a Senate matter, he said, an internal Senate thing that needed to be handled by the Senate, and he was expecting the Senate in due course to take appropriate action. He recognized the problem was a serious one, but he felt that it was not his job to get down and fight with Senator McCarthy.

RITCHIE: Do you think that the atmosphere made the State Department less imaginative and more cautious?

WILCOX: Yes, no question about it. They were fearful to advance new policies and new programs because of the reaction that

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might come from inside and outside the Department, that they were too liberal in their thinking, they were too pro-Communist, or perhaps pro-Russian in their attitudes. There's no question but what in that period Joe McCarthy had a harmful and debilitating impact in the State Department and on our foreign policy generally.

RITCHIE: To back up a little bit, the other person I wanted to ask you about was another "Mac" and that was MacArthur. In 1951 the Foreign Relations Committee held joint hearings with the Armed Services Committee on General Douglas MacArthur's dismissal by President Truman. In reading some of the books on the Korean war, I've noticed references here and there to some of your observations on the MacArthur hearings. I was wondering in general how it worked when two committees of the Senate held hearings jointly on the same subject?

WILCOX: Well, we always had some problems on that front. In the field of foreign policy it's understandable why more than one committee might be interested in some important issues that arise, and certainly the MacArthur hearing was a case in point. Each committee likes to maintain jurisdiction over its own area, and it isn't often that you found it possible to have committees meeting together. I tried to encourage this wherever I could, and I recommended it to my chairman on several occasions, when I thought it would be advisable—since the issue at hand was a political/military one—to

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combine the two committees. This would give greater stature to the committee and to the chairman and to the hearings, and would save time and would be a useful procedure. And in some cases this was done. We had several of these joint sessions with the Armed Services Committee during that period. The MacArthur hearings were set up with that in mind, and they lasted as I recall three full days, going from fairly early in the morning till late in the afternoon.

General MacArthur was a remarkable witness in many ways; there's no question but what he had full command of the facts, insofar as his operation, his part of the world was concerned, and his responses were for the most part beautifully done with a fine grasp of the English language. He was a very articulate individual. He handled himself remarkably well, there's no question about it. His principal weakness, as I saw it, was that he did not quite understand the relationship between his theatre of military operation and the rest of the world. He knew Asia, and he knew Japan, and he knew what he could do if he had the resources in Asia to win the Korean war. But he didn't understand the relationship between what he was doing and what was happening in Europe.

I remember Senator McMahon of Connecticut raised a number of questions with him about the problems that were arising in Europe and the need for troops in that part of the world, and what the Joint Chiefs of Staff had decided to do, General MacArthur had to say:

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"Well, senator, I am a theatre commander and I don't know all of the details that you refer to." Senator McMahon came over to me and whispered in my ear: "Now I've got him. I've really got him. He is a theatre commander, he doesn't know anything really about what's happening in the rest of the world. The Joint Chiefs of Staff are the only ones who have a knowledge of the whole military responsibility of this government." And he commented that General MacArthur's demand for more troops was inconsistent with the evaluation of the Joint Chiefs about our total military needs. The situation in Europe was not easy at that time. The Berlin airlift, of course, had been taken care of. The Czech invasion had taken place earlier. But the Soviet behavior was still such that it created real problems in Europe. The Joint Chiefs felt, apparently, that if we took more troops to take care of the situation in Korea or in Asia that General MacArthur faced there, this would diminish our deterrent capacity in Europe to the extent that it could create an invitation to the Soviet Union to attack Western Europe. This was, of course, more important to the Joint Chiefs than any crossing of the Yalu River in Korea. Well, as a result of this line of reasoning, I think the committee was convinced that President Truman's action in recalling

General MacArthur was a sound one; that MacArthur had no business disputing the decision of the Joint Chiefs about the use of our armed forces in various parts of the world, and of course, the president's decision has final authority in the military field anyway.

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But having said that I had to come away from those hearings with a lot of admiration for General MacArthur and his ability to describe his problems and the situation in Asia and the way he handled things generally. There's no question but what he was a prima dona of the first order, and he was an actor, too. I remember so well one of the impressions I got that I can't forget: the hearings went as I said from early morning until late in the afternoon. The senators would, individually, get up and leave the hearing room and go to the men's room to take care of their needs. The chairman from time to time would say: "General, would you like to recess the meeting for a short time?" "Oh, no, no Mr. Chairman, I'm just fine. Go right ahead." He did this several times to the point where the senators got an impression of him as being an iron man, that his constitution was a remarkable one. But I noticed that he rarely, if ever, took a drink of water. He smoked his pipe frequently, but he never took a drink, and as a result he didn't find it necessary to go to the wash room. But this was an act of—what will I say—it was an actor performing in a remarkable sort of way to make an impression on the committee.

RITCHIE: He even waved the opportunity to break for lunch and had a sandwich sent in.

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WILCOX: Yes.

RITCHIE: But he seemed to be under the impression that he could give a performance that day and leave

WILCOX: Yes.

RITCHIE: He didn't seem to anticipate that the senators wanted to question him in depth. Wasn't there some surprise on his part at the end of the day, when they told him that wasn't the end of his testimony? Didn't he indicate he planned to fly back to New York that night?

WILCOX: I'm not sure about that. But they kept him for three days. And you know when you keep a single individual for three days and question him with all the leading people who were there from both those committees, you know very well that his responses are interesting and useful for the record. But I

remember too the procedure that was used to get material to the press in record time. We set up a special procedure with the Defense Department involved to clear each sheet of paper (for national security reasons) that came from the stenotypist so that it could be released almost automatically to the press. This took care of any demands that the press had and made sure that the national security interests of the United States were well protected. Otherwise it would have been rather difficult to go over that manuscript every night before it went to the printer. This

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was done automatically with each sheet as it came off of the typewriter with an official from Defense carefully reading the manuscript.

RITCHIE: Was that the only occasion you can remember something like that happened?

WILCOX: Yes, I don't remember anything like that being done on any other occasion.

RITCHIE: We've finally declassified the rest of those hearings, by the way. They're now all available for research. There was actually a very small percentage of the testimony that was held back.

WILCOX: That's right. For the most part it was released at the time of the hearing. I think the record shows that the committee underlined the point I made about Senator McMahon of Connecticut and explained why it was necessary in the national interest not to meet General MacArthur's request for more troops and more supplies for Korea, to enable him to cross the Yalu.

RITCHIE: Senator Richard Russell chaired that committee, as opposed to Senator Connally. Did Senator Connally not really want to get involved with that hot potato?

WILCOX: No, I don't think that he had any great desire—well, Senator Russell was the better person for that kind of job any way,

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since it was more of a military matter than it was political. I don't remember anything that Senator Connally said that indicated he was unhappy with the choice of Senator Russell as chairman. They were on good terms. They worked together harmoniously. I think it was recognized that this was more of a military matter than it was a foreign policy matter.

RITCHIE: What was your assessment of Richard Russell?

WILCOX: He was without doubt the best parliamentarian in the Senate. He knew the rules of the Senate as very few people do, and he was almost always

called upon to interpret the rules when important debates required it. Of course, the parliamentarian was there, too, but you need someone on the floor who knows the rules, and he obviously did. He was an excellent chairman. He was articulate. He knew how to keep order. He knew how to ask questions, and the right kinds of questions. I found him really tops. Indeed, I thought probably the best team in the Senate at that time was Walter George and Dick Russell from Georgia. These two senators from Georgia were probably as good as any two from any other state. There were other state teams that were pretty good, but I thought this was the best example of statesmanship and ability in the Senate from any one state.

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RITCHIE: How was Russell as a person to work for, as a staff person? Even though he was chairman of another committee you were in effect staffing for him on the joint committee.

WILCOX: Well, he was very good. I had no problems with him at all. Of course, his own staff director was the one who communicated more with him than I did. I had some role to play in helping the members of our committee. His staff director helped the members of his committee. But we had no problem whatsoever working with Dick Russell. He was not autocratic or authoritarian in the slightest. He had respect for staff members as well as senators, and this came through in everything he did. He was a real Southern gentleman. The important thing was he always knew what he was talking about.

RITCHIE: With both the McCarthy and MacArthur hearings we talked about Brien McMahon, I was wondering if you could give me your impressions of McMahon as a senator and his role in these events.

WILCOX: Oh, I would rank Brien McMahon very high as a senator. He was one of the few who saw at an early time the importance of atomic energy and its relationship to foreign policy. He was one of the first members on the Atomic Energy Committee of the Senate and was chairman for a period of time. He died at an early date, unfortunately, much before his time. But I found him able, sincere, honest, objective, with the national interest always in mind. I would have to give him very high marks. He spoke well. He was

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influential in committee hearings and in the committee itself. But as I recall he died in 1949 or was it '50.

RITCHIE: He was on the MacArthur hearings.

WILCOX: Oh, yes, well then it must have been in the early '50s. But my impression of him was very good, and I was particularly interested in the work that he did in bridging the gap between foreign policy and atomic power and the coming of nuclear weapons. He saw the problem as early, I think, as anyone in the Senate, and was deeply interested in it. We did have a certain amount of overlapping between the Foreign Relations Committee and the Atomic Energy Committee, which I think was fortunate. Brien McMahon and Bourke Hickenlooper were two able people who served on both committees. This gave us a very good relationship that I thought was desirable in those early days.

RITCHIE: He seemed to be a particularly effective questioner.

WILCOX: Yes.

RITCHIE: I know the staff prepares questions for senators, but what is it about certain senators that makes them so effective? I know in McMahon's case you talked about his questioning of MacArthur and following up on them. What distinguishes one senator from another?

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WILCOX: Well, that's hard to say. What distinguishes one professor from another, or one doctor from another? It's their personalities, I suppose, and their intellectual interests, their background and training, their curiosity, their capacity to formulate questions and to penetrate areas that other people don't stop to think of. Jack Kennedy had a real capacity to formulate questions, to ask the right questions. Mrs. Roosevelt had a capacity to ask the right questions. Arthur Vandenberg had that capacity, and a number of members of the Senate that I could name. Certainly Hubert Humphrey had that capacity. I suppose it's their background and their wide interests. In the Senate, so many questions or opportunities for questions arise in areas that are very divergent. It just takes someone who has that imagination and that ability to articulate his ideas—and an interest in the subject matter—that enables him to stand above his colleagues. Some people are inclined to be rather quiet and not take an active part in floor debate or in committee hearings. Maybe they learn just as much and know just as much, but they aren't inclined to speak up.

RITCHIE: Did you find that there were certain senators whom you fed questions to during a hearing—whom you thought would be more likely to follow-up on things?

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WILCOX: Yes, because of their different interests. Some senators wanted that kind of help, and greatly appreciated it. Some senators weren't particularly interested, maybe the subject matter didn't interest them or whatever, or they were inclined to lean on their own resources. But there were differences in the Senate. Hubert Humphrey was always one that liked to have ideas and suggestions and counsel. Bill Fulbright was always inquisitive and raised good questions. Cabot Lodge was pretty good at this. Alexander Smith liked to have help and would raise pertinent questions at the proper time. I don't mean to omit some people who were good, but these were a few examples of senators that I knew. Claude Pepper was good at this. Then there were some people who were more articulate than others.

I recall there were two senators at least who had the capacity to get up on the Senate floor and make a speech at the drop of a hat on a good many different topics. I recall on one occasion, when the Senate had before it the Statute of the International Court of Justice, I was on the floor with Tom Connally, then the chairman of the committee, to help the Senate in discussing the issues. Senator Pepper came on the floor, sat down by me and said, "What's this all about?" I told him it was about the accession of the United States to the Statute of the International Court of Justice. He said, "Well, what are the issues?" I took five minutes or so to explain the issues. Pretty soon Senator Pepper got up and made a speech

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about the accession of the United States to the Statute of the International Court of Justice. The next day the State Department expert in this area called me and said, "Gee, that was a great speech Senator Pepper made. Did you write it for him?" I said, "No, I didn't write any speech for Senator Pepper." I explained the situation—that I had briefed him on it rather quickly, but that he had grasped the main issues involved and had arisen to make a very good speech on the subject.

Now, Senator Humphrey was able to do the same thing. I think it was partly because of their backgrounds. Senator Humphrey had had an extensive background in the field of political science. He had taught social sciences, political science, and related subjects, and he had mastered a good many of the arguments and a good many of the facts in the social science field. They served him quite well in giving him the kind of background he needed to speak on these subjects and to raise questions about them. I think it depends on the backgrounds that the senators have, as well as their temperament, and their intellectual interests and ability.

RITCHIE: But clearly the staff does a little internal ranking to decide who's more likely to be able to handle an issue, speak on it, and ask the right questions?

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WILCOX: Oh, yes. And if the staff work is good, the staff director might say, "Mr. Chairman, you know, this is a tough subject and you're going to need some help on this. Who do you think on the committee will be most helpful?" And then we might ask three or four members of the committee to take ten minutes, or five minutes, to support the chairman with speeches on the floor. Otherwise, on an important issue, if the members of the committee don't feel any particular responsibility—and often they don't—the chairman may be left there by himself without other visible support. For instance, Cabot Lodge was very good at helping out. He was young, he was articulate. He made a good impression. He made short speeches but good speeches. He was a junior member, but he was always willing to help the staff and the chairman put something through the Senate. Other members would, too, if they were asked to help. And some of them rather liked to be invited. It gave them an opportunity to speak and to make themselves heard on behalf of a problem that they were interested in.

RITCHIE: Earlier we talked about 1953 when the Republicans again took control of the Senate. That was a period of constant turnover, in 1946, '48, '52, and '54 the parties were switching back and forth. Alexander Wiley became chairman in 1953, and I wondered if you could make some comparisons between Wiley as chairman and Connally and Vandenberg, from a staff point of view?

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WILCOX: I liked Senator Wiley very much. He was a friendly, affable Mid-Westerner, and I fitted right in with that category of people who would get along with him pretty well. I think he was fond of me and I was fond of him. I would have to rank him third in order: Vandenberg, Connally, and Wiley, in that order, in terms of competence, organizing ability, imagination, and understanding of foreign policy. He was not a student of world affairs as Vandenberg was. He could not command the attention or the support of the Senate as Vandenberg did. Some people thought he was a bit of a lightweight, relatively. But he was a real gentleman and was very kind and considerate. His heart was in the right place and he usually voted the "right" way.

I recall he hoped, he expressed to me, that he might have a feature article in the *Saturday Evening Post* about him, because Senator Connally had one and senator Vandenberg had one, so Senator Wiley thought he should have one, too. I worked on this a little, but I found that the editors felt that if they wrote a piece about him it might not be as flattering as he would like, and therefore, they hesitated to do it. They didn't want to do him an injustice. So he didn't command quite the support in the press that Senator Vandenberg did. I think among his Republican colleagues he was not considered as able a leader. He didn't command the support from the committee that his predecessors did.

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He was very persistent about certain things. He took a keen interest in the St. Lawrence Seaway, for example, and he was determined to get the Seaway through the Senate. It had been up for consideration on several occasions but had always been allowed to lapse. But he and I worked hard on that St. Lawrence Seaway project. We would take every opportunity to get publicity on it, to have articles inserted in the Congressional Record, to nudge the White House and to remind the Senate of its importance. The executive branch had to take the lead on it. We needed the support of the White House—the strong support of the White House—and the State Department. So we would bend every effort to keep them informed of what we were doing, to cultivate the support of various senators on the issue, to conduct the hearings in a way that would be helpful and beneficial to the cause, and to bring in as much in the way of support for the project as we could. I recall doing a good many letters for him on the subject. He would come by at frequent intervals and say, "Well, how are we doing with the St. Lawrence Seaway?"

Finally it got through the Senate, I think largely because of the interest and persistence of Alexander Wiley of Wisconsin. The committee wasn't that keen about it—indeed there was some opposition to it—but he finally got the kind of testimony that suggested that it would be in the national interest. The railroads were very strong in their opposition, of course, but other groups came along to support it. The shipping companies were heavily involved, as were other

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trading elements. There was some concern about what this would do to the interests of senators on the East coast, if ships were going to go back to the

Chicago area to pick up traffic on the Seaway. But in any case, I think the Seaway owes its existence largely to Alexander Wiley.

Now, he was just as persistent about the Bricker Amendment. He was tooth and toenail opposed to the Bricker Amendment, which would have taken away from the president much of his authority to make executive agreements. Senator [John] Bricker of Ohio wanted to make sure that the Congress had a chance to approve such agreements, and he was very keen on a strict interpretation of the Constitution in that regard. But Senator Wiley followed the executive branch line; he was adamant and persistent in his devotion to the idea that the president should have considerable authority to conclude international agreements. I can recall these two cases particularly where Senator Wiley's influence and hard work were felt.

It is true that the senator could have been a better and more convincing leader. He was not particularly good in floor debate, and he looked to us to prepare his speeches for him. Sometimes he would say things he shouldn't have said—but his heart was in the right place and he wanted to do a good job for the Senate and for his country. When the Bricker Amendment came to a vote, I remember that evening when the vote was taken, we needed one vote to prevent the

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passage of the Amendment. The vote was tied as the roll call came to an end and after a brief delay one senator walked in and cast the deciding vote. So by one vote the Bricker Amendment was defeated. I must say, you do have to give considerable credit to Senator Wiley for his persistence in this regard. It shows what a chairman can do if he's really interested in supporting the administration on an important issue.

RITCHIE: Both of the issues that you just mentioned were, in a sense, political issues. The Foreign Relations Committee is often reactive to situations that are happening elsewhere in the world, but in these cases one was a waterways issue . . .

WILCOX: It was domestic, but international because of our relations with Canada, of course.

RITCHIE: . . . and the other was a political question about amending the Constitution.

WILCOX: Yes, but it had to do with the president's role in the conduct of foreign policy, which was tremendously important for our foreign policy.

RITCHIE: But I was wondering if Wiley was perhaps a better domestic politician than a world figure.

WILCOX: Well, I think it's quite true he knew more about the

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Constitution and about the St. Lawrence Seaway than he did about some other foreign policy issues. I remember when he went to the United Nations Assembly as a delegate, because we had made arrangements to have senators go every second year, and House members go in offelection years. He was anxious to make speeches hitting the Soviet Union pretty hard. He took a pretty tough line against the Soviet Union, and he was really interested in being out in front on this issue. I think he was rather proud of the fact that he had been appointed as a delegate to the Assembly and he wanted to assert his authority in the international field, which he did. But I repeat, his heart was in the right place. He voted the right way on most important issues.

His wife was very influential. He married a fairly young English lady who was very attractive, and very nice. She was very thoughtful about the staff of the committee and about the senator. I think she was extremely helpful to him in his last days in the Senate. But Senator Wiley, along with other chairmen of the Foreign Relations Committee, apparently paid too much attention to foreign policy, because he was not reelected when he ran for reelection in—when was it, 1954?

RITCHIE: No, I think actually he made it through, because he was eventually defeated by Gaylord Nelson in 1962.

WILCOX: That late was it? Are you sure it was that late?

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RITCHIE: Yes. It was Walter George who didn't run again.

WILCOX: Walter George didn't. Senator Wiley ran again, yes, and then he was defeated in 1962, that's right.

RITCHIE: But it was an end of the road for Tom Connally in 1952.

WILCOX: He chose not to run—the situation in Texas didn't look very favorable. And Senator George chose not to run, for much the same reason.

RITCHIE: And both had been such establishment figures, and yet decided they couldn't make it in their own party primaries.

WILCOX: Fulbright was defeated, and [Frank] Church was defeated, and Wiley eventually was defeated, I think partly because he was reaching the age when his constituents thought he shouldn't serve another term, I don't know. But I say his wife was a charming lady who gave him real moral support.

RITCHIE: Carl Marcy told me that as soon as Wiley became chairman he was interested in taking a major trip through Europe, visiting the major capitals. Did you as staff director encourage members of the committee to travel abroad?

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WILCOX: Yes, indeed. I thought such trips were very helpful.

RITCHIE: Did you think it would assist them?

WILCOX: Sure. And I always encouraged the State Department to think of these trips as educational trips and not as junkets. I always felt that members of the Senate and the House could understand our foreign relations better if they had a first-hand view and a first-hand opportunity to talk with leaders of other countries and with people to see just what the trends were, and what the issues were, and how other countries looked at them. You know, if members of the Senate and House see how negotiations take place, what actually happens at international conferences, and the problems that are encountered, and the domestic problems that other countries have—it can be very helpful. They always think of the problems that we have, the problems that arise in *this* country, including the pressure groups and so on—but they need to be aware of the fact that other countries have these same problems. If members of the House and Senate can see these things at first-hand they can appreciate them better. They can understand a little better, too, why we can't always get everything we want when we negotiate in the international community. I had strong feelings that it was very helpful—it is very helpful—to have members go abroad, particularly if they are on the Foreign Relations Committee. And maybe if they're not, too, because they probably need it in some ways even more than the members

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of the committee do. I don't like the thought that our press constantly reports these trips as junkets, because this tends to make members reluctant to go on such trips; that is most unfortunate.

RITCHIE: Do you think that just membership on the committee alone helps to break down some parochial views of the world?

WILCOX: No question. It did with Bob Taft. Bob Taft in the Senate opposed the NATO treaty and took rather questionable—from my point of view—positions with respect to the sending of troops to Europe and related matters. He and Vandenberg had divided, more or less, by mutual understanding I gather, but in any case it was understood that Bob Taft would take the lead on the domestic problems for the Republican party in the Senate, and Arthur Vandenberg would handle the international side. They had this division of labor which worked fairly well. They got along quite well as a team—although Bob Taft did oppose some of the foreign policy issues that Arthur Vandenberg supported.

But when Taft came on the Foreign Relations Committee, I began to notice a change in his attitude toward things. As he sat there and absorbed

the testimony of experts in the field, and as he began to consider in a more studious way some of the issues that were involved, his attitude began to change. He became somewhat more flexible. He became more understanding. He became more supportive of the issues that the committee faced. I thought I saw a very

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decided change for the better. Not so much the fact that he agreed with the things that I agreed with, but that he took a more reasonable approach towards things. I developed a great deal of respect for him. I had some doubts and reservations at first, but after he was on the committee for a period of time, I thought by golly, here was a real senator who did his homework and did his best to understand the issues involved. Certainly we can always afford to have senators like Bob Taft in the United States Senate. My attitude toward him changed after he got on the committee.

RITCHIE: As his attitudes toward the issues began to change.

WILCOX: Yes. Well, I think he became more understanding, and more realistic, and more reasonable in his approach.

RITCHIE: I also want to ask you about John Foster Dulles, when he became Secretary of State, and what the relationships were between the committee and the State Department—if they changed, if they improved or not, between the Acheson and the Dulles periods.

WILCOX: Well, Foster Dulles played a unique role in foreign policy during this period. Indeed, he played a unique role throughout the century, ever since the time when he went to the Hague Peace Conference in 1907; he went to the Versailles Conference in 1919, and in fact he had a hand in most important foreign policy issues during the twentieth century. No question but what he was a remarkable

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person with a great deal of ability. He had advised with the Senate and with the executive on the United Nations Charter. He was one of the senior consultants at San Francisco, very close to Arthur Vandenberg. And it was assumed in 1948—by the Republicans at least—that Tom Dewey, Arthur Vandenberg, and Foster Dulles would be the great trio in the field of foreign policy after the election. Vandenberg used to say, "We'd make a good team. I'll be the Republican leader in the Senate. Foster Dulles will be the chief person as Secretary of State. Tom Dewey will be the president. We'll have a darn good team here." This shows what the attitude of the leadership at that

time was toward Foster Dulles.

He then was asked by the president, among other things—just to show his evolving role—he was asked by the president to serve as consultant to handle the conclusion of the Japanese peace treaty. He worked closely with the Senate—John Sparkman was the chairman of our Asia subcommittee—and I sat with them at breakfast on a number of occasions. He met with them frequently to keep them abreast of what was happening, and getting their advice and comments about the substance of the treaty. He did this very effectively, and I think worked with the Senate as few people had—partly because he had time and the desire to do a good job. He took pretty much full time to do this. Most Secretaries of State have many other things to do, but Foster Dulles, before he was Secretary of State, had ample time, so he devoted a good deal of energy and effort to this problem. The

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treaty went through the Senate with only ten votes in opposition, as I recall, and he was given a great deal of credit for the masterful way that he handled relations with the Senate committee. This was demonstrated in a concrete way by the strong support the committee and Senate gave to the treaty.

Now, that gives you a little of the background of Foster Dulles by the time he became Secretary of State. He went in as Secretary of State in 1953 after the election of President Eisenhower. I think it's fair to say that he was trained through his whole life to be Secretary of State. I remember once at the Secretary's staff meeting one morning, somebody brought up the question of sanctions, economic sanctions, and the problem of blockade and neutrality. Someone on the staff said, "Well, I just went back and read that excellent memorandum that was done for President Wilson in World War I," and he went on to talk about what a great piece of work it was. When he finished the Secretary said, "Yes, I did that memorandum for President Wilson." This was typical. Time after time incidents like that would come up. You'd go back twenty or twenty-five years and sure enough, Foster Dulles was involved in what was being done at that time in the field of foreign policy. All through the century he seemed to have a fairly major role to play. So when he became Secretary of State I think it was to be expected; it was a rather natural development. I think that he and Dean Acheson were probably the two best Secretaries of State that we had in the postwar period.

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Dean Rusk was also very able. He would also have been considered a

great Secretary of State if it had not been for the Vietnam War.

RITCHIE: But where Acheson had had some pretty rocky relations with Congress, Dulles seemed to be very conscious of trying to smooth out the kinks.

WILCOX: Dulles tried, I think, very hard to work with the Senate. He had worked with them before as I said in a number of ways. He was well aware of the important role of the Senate. I remember he asked me, as chief of staff of the committee, to set down my ideas as to how he could improve executive-legislative relations; what he should do in his relationship with Congress when he became Secretary of State. I put down a number of things, including what I would do with respect to consultation, and taking care of the chairman and the ranking minority member, and what I would do with the Senate as a whole. I put down fifteen or sixteen suggestions with the thought that he could select some of them, the ones that he thought were most useful. He looked at the list and he said, in his best Presbyterian English, "My gosh, that's a very good list of suggestions, but if I do all these things, when will I have time to be Secretary of State?" I pointed out that I wasn't suggesting that he do all of them, but I was suggesting that he could do some of the things that he thought would be most beneficial.

RITCHIE: Did you think that he followed up on your suggestions?

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WILCOX: Yes, I think so. His behavior from the time he took over the job made it perfectly clear that he realized the importance of Congress and he knew that he couldn't get the important things through unless he had a substantial vote, certainly on treaties. He knew the leadership, and I think he got along pretty well on the whole with the members of the Senate—at least in the first years of the Eisenhower/Dulles administration.

One incident relating to Dulles' ability may be an order. I went with him one day when he testified on arms control before a subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. On the way back to the Department he asked me to correct the lengthy transcript of the hearing for him. I did so but I found a nearly perfect transcript. Every paragraph was in order; every sentence properly parsed. The transcript was so beautifully done it really didn't need any improving at all.

RITCHIE: Is it possible that he was a little too concerned about Congress? He hired Scott McLeod from Senator Bridges' staff . . .

WILCOX: Yes.

RITCHIE: Do you think he was perhaps too cooperative?

WILCOX: Yes, I would have hoped that he—certainly if I had had my

druthers he wouldn't have done that! I think he went too far

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probably in bending to the winds at that time—too much concerned about the influence of McCarthyism. Scott McLeod was not a good appointment and it did not help the State Department. It took a good while for them to get over this McCarthy era. But he did go in, you see, at a time when the Department was highly concerned about McCarthy. I don't think it's fair to say that he straightened that out right away. Joe McCarthy subsided but his influence was apparent in the State Department for quite some time.

RITCHIE: You mentioned how Senator Wiley followed the administration's line on the Bricker amendment. What was the relationship between Wiley and Dulles? Did they meet regularly?

WILCOX: Dulles felt that he couldn't really consult with Senator Wiley. He could consult with Vandenberg, because they were close and they were both very interested in foreign policy. He could talk turkey, he could talk substance to Arthur Vandenberg. He felt that Senator Wiley really didn't know enough about foreign policy. He did consult with him, of course, from time to time. And I tried to get the administration to consult with both the chairman and the ranking Democrat as often as the situation required. He needed the Democrats' support, and I tried to get the people downtown to be sure and not forget the minority. So my efforts in that direction were to make sure that they consulted with both sides of the aisle. But Dulles was a little reluctant to consult very much with Wiley because

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he felt that he really couldn't deal with him on substantive issues. Dulles was a man who had a great interest in the substance of foreign policy. This was not quite so true of Senator Wiley.

But consultations did go on and we tried to keep in close touch with the Department on such things as the Bricker amendment and the Seaway and other things that came before the committee. There were the SEATO and CENTO treaties, and other important issues. The Southeast Asia Treaty, as I recall, came before the committee in that period. But I think that on the whole the committee did a reasonably good job during Wiley's administration. Staff-wise we had a bit of a problem with him because he insisted on bringing in a staff person—not as chief of staff, he did not disturb my role. I think he liked me reasonably well. But he brought in his staff assistant to work with the committee, and some of the staff members had a feeling that this staff

assistant was trying to influence the chairman in a way that we weren't sure was always consistent with the committee's position and what the foreign policy requirements were.

RITCHIE: That was Julius Cahn.

WILCOX: Yes.

RITCHIE: Did you have difficulty working with him?

WILCOX: No, I got along with him pretty well. I recognized that Senator Wiley wanted him there, and that he had a legitimate

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role to play. So I worked with him and we got along quite well. Julius was a bright person, very bright. He hadn't had very much experience in the field of foreign policy, but I think he was very interested in gaining some experience and in helping the senator in any way that he could.

RITCHIE: But you didn't disagree on policies?

WILCOX: No, we got along reasonably well, as time went by. It took a little time to adjust. We weren't sure how far he felt he could go, given his special relationship with the chairman. But we worked together and got along reasonably well.

RITCHIE: He became a very controversial member of the staff later on. In fact he had to leave the staff because he made a number of political speeches .

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WILCOX: Yes, he did.

RITCHIE: . . . which was considered inappropriate for a professional staff member.

WILCOX: Yes, he was a little inclined to be brash, shall I say? He was inclined to want to be in the spotlight. He put his chairman at the top so he could be at the top, too.

RITCHIE: Senator Wiley did have a hankering for publicity.

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WILCOX: Oh, yes.

RITCHIE: According to some of the reporters like Allen Drury, he went to great lengths to get in the spotlight.

WILCOX: He tried. He tried hard. And Julius was instrumental in this. I think he encouraged the senator to try to get in the spotlight. Most staff members feel this way about their senators; its their job.

RITCHIE: By comparison to Dulles' relations with Alexander Wiley, Dulles had very good relations with Walter George. They ate breakfast together

regularly

WILCOX: Yes.

RITCHIE: Was that because he respected George?

WILCOX: Yes, and George's role in the Senate was greater. And George's grasp of foreign policy was better. And his leadership was stronger. Dulles respected him, and I think George respected Dulles.

RITCHIE: I've heard that the Eisenhower administration-Dulles—did a little lobbying to convince George to take the chairmanship. He could have been chairman of the Finance Committee or Foreign Relations. Secretary Dulles apparently very much wanted George to become Foreign Relations chairman.

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WILCOX: Yes, the administration did, because the alternative was not as good as it might have been. Senator [Theodore Francis] Green would have been the chairman if Senator George hadn't taken it. I went to see Senator George and told him that I hoped very much that he would take the chairmanship. He said he hadn't decided yet between the Finance Committee and the Foreign Relations Committee. I said I thought he owed it to the committee, to the Senate, and to his country to take the chairmanship because of the importance of the job at this stage in our history. His leadership in the committee and the Senate would be very instrumental and very helpful.

He looked at me and said, "Well, I'll take the chairmanship if you stay on as chief of staff." And I had been thinking of leaving at that time! So he really caught me unaware and I replied, "Well, I'll stay on for a time anyway as chief of staff." I don't know that my willingness to stay on was instrumental in his taking the chairmanship, but he implied that he would do it if I would be willing to remain as chief of staff. So I agreed to do that. I told him that if he didn't take it that it would mean that the committee would be struggling along with rather weak leadership. I thought the Finance Committee was important, but I thought in the world we lived in at that time the Foreign Relations Committee was more important, and his leadership was highly significant.

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RITCHIE: George was chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee twice. He'd been chairman very briefly in 1941 when Key Pittman died—in fact he was the floor manager for the Lend Lease bill as chairman. Then he went on

to Finance and it was fourteen years before he became chairman again, although he remained as a member of the committee in between. He was an interesting person, but not a particularly well known person by those outside the Senate.

WILCOX: Not so much outside, but inside he was highly respected.

RITCHIE: What were the qualities about him that made him so respected?

WILCOX: He was reasonable. He was sensible, logical, and had wide experience in the Senate and in foreign policy. He was articulate. He had considerable influence in the Senate because of his speaking ability. I recall that when Senator Vandenberg was chairman he would say, "Francis, I don't think we have the complete support of Walter George on this issue. Let's have another meeting and see if we can't swing him around. His support is very important." He recognized that in the committee and on the Senate floor Walter George's weight was perhaps more significant than that of any other member of the committee. You know, some senators can command votes in the Senate and what they say and do is of importance to other members of the Senate. Walter George was one of these key people.

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Arthur Vandenberg was another. There are certain people that have this quality of leadership about them. Other senators would say to me, "What's Walter George think of that?" Or what does Bill Fulbright think, or what does Arthur Vandenberg think? This role of leadership certainly has a bearing on the outcome of important votes in the Senate.

RITCHIE: He apparently handled himself very well on the Senate floor, from all accounts.

WILCOX: Sometimes his voice would come through with a booming sound, but it was always an impressive one, in the sense that it commanded attention and got respect from members of the Senate. When he spoke he was always very earnest and very serious. The senators knew that he had examined the problem he was addressing carefully and had arrived at a careful decision, and they were willing to listen to him.

RITCHIE: I talked to Floyd Riddick, the former parliamentarian, who said that when George spoke on an issue on the floor he didn't always need to have a staff person sitting next to him. He didn't need to be prompted the way other senators and chairmen did.

WILCOX: I was always with him on the floor when he was chairman, because the role of the chairman is a little different than an individual member who comes in to make a speech and then goes off the

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floor. But when the chairman is sponsoring a bill, or a treaty or something, then I think it's of some importance to have the staff person there who has command of the facts and who has the documents available—which can be helpful—both with the chairmen and with the other members of the Senate.

RITCHIE: You mentioned that one of the arguments you used with George was that Theodore Green's leadership would have been a weak leadership. What made you feel that?

WILCOX: Because of Senator Green's advancing age, and at that time, his declining role as a leader in the Senate; also, the fact that by comparison Walter George could do a more effective job. I had a good deal of respect for Senator Green. I was with him when we took a group of senators to the NATO treaty area in 1952. He was the ranking Democrat and was the chairman of the group. There were ten senators in the group. He did a remarkably good job in responding to the toasts of foreign ministers or prime ministers, wherever we went and in whatever country. He had a certain academic interest and background, a scholarly bent, and he could make appropriate remarks about German history or French history or French writers or philosophers, or Italian writers or whatever. I was very pleased with the way he handled himself in speaking on behalf of his delegation. But nevertheless he was somewhat advanced in age. He was not strong. And I felt that Senator George, since he had the option

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and was senior to Senator Green, would be the logical successor to the chairmanship. Senator Green used to come by the office from time to time. One day—he was in his 80s—he walked in and greeted me. I asked him how things were going with him. "All right," he said, "but I went to see my doctor this morning and he told me I ought to give up high diving and wrestling." He was very provoked about that!

RITCHIE: Senator Green also seemed to be more iconoclastic on things. In those days, for instance, he advocated admission to the United Nations of the People's Republic of China, which was just not an "acceptable" political stance. He was willing to take very unpopular positions.

WILCOX: Yes, he was. A little bit of a maverick in a way.

RITCHIE: While that's OK for a member of the committee, I suspect that as chairman

WILCOX: The chairman has to be a little more circumspect and a little more responsible, because what he says is going to have an impact in the Senate and sometimes in the world outside.

RITCHIE: Of course, the irony was that Green did become chairman, but

two years later than that.

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WILCOX: Of course, and he didn't stay very long. When he served it was with some trepidation on his part and on the part of the members of the committee. At times during the course of a hearing when he asked a question a staff member would say to him, "But senator, you just asked the witness that question a few minutes ago. He would respond, "Oh, did I?" He couldn't read; his eyes had reached the point where he had real trouble reading. Moreover, he was getting to be very forgetful, so he really didn't deserve to be chairman.

RITCHIE: It's one of the problems of the seniority system.

WILCOX: It's one of the real problems of the seniority system. And as you know from your interview with Pat Holt, the leader of the Senate—Lyndon Johnson—had some difficulty in getting him to step down and turn the chairmanship over to his successor.

RITCHIE: Despite Senator George's hope that you would stay on as chief of staff of the Foreign Relations Committee, you actually left the committee relatively shortly after he became chairman.

WILCOX: It was 1955, in the fall of '55.

RITCHIE: Well, he came on as chairman in January of '55, and you left that fall. Could you tell me some of the story about how you moved from being chief of staff of the Foreign Relations Committee to being Assistant Secretary of State?

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WILCOX: I had been with the committee for ten years, and I had a feeling that ten years was about all that I should do. I had several opportunities to leave—Allen Dulles, who was then director of the CIA, called me and had two jobs that he wanted me to take, either one or the other. One was a membership on the national estimates group, I think that's what they called it. A small group of people who would look at a foreign policy problem and evaluate it in terms of its intrinsic importance to American foreign policy and come up with recommendations about what to do. It was an important group in the CIA. And some other job, now I've forgotten the nature of that one.

But about the same time, Foster Dulles had indicated—he had told me earlier if I ever got to the point where I wanted to leave the Senate to let him know—the he would be glad to have me come and join him in the Department of State. So I told him that I was contemplating a shift at that

time. He then said to give him a week, he would think about that and see what he might have in the way of a State Department job. He called me and asked me if I would be willing to take the job of special advisor to the Secretary on United Nations affairs. I wasn't as intrigued by that as I might have been. Then later he said, "There is another job I'd like you to do, and that's the Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs," which includes jurisdiction over our United Nations relationships plus other things.

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I had just written a book with Carl Marcy on that subject—on proposals to change the United Nations—because ten years had elapsed and they were thinking about calling a conference on strengthening the United Nations. The conference didn't ever take place, but we had written this book in anticipation of the ten year time interval. And since I had been at San Francisco, and I had followed the United Nations with the Foreign Relations Committee through the next ten years, it seemed like a logical thing to do, a step up in the right direction. So I agreed to take that job. I spoke to Senator George about it and told him of my concern after having been with the committee for ten years. He felt that was reasonable and agreed to let me go.

I don't know whether I mentioned this earlier, but I had had an offer in 1952 to become Assistant Secretary of State for Asian Affairs, because they were having trouble in the Department with the Korean problem. Dean Rusk, Jack Peurifoy, and Carl Hummelsein, who was then Under Secretary of State for Administration, came to see me and asked me if I would take the job of Assistant Secretary of State for Asian Affairs. I think they wanted to give Dean Rusk another assignment as Under Secretary or something. I thought about it and I talked with Senator Connally about it, who was then chairman. He said, "Well, if you go, what will I do here?" He wasn't particularly excited about my leaving and when Dean Acheson talked with him he made that clear. So Acheson called me and said, "Look, I don't want

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to create problems with executive-legislative relationships at this point." So he said, "As much as we'd like to have you, I think it's better not to press this. Maybe you'd better stay with Tom Connally." So I did. That was in 1952, I think.

In any event, I had been aware of the possibility of moving to the executive branch for a time, and that rather intrigued me. So when Mr.

Dulles asked me to take the assistant secretaryship in 1955, I said I would do that if the chairman agreed. He agreed that in the circumstances it was sensible to go. We had a replacement on hand in the way of Carl Marcy, so I didn't feel that I was deserting the ship particularly.

RITCHIE: When you left, did you have any particular feelings of satisfaction about the ten years you spent with the committee? Were there things that you felt you had accomplished that you were pleased with?

WILCOX: Oh, yes. Of course. I was quite proud of the role of the Foreign Relations Committee during that postwar period. I think they responded very well to the many challenges that confronted them. Here the United States had emerged from an awful war with terrible costs and we were trying to help organize the world in such a way that this wouldn't happen again. The Senate committee, fully cognizant of the problem of making accommodations with the Soviet Union, nevertheless went ahead and helped to erect those pillars that served

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as a base for our foreign policy machinery and decisions in the postwar period. Yes, I was pleased, because I felt the committee had done a very creditable job—in fact a remarkable job—and it couldn't have done it without the help of some staff at the professional level.

When you look back—and this was the heyday of American foreign policy after the war—when you look back at the votes that were taken by the Senate on these major issues, they remind us again of the great success of the bipartisan (Vandenberg preferred to call it nonpartisan) approach to foreign policy, and the effectiveness of the committee in getting the Senate to accept its recommendations. I was, of course, very much impressed, and I wrote some things at the time about the Foreign Relations Committee and its success in getting a very favorable outcome on so many important issues. If you look at the UN Charter, the Greek-Turkish program, the interim aid program, the Marshall Plan, NATO, the Japanese Peace Treaty, the peace treaties with the satellite states, all the specialized agencies of the United Nations, the Smith-Mundt bill which had to do with the exchange program, these were all important matters. I think they were handled quite well and in a way that responded to the national interest.

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RITCHIE: Were you satisfied with the way the professional staff had developed, having been the first chief of staff of that committee?

WILCOX: Yes, it wasn't a large staff, but it was a competent staff. I had felt that we did not need to duplicate the various regional offices of the Department of State, that a relatively small staff was adequate for the needs of the committee at that time, assuming that it could make sure that the committee had before it the kind of information that would enable it to make rational decisions based on solid information. That information could come not just from the State Department but from other government agencies, the press, special interest groups, the academic community, and other sources. We were doing that and doing it reasonably well.

As time went on, as our foreign policy evolved, and as the Senate became more active in a lot of peripheral things, it became apparent that they really needed more staff. Even in the early years we were able to take on a few special staff members for special work that needed to be done, special subcommittees like Senator Humphrey's Disarmament Subcommittee, things like that. But it was my assumption that we didn't need a very large staff to perform the essential things that needed to be done. Sure, we could have used a bigger staff, but there were those legislative limitations that held us back, and we got along as best we could.

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RITCHIE: Did you have any regrets, or any disappointments over things that weren't accomplished that you would have liked to have accomplished?

WILCOX: Well, among other things I was the one who recommended to Senator Connally the creation of a set of subcommittees for the Foreign Relations Committee, dealing with the substantive issues that came before the committee—foreign policy problems that the administration had to face up to. A subcommittee on international organization, one on economic relations, one on European affairs, one on Latin American affairs, one on Middle East affairs, and so on. This was to relieve the main committee of a lot of detail, but it was also designed to enable the administration to consult more actively with the Foreign Relations Committee members and to have more people on the committee who knew more about the various areas of the world, including economic problems and arms control. Senator Connally thought it was a good idea and we started it. We named three people for each committee—three or four depending upon the committee and the interest shown by the members. The idea was sound and I think it worked reasonably well. I would have liked to have seen it work better.

The success of the subcommittees depended largely upon the interest of the chairman, how often he called the subcommittee together. It depended

also upon the relationship between the

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chairman and the Assistant Secretary of State in charge of the area in the State Department. Sometimes the chairman would prefer to call the Secretary of State for consultation, but this was one reason why the subcommittee system was set up, so that they could deal with the State Department at a somewhat lower level than the Secretary's level. In some cases the chairman wouldn't be particularly interested in calling a meeting unless a crisis arose, and then perhaps eager to get a headline he might say yes, let's have a meeting. But the success of the enterprise depended somewhat also on the staff person who was interested in the particular area. We assigned a staff person to each of the subcommittees and it was his function to keep the chairman properly advised as to issues that might arise and to the desirability of calling the subcommittee into session at any given time. This worked better with some subcommittees than it did with others.

I remember going to see Senator John Kennedy on one occasion. He was the chairman of the subcommittee on international organizations. He was interested in the problem area, but as I talked to him I could see he was interested in politics, too, and it was difficult to command the time and attention he needed to devote to it because he was very busy with other matters. One of the great troubles, Don, is the fact that the senators are so doggone busy. They just don't have the time to devote to foreign policy problems unless they reach a crisis stage, or at least they reach an urgent stage where their

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presence is really required. If they had more time at their disposal and the senators had a keener interest in the substance of the problems involved, the subcommittee system would work better. I'm not saying it didn't work, and it is working reasonably well now, on both sides of Capitol Hill. I know that in some cases the chairmen of the subcommittees have done really very good jobs. But I'd like to see the system work better.

The other thing I want to mention is the fact that I agree with the criticism you hear in Washington now that there are too many staff people, that we don't need quite that many to serve the Congress. The difference between four and sixty or seventy, whatever it is, is very substantial. I think the staff system would work just as well with a somewhat smaller group of experts. I certainly agree that they need more than four professional people

to service the Foreign Relations Committee. But we have to remember that most of the staff members are intelligent, able, interested, and ambitious. They do all kinds of things that result in stirring up problems between the executive and legislative branches. Many of them take the adversary relationship seriously, and they frequently challenge the State Department or the executive branch, or they have their senators do it. They write speeches and prepare resolutions, they draft amendments to pending legislation, and they do other things that tend to complicate relations with the executive branch. On the

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other hand many of them are very helpful to their senators and congressmen and to the committees they serve.

The other thing that I would like to comment on—is the fact that the concept of bipartisanship has suffered a serious setback. It was a concept that was popular in the period after the war, for reasons which I have mentioned. As time has gone on, this concept has fallen into disuse more, although in practice the president always has to have support from the minority party in the Senate and to a certain extent in the House if he is to win approval for treaties and legislation. So we have always done things in a bipartisan way, so far as the final vote is concerned, but we haven't always used a bipartisan approach in formulating policy with an opportunity for the minority to contribute to the evolution of the policy and to make suggestions and put forth ideas that are acceptable. I would like to see a greater degree of bipartisanship, because I think our national interests require it. But now, for instance, with elections coming, you see charges and countercharges being made by the leaders of both parties. It's awfully hard under these circumstances to develop a bipartisan policy.

I think what we need is a greater willingness on both sides—legislative and executive branches—to work together in the common cause. On the part of Congress it requires a willingness to modernize its machinery. Here you are with the War Powers Act, demanding a

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greater role for the Congress in foreign policy, yet they have not exhibited any real willingness to streamline their machinery so they can play an effective role. Dean Rusk used to say to me: "I don't know who to consult on Capitol Hill. Where do I go to get a decision?" Unless a treaty or a resolution or a nomination is before the Senate, it's awfully hard to find out what the

Senate or the House thinks about a foreign policy question. They need to reorganize and streamline their committee system. They need to make somebody up there responsible for consultation.

Maybe it's something like former Congressman [Clement] Zablocki suggested, a national security committee of the House and Senate, that would be made up of some twenty leaders and would be a contact point with the executive branch. I have suggested the creation of a joint National Security Council, with some of the congressional leaders being invited to meetings of the National Security Council to have an exchange of views with the president and his cabinet officers, maybe every four or five or six weeks, to talk about foreign policy problems that are emerging on the horizon, not just a crisis situation but foreign policy questions that are appearing on the horizon. This would make for better relationships between the two. They'd be in a better position to advise the president. They'd be in a better position to take part in debate on the Senate floor and the House floor. They'd be in a better position to function effectively

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in the committees. And there would be a greater willingness, hopefully on both sides, to work together.

If a new president were to embark upon that course, he could do it. He could do it formally by increasing the size of the National Security Council and inviting the congressional members to come and participate. Or he could do it informally by having them come from time to time without any formal organization. If it didn't work very well, he could stop it. This would not violate the separation of powers principle, in my judgment. If the executive and legislative branches don't work together to a certain extent, the Constitution is not going to function properly. It's true that it provides for an adversary relationship. Sure, the president is commander-in-chief of the Army and the Navy, and the Congress is the organ of our government to declare war. Well, you have to compromise a little bit on when the president is going to use the armed forces, and where, and under what circumstances.

The fact is you have a greater role for the Congress to play, given the changing conditions that prevail in the world. The War Powers Act is only one aspect of it. But when you look at the sale of huge quantities of wheat to the Soviet Union, or you look at the quadrupling of oil prices that caused people to line up at the gas tanks in this country, or you look at the sale of AWACS planes, or you look at the Panama Canal treaty and these other things, they are

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of very considerable interest to the people of the country and they've got to be of interest to Congress, whether Congress wants to be interested or not. Therefore, I maintain that we have to find some way to make this adversary relationship work—admitting that Congress has to play a more important role, and admitting that the president is the principle person in charge of our foreign policy—some way to bring these branches together a little better than they have been in the last ten years.

RITCHIE: I'm very interested in your views. I would like to have another session in which we can talk about your looking back on the Congress from your perspectives in the State Department and as a dean, and your general views on executive-legislative relations. But I'd like to end today by asking one question that's been on my mind all along. I read all I of the statements that were made by the senators at the time you left the Senate. They were all very glowing and obviously very appreciative statements, but I kept seeing the same comment: that was that you had epitomized the professional staff person, because not one of the senators could say what political party you belonged to. So I wanted to ask you today. What political party *did* you belong to at that time?

WILCOX: Bourke Hickenlooper made that point, didn't he? He said about me that he's from Iowa, and I've known him, and he's a good friend and everything, but I don't know what party he belongs

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to. Well, let's see if I can tell you. I have lived in the District for quite a while. I was abroad in the 130s some. I voted for Franklin Roosevelt when I became eligible. I voted for Gerald Ford. I voted for Lyndon Johnson and Ronald Reagan. I voted for Dick Nixon in 1972. In other words, what I tried to do was to be careful not to put a political label on my coat lapel, because I felt I had to be, and the committee staff had to be, helpful to both sides of the aisle, otherwise we would lose our effectiveness. So I was very careful to avoid taking sides politically. Since Connally and Vandenberg had agreed that I was *persona grata*, this gave me a good start, and this is the course I followed. When I went to the State Department, it was under the Eisenhower administration, but the UN had always been considered a nonpartisan issues from the early days on. So I felt there again it was wise to play a nonpartisan role.

RITCHIE: You never registered in a political party?

WILCOX: Right now in the District I'm registered as a Republican.

RITCHIE: But not back then?

WILCOX: No. And I don't know that it makes any difference in the District,

because the Republicans can't get anywhere, certainly a white Republican can't get anywhere.

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RITCHIE: Well, you're a unique person in Washington politics, because no one was ever really able to pin you down.

WILCOX: Well, I'll tell you. I tend to vote for the person, I really do. I didn't think that Mr. Carter did a very good job, so I couldn't vote for him again. I was hesitant about—who ran against Nixon in '72?

RITCHIE: George McGovern.

WILCOX: I couldn't vote for him. I have more respect for him now than I did then. I think he's emerged as a rather wise leader in some respects, don't you think so?

RITCHIE: He's come off very creditably in the recent primaries.

WILCOX: But I felt as between the two, Nixon had the qualities to make a good president—and I think he would have been a very good president if he hadn't gotten mixed up in the Watergate mess. The thing that really shook my feeling about Nixon was when I read the tapes of the conversations he had in the Oval Office with his staff. Some of the language he used was not becoming a President of the United States. But that's the answer, Don, I have not advertised my political relationships, because I didn't think they were that important, and I felt it was better to play a nonpartisan role. Maybe that's not wise, but that's what I did.

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RITCHIE: You certainly were very successful.

End of Interview #3

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