

Pat M. Holt

Chief of Staff

Foreign Relations Committee

Interview #8

The End of the Fulbright Years

(Thursday, December 4, 1980)

Interviewed by Donal A. Ritchie

RITCHIE: When we left off you had been discussing Chile and we had taken the story up to the coup, the assassination of Allende, and Gale McGee's subcommittee beginning, to hear the first stories about CIA involvement.

HOLT: Right. That subcommittee held intermittent executive sessions on Chile during the autumn of 1973. The State Department protested total innocence of any United States involvement. Finally, the subcommittee had a session with Bill Colby, who was then director of the CIA, and although Colby maintained that there was no covert intervention in the overthrow of Allende, he did tell the subcommittee a good deal more than we had known before about CIA activities in Chile over a period of years, including the years of the Allende administration. Those activities consisted, certainly in major part perhaps in their entirety--I'm a little hazy about that--in the support of groups who were opposed to Allende. There were subsidies to some of the media, there were subsidies to political parties and opposition groups generally. The purpose, as explained by Colby, being to keep the opposition alive, so

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to speak, with the hope that it would win the next presidential election, which was scheduled for 1976. And in fact, as I recall, the opposition had made some gains in the congressional elections in March 1973, six months before Allende's overthrow.

Well, the McGee subcommittee took note of this but didn't really do anything about it. As a matter of fact, I don't even remember who was present at this session besides McGee and myself. McGee said publicly, as recall, that he had found no evidence of CIA or other United States government covert involvement in this thing, and sort of left it as closed chapter. Well, all right, then we come down to the following spring, which would have been 1974, and in April or May, Colby said substantially the same things but in greater detail before the Intelligence Subcommittee of the Armed Services Committee of the House, whose chairman at that time was Representative Lucien Nedzi of Michigan. In about June, Representative Michael Harrington of Massachusetts exercised the right which any member of the House has under the law to look at the records of any committee of the House, read the Colby transcript before the Armed Services

Committee, and became very excited about it. At that time he didn't do anything publicly. He fired off letters to Doc Morgan, the chairman of the House Affairs Committee, and to Senator Fulbright, summarizing

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what was in the Armed Services Committee transcripts and urging a further investigation by one or both of the committees. What Morgan did about this I don't know, Fulbright himself replied in effect that an investigation wouldn't do any good because the CIA would withhold information, and that what was really needed was a congressional committee empowered by law to get at CIA files, documents, and other records. But, Fulbright said, we can't get the votes to establish such a thing.

Fulbright by that time had lost the Arkansas primary and was sort of dispeptic and discouraged about things in general, and I by that time was chief of staff of the Foreign Relations Committee, but I learned of the Harrington-Fulbright exchange when Fulbright's office sent the correspondence to the committee for the committee's files. I had not seen Harrington's letter before Fulbright replied to it, and I was a little surprised that Fulbright handled it that way, although he was prone to do this every once in a while. But I was not particularly impressed with anything that was in the Harrington letter. I thought, well what the hell, this is old stuff. It really doesn't provide any evidence of complicity in the Allende overthrow. Well, there the matter rested until I guess early September when Harrington's letter to

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Fulbright and Morgan (if not identical they were awfully similar) appeared in the New York Times. Harrington later implied publicly that the leak came from the staff of the Foreign Relations Committee. I suspect it came from Harrington. But where it came from was never really determined. In any event, this caused quite a furor, particularly on the part of Senator Church and the staff of his subcommittee on multinational corporations that had held hearings on ITT in Chile. They were storming around saying that Helms ought to be prosecuted for perjury and feeling much put upon, misled, etc. When I produced the Colby transcript from the McGee subcommittee, their wrath sort of was diverted from Helms to me. They felt that I should have told them. Church was particularly upset. Well, they all were, I don't know that Church was any more so than others. In retrospect, maybe I should have told Church, but with respect to CIA briefings of that kind we had always followed the line that senators knew that the briefing had occurred, if they were interested they could ask for the transcript and be furnished it, and in the interests of not spreading that stuff around any more than necessary we weren't going to take the initiative on it.

Well, anyway, the Foreign Relations Committee chewed on this. There were some rather stormy executive sessions about it, and then the matter just sort of, as I recall, dropped, although it was one of the things which led to

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the Hughes-Ryan amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act, which required that covert operations be reported to some congressional committees, including Senate Foreign Relations, and it was also one of the things that led somewhat later to the creation of the Church committee to investigate intelligence operations. That committee later published a great deal of material about CIA involvement in Chile, although at best the direct involvement in the Allende overthrow remains very ambiguous. Helms was, as you know, eventually indicted, not for perjury but for failing to testify fully. I thought at the time and I still think that a perjury charge against Helms would have been difficult to sustain. It was much easier to take the failing-to-testify-fully route, which indeed he admitted he had done. I guess that's the story of Chile.

RITCHIE: For about twenty years it seems that the committee was aware that the Central Intelligence Agency was playing a larger and larger role in foreign policy, and from time to time people like Fulbright, and Mansfield and Eugene McCarthy introduced resolutions to have greater Senate supervision, but their efforts never got anywhere. Why do you think that the committee took so long to really react to the CIA's role in foreign policy?

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HOLT: There was not Support for this, or there was insufficient support, for this view in the Senate. Mansfield started way back in the '50's. Just about every Congress he would introduce a resolution to establish a different, more formalized, hopefully more effective mechanism for Senate or congressional oversight, and the only time he was ever able even to get a vote on it he lost pretty badly. But this itch sort of continued around here and it was provoked mainly by CIA operations that failed, or at least-the interest of the Foreign Relations Committee was provoked mainly by those things. We have talked at some length earlier about the Bay of Pigs affair, even before the Bay of Pigs, in the last year of the Eisenhower administration there was the incident of the U-2 being shot down over the Soviet Union. This led to prolonged but somewhat inconclusive hearings before the Foreign Relations Committee.

Then the McCarthy resolution came along about 1966 or so. By this time congressional concern over oversight of the intelligence community had reached the point that although there was still insufficient support to set up a new committee or change the rules, the oversight subcommittees of Appropriations and Armed Services did invite I think it was three members from the Foreign

Relations Committee to sit with them during their oversight sessions. The arrangement in the period we're talking

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about was a little peculiar because Senator Russell was chairman of the CIA subcommittees of both Armed Services and Appropriations, and I think there was some other overlap on those there, though Russell in effect controlled it. After the debate over the McCarthy resolution, the Senate effectively killed the McCarthy resolution by voting to refer it to the Armed Services Committee, but after that happened, Russell did invite three members from Foreign Relations to sit in with his other group on these things.

If I remember correctly, those three members were Fulbright, who was chairman of the committee Hickenlooper, who was the ranking minority member, and Mansfield, who didn't have all that much seniority on the committee but was Majority Leader. I don't recall that I ever heard any reaction from either Mansfield or Hickenlooper. I did not hear much from Fulbright, but my impression was that he didn't think very much of this arrangement. He still thought that the CIA was not being very forthcoming. The oversight subcommittees of Armed Services and Appropriations were very inadequately staffed. What they called their staff consisted of Bill Darden, who was the staff director of Armed Services Committee. He was allowed to sit in on their sessions, but you know this was in addition to all his other duties and he had no staff assistance, and furthermore--really sort of stretching along the rules around here--Russell forbade

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him to brief any senator who wasn't present. So, I think Fulbright felt that even though he went to this thing he just heard sort of a set speech from the CIA and there was no background material, no very probing questions, and no basis on which to ask any very probing questions. But that arrangement continued in somewhat desultory form. I think it probably was abandoned or fell into disuse even before the creation of the Church committee.

RITCHIE: I don't get any sense, though, that the supervision of the CIA was really a priority issue of the committee. It seems to have been some thing that certain senators wanted but they didn't organize a particularly effective lobbying effort for it.

HOLT: Well, I think that's right. I think one reason they didn't, or couldn't, was that as I said before there was insufficient support for this in the Senate itself, and you know there was insufficient support for it within the committee up until very, very late in the game. Even as late as '73, when McGee was having those hearings on Chile that I referred to, McGee never explicitly stated it this way but he implied or at least I drew the inference that his objective was not so much in

really finding out what had gone as it was in providing some protection for the administration and the in

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telligence community against the charges that were being leveled at them publicly. The idea being that he could say: "Yeah, we had all these-executive hearings and didn't find anything."

RITCHIE: After all the revelations about the CIA started coming out, under the Church committee's investigation, did you get a sense that the attitude of the committee toward the CIA changed significantly in the 1970's?

HOLT: Well, the attitude of the whole damn Congress changed. But just going back to what I was saying a moment ago about the committee, you know the Hughes-Ryan amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of '74, I guess it was, which was the greatest legislative step towards oversight that had ever been taken up to that point, didn't come out of the Foreign Relations Committee. [Harold] Hughes wasn't even a member of the Foreign Realties Committee. He was a member of the Armed Services Committee, which indicates some dissatisfaction on his part about what he was learning in that capacity.

But, back to your question, the attitude of the committee changed, the attitude of the whole damn Congress changed. I don't want to attribute too much of this to Chile. Chile was one factor, but it was only one factor, and I don't know that it serves a useful purpose to try to

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weight the various factors. Another which came along a little after Chile was Angola. Another was the series of revelations stemming from Watergate and the Fielding break-in, and the Huston plan, and all of that. The atmosphere around here just changed totally. And another factor in this was the results of investigative reporting by several journalists around town, notably Seymour Hersh of the New York Times. It was Hersh's stories as much as anything which led to--I guess Ford was president by this time--the appointment of the Rockefeller Commission, which was mainly an executive branch agency, to investigate this. You know, some of the things the Rockefeller Commission came up with also contributed to the change in atmosphere up here.

RITCHIE: On the same issue of intelligence, but not necessarily on the CIA, I was curious whether you when you were working on the committee ever felt that the committee itself was under surveillance. Was there ever any trouble with telephones being tapped or anything like that?

HOLT: So far as the committee was concerned there was never any evidence of it. At one point, earlier than the '70's, there was a brief hubbub in the Senate over

the discovery, or the alleged discovery, that a senator's phone had been tapped. I think this was

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Senator Lehman of New York, who was not on the committee. Mansfield made an outraged speech and sought assurances from everybody in sight and there were all kinds of technicians prowling around and so on. But that's the only instance that occurs to me.

One time when March was away and I was acting chief of staff, the State Department reported to me that they had information that one of the secretaries on the committee was having an affair with an ambassador, and this gave them some cause for nervousness. This originally came to me from their congressional relations people and I promptly escalated it to the level of Assistant Secretary for the part of the world this ambassador came from which was not the Soviet bloc, thank God, but a Western country--and got a little more information about it. I said to the guy, "What would you do if you'd caught one of your secretaries." He said, "Oh, geez, I guess we'd transfer her." I said, "You know, God damn it, were people watching the ambassador or were they watching so-and-so?" He said, "Oh, the ambassador, the ambassador we wouldn't do anything like that!" Well, this was such sensitive intelligence that I really couldn't confront the girl with it. I did share it with Darrell St. Claire, who was then chief clerk of the committee, and sought his wisdom and advice as to what the hell to do, and finally I called her in and put it to her in terms that I had been hearing "gossip." Her first

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reaction indicated that she was thinking "who in the hell has been blabbing this?" And then her second reaction was to deny that it was so. I said to her, "I didn't ask you if it was so. I don't care if it's so. What's important is that it has generated gossip and appearances, and you know if you worked for HEW it wouldn't matter a damn even if it were so, but you can't have this and work for the Foreign Relations Committee." Well, the matter, thank God, was promptly resolved because the ambassador returned to his home country and she married somebody else. I was inclined to take the State Department's word for it that there interest in this had come from the ambassador rather than the girl. Now there were other people around the staff who were more paranoid about this than I was. Some of them would tell you that they thought some of this probably was going on, although there never was any evidence of it. Before sensitive, or presumably sensitive meetings, the CIA or the State Department used to send technicians around to sweep the committee room and check the telephones and all that kind of thing. I used to kid them, were they looking for bugs or planting them? They didn't think that was very funny, but who the hell knows?

RITCHIE: You did have a tremendous amount of sensitive material in your files, all those

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executive sessions, and the correspondence, and all the rest of that. Did you have any troubles with that leaking out?

HOLT: Well, like everybody else in town, we had troubles with leaks. I think on the balance we probably had fewer troubles with leaks than most people, but you know we had them. I don't know an office in town, and that includes the executive branch and the Supreme Court as well as Congress that is one hundred percent leak-proof. We had pretty good luck with respect to documents. We really did not have a filing system that was all that secure. We had a lot of filing cabinets with combination locks on them and so on, but the combinations to the locks were not treated the way I was taught to treat them when I was in Army Intelligence! The physical lay-out of the place was such that the public-at-large was forever wandering around and through various committee offices, so you couldn't be totally confident of it, but we were lucky enough not very much of that stuff leaked from the committee offices.

There were occasionally leaks that were very embarrassing. These usually took the form of somebody who had been present at an executive session blabbing about it to a newspaperman afterward. I think it was generally assumed certainly I assumed it for a long time, that this was done mainly by senators. Towards the end of my career up here,

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the number of staff members admitted to executive sessions increased so exponentially that I suspect some of the staff members might have done it on occasion. Of course.. nobody ever found out who the hell did any of these things. There are two documents that did leak, that occurs to me, to my great embarrassment. One of them was a report which I wrote on Bolivia, after a trip there I think it was in late 1969, which I classified "confidential" and put a covering memo on to the effect that "confidential" was perhaps underclassifying it, that it did have some sensitive material in it, and circulated it to members of the committee, which was sort of standard procedure. And it appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* the next day and very greatly embarrassed me, the American ambassador in Bolivia, and everybody concerned. I was sufficiently upset about it to complain to the full committee at an executive business meeting. The committee was sympathetic but not nearly as upset as I was. One of them said, "Pat, if you want to find out who did it, think of who around here wants to embarrass you." And I said, "That doesn't narrow the field enough!" But I was sufficiently upset to pursue it with the Ethics Committee, or at least I drafted a letter. I think Senator Stennis was chairman of the Ethics Committee then. I drafted a letter to Stennis which Fulbright signed. As far as I know he never even got an acknowledgement of it.

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Another leak, which had to come from Church's office, when he decided that he seriously wanted to pursue the matter of the public safety program and torture in Brazil that we talked about later, I sent him a memo on how I thought they ought to go about it. Within a few days I was chagrined to read most of this in Jack Anderson's column. I complained bitterly to Church and to everybody else in his office that I could talk to. One person said Tom Dine had done it, Dine was then Church's legislative assistant. Dine said Church had done it, and you know where was I to go?

RITCHIE: Well, if a senator leaked information there wasn't very much a staff member could do about it, I guess.

HOLT: No, except the next time you put something in writing to that senator you were more careful about what the hell you said, and this meant that you were not as useful to him as you would have been otherwise. Some of these things are calculated and deliberate. Many of the leaks, perhaps most of them coming out of the executive branch, fall into that category. On rare occasions I leaked things myself under instructions from senators. I'm not going to talk about specific instances, but these did not involve the kind of documents we've been talking about, executive transcripts or classified memoranda

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or materials received from the executive branch or that sort of thing. I think I could even pass a CIA lie detector test with respect to leaking classified information, but I did leak some other things which were calculated to embarrass a third party--under instructions.

RITCHIE: I remember that you said when you first came on to the committee one of your jobs was to handle press relations for Tom Connally. Did you handle press relations at all after that?

HOLT: Yes, I did for a while. Then as we got--this is sort of curious and paradoxical--as we got bigger we became less centralized about things like this. There was never any formal or explicit decision that I would stop doing it and somebody else would, it was just one of those things that sort of dribbled off. I did less and less and nobody sort of did it as a part of his job. It was whoever was there or whoever knew the most about it, that kind of thing.

RITCHIE: Did you have reporters coming to you on a frequent or infrequent basis looking for information?

HOLT: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

RITCHIE: Was it sort of a regular beat, or did they follow the headlines?

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HOLT: Well, you have to distinguish between the chief of staff and other members of the staff. Before I became chief of staff, reporters came to me mainly with respect to situations or bills or what ever it was that I was doing the staff work on. And they went to other members of the staff the same way. Reporters go to the chief of staff more with respect to questions about the committee's activities in general, its program, what is it going to take up the next session of Congress, or whatever. They were always wanting predictions about what the committee action with respect to a particular matter would be. One of the troublesome things was that they were frequently trying to get the committee staff to do their work for them. This applied to lobbyists as well.

A common pattern would be that a reporter would go to the State Department with a question, let us say as a hypothetical example: do you have a request from Jordan for additional military assistance, and if so, what are you going to do about it? The State Department would not answer them in one of the many ways in which the State Department is adept at not answering questions. And so they would come to the Hill, you know: have you heard anything from the State Department about this? We'll assume the answer was no. Well, could you ask them about it? Or don't you think you ought to ask them about it? That kind of thing. Sometimes I would, but then I never would

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pass it on to whoever it was that had inspired the inquiry. Sometimes they'd be more forthcoming with me than they were with the press, and sometimes they wouldn't.

RITCHIE: I'd like to go back a little bit to our discussion of Chile. Do you think that the situation in Chile in any way significantly affected United States relations with Latin America in general? The Chilean situation was sort of a black mark, or at least it was painted up to be.

HOLT: I don't think there was any very great effect it had on government-to-government relations with the various countries of Latin America. I think it contributed to the already well-developed paranoia in the Third World about the CIA. But so did a lot of other things.

RITCHIE: I would assume that foreign affairs under Richard Nixon were affected by Watergate the way everything else under Nixon was affected. In what ways did you see it changing things from your perspective on the Foreign Relations Committee.

HOLT: Well, I don't think of anything at the moment that is specific with respect to which you can say the committee or the Congress did this

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or refused to do that mainly because of Watergate. The effect was more in terms of atmospherics than particular action. We talked about the credibility gap under Johnson, well by the end of the Nixon administration it had grown to cosmic proportions. The prevailing mood around here with respect to almost anything out of the White House was one of cynicism. This had an impact on things. For example, partly as a, or maybe entirely, or largely as a consequence of the brutality which characterized the Pinochet regime in Chile in its early days and months, the House put an amendment on a foreign aid bill introducing human rights as one of the things to be taken into consideration in extending or not extending foreign aid. Kissinger by this point was Secretary of State. I guess as a matter of fact Nixon had already resigned, but we were still in the aftermath of all of this. Kissinger came up to the Foreign Relations Committee with an impassioned plea in the best tradition of Secretaries of State not to tie his hands, that progress in human rights was best promoted through "quiet diplomacy." Well, there's a lot to be said for that argument in the abstract, and I think in the abstract most members of the Foreign Relations Committee agreed with it; the trouble was that nobody believed there had been any "quiet diplomacy." So the amendment which had originated in the House went into law, and it's still there. There is a school of thought which holds

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that the Nixon veto of the War Powers Resolution in the fall of 1973 would not have been overridden except that it followed by two or three weeks the "Saturday Night Massacre" in the Justice Department.

RITCHIE: I was going to ask you about that.

HOLT: Well, this is one of those speculative questions. My recollection is that the override vote in the House was not all that impressive. I think they had maybe four or five votes more than the two-thirds that were necessary, and there were more votes to override than there were to pass the damn resolution to begin with. The main thing that had changed in the interim was the "Saturday Night Massacre." On the other hand, the War Powers Resolution in one form or another had been under consideration for a couple of years or so. You can chart a steady progression of support for it in the House. There were more members of the House voting for stronger legislation every year than there had been before, and by '73 this support was growing very fast. Of course, by this time Watergate had begun to unravel. You had the Ervin Committee hearings in the Senate in the summer of '73, when the House was considering this, and then you can see other things building up to the "Saturday Night Massacre," but you also had the

growing anti-war sentiment in the country. In any event, that argument, for whatever it's worth, is

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pretty much confined to the House. There was always more support for something like the War Powers Resolution in the Senate, and the votes in the Senate weren't all that close.

RITCHIE: What was, your role with respect to the War Powers Resolution?

HOLT: Not very much directly. Seth Tillman did most of the staff work on that for the committee. I was around at some of the hearings, and at some of the sessions when it was discussed, and I sat in on the conference committee, but I had no part in drafting it, or drafting amendments, or anything like that.

RITCHIE: The War Powers Resolution is getting a lot of attention from political scientists and historians who are trying to assess it. Do you think that it will ever live up to its expectations?

HOLT: Well, it hasn't really been tested. I think whether it works really depends on whether when the test comes Congress wants to make it work. You know, Congress can insist on its procedures, and if Congress disapproves of a particular action the procedures are there for Congress to overturn it. But this won't happen unless Congress insists on it.

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RITCHIE: Was the situation in Angola a test of the War Powers Resolution, or more a matter of appropriations?

HOLT: No, because we never had troops in Angola. The United States involvement in Angola, the extent that it existed, was covert. That was ended by Congress through use of the appropriation power.

RITCHIE: Which in the long term has always been Congress' most powerful instrument.

HOLT: Exactly so, you know it's there whether the War Powers Resolution is there or not. The War Powers Resolution, as much as anything was an effort to force Congress to participate in a decision, as distinguished from either acquiescing in it after the fact, or trying to overturn it after the fact. It was an effort to keep Congress from succumbing to the traditional temptation to pass the buck. But, you know, it's awfully hard to force Congress to grapple with an issue that it doesn't want to grapple with. The president, whoever he is in a hypothetical future case, can follow the procedures of the War Powers Resolution

in terms of prior consultation, in terms of reporting to the Congress, and so on, and then if Congress doesn't want to do anything about it, why who knows what would happen? Of course, under the War Powers Resolution, if Congress does nothing, then

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this has the effect of vetoing what the president has done. One can construct hypothetical circumstances in which this would be a very painful thing for Congress to be involved in. But all of the cases which have arisen under the War Powers Resolution since it's been passed have really been so damned ambiguous, border-line kinds of things.

RITCHIE: The Mayaguez affair. . .

HOLT: The evacuation of Da Nang, and Saigon, the evacuation of Phnom Penh, the Mayaguez affair. There have been some other even grayer, or lighter gray cases in which the president has not reported to Congress. Congressional opinion has been divided as to whether he should have or not. But there hasn't been anything clear cut of the kind that the framers of the resolution had in mind. Now, one can imagine, let us say in the early months of the Reagan administration that you have developing in El Salvador or in Guatemala a situation roughly analogous to that which developed in the Dominican Republic in 1965, with the 82nd Airborne or some other unit moving in. That would be on a scale sufficient to remove the ambiguity from whether or not the War Powers Resolution applies and would provide a test for it. But nothing like that has happened since it was passed.

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RITCHIE: The War Powers Act passed in '73 and it was in the spring of '74 that Senator Fulbright was defeated in the primary in Arkansas. Did that come as a shock to the committee and the members of the staff?

HOLT: Fulbright's defeat? I don't think it was a shock in the sense of it being a surprise. There had been enough straws in the wind from Arkansas to indicate that Fulbright was in trouble down there. It was a shock in a sense of it being a very great disappointment to me personally, to I think most of the staff, and certainly to some members of the committee. I suppose that there were members of the committee and of the Senate at large who took pleasure in it, but they were careful to conceal that.

RITCHIE: Fulbright had the longest tenure of any chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. Looking back over his years on the committee, what would you list as his most significant accomplishments and achievements?

HOLT: Well, I think the thing--I hate to put words in his mouth--certainly the most enduring accomplishment, probably both in terms of its inherent longevity as well as its long-term effects, would be the exchange of persons program, which of course was started

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long before he became chairman, before he was even a member of the committee as far as that goes, the original act. But all of this was revamped, and codified, and what-not, in the Fulbright-Hays act of 1960 or '61, which is when he was chairman. But just so far as his impact as chairman, I think he led the committee and eventually the Senate to insist upon a more independent role vis-a-vis the executive branch, and I think this is really more consistent with what the Founding Fathers had in mind when they provided for the separation of powers than had been the case in the glory days of the bipartisanship of Vandenberg and Connally.

I think that was probably his greatest accomplishment and impact as chairman, although in all candor it has to be said that he came to this after he had been chairman for several years, and only under the pressure of very strong disagreement with executive policies. In the latter days of the Eisenhower administration, Fulbright was given to deploring the effects of divided government, by which he meant a president of one party and a Congress controlled by the other. You know, I think I mentioned one reason he didn't want to be Kennedy's Secretary of State was he thought he could be more helpful to Kennedy as chairman of the committee than as Secretary. That was also the period when Fulbright was championing the traditional executive argument for flexibility in administering

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programs such as foreign aid and so on. But all of that changed and we still see the effects of it. Now, it's going to be interesting to observe next year how much staying power those effects have when you once again have a president and a Senate of the same party, and furthermore a much more conservative Senate than you have had in the past. My guess is, as a legacy of the '60's and '70's in which Fulbright contributed substantially, the Senate will continue to assert its independence, but from a different perspective. I anticipate that there will continue to be use of the technique of limiting amendments and provisos on appropriations bills and that kind of thing. They will come from a different direction on the political spectrum, but it will still be the same basic technique and relationship in terms of the executive and Congress.

RITCHIE: To some degree the committee and the Congress were even more independent of the White House after Fulbright's tenure. You have the stopping of aid to Angola, the cutting off of aid to Turkey, the cutback on aid to Vietnam

and Cambodia, all took place in 1975, 1976. Would you attribute that as the legacy of Fulbright?

HOLT: It was a continuation of the trend which had started earlier, and Fulbright contri-

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buted to the trend. I wouldn't want to suggest that he was the primary or only factor in it, but he was certainly an important one.

RITCHIE: Having looked back over his significant accomplishments, do you have any feeling of any disappointments or any regrets over his twenty years as chairman of the committee--things that weren't done?

HOLT: Oh, well, there are always a lot of things that aren't done. Nobody can do everything. It I don't off hand think of any examples of things that weren done, but I certainly wouldn't want to leave the impression that everything was done that should have been done. He did not leave a perfect committee or a perfect Senate when he departed in 1975, obviously not.

RITCHIE: With Fulbright's leaving the Senate, John Sparkman became chairman of the committee. He had been a member of the committee since the 1940's.

HOLT: Or early '50's.

RITCHIE: Could you give some assessment of John Sparkman, first as a member--we haven't talked about him that much--and then as chairman?

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HOLT: Well, as a member of the committee early--I think I mentioned this--he was chairman of the subcommittee which Connally appointed to handle the nominations to the United Nations General Assembly, about 1950 or '51, '52 maybe, of which controversy centered around Philip Jessup. Then I guess about that same time he was chairman of the subcommittee on the Far East, which I think we also talked about, it had such a good relationship with John Foster Dulles during the negotiation and the advice and ratification process of the Japanese Peace Treaty. Beyond that time in the '50's I don't really off-hand think of anything in particular about Sparkman. I began to have more to do with him in 1961 when we began the series of Mexico-United States interparliamentary conferences. Fulbright asked Sparkman in the beginning to handle that so far as the Senate and the Foreign Relations Committee was concerned, and Sparkman did throughout most of the '60's when he got out of it. I made a number of trips to Mexico with him and dealt with the Mexicans with him, and he was very easy

to work with, get along with. He always tended to be supportive of the State Department, whatever administration was in power. He was not as aggressive or even combative or as independent as Fulbright. Less self-assertive than Mansfield, Humphrey or whoever. At one point he used to amuse himself at the committee meetings by solving algebraic equations. Some senators doodled, and

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at one time we had a great collection of senatorial doodles. I think Morella Hanson has them now. But instead of doodling, Sparkman did algebraic equations. When he became chairman, he was insistent on the prerogatives of the committee and the Senate and so on, but he was not as assertive or even aggressive about this as Fulbright had been.

Under Sparkman the centrifugal forces within the committee manifested themselves. There was a tendency toward fragmentation. This, however, was part of a larger phenomenon which was occurring in the Senate as a whole at the same time. You had the progression, beginning in about 1975, of actions in the Senate to provide more staff, to provide more minority staffing, and that kind of thing. So in a sense the Foreign Relations Committee was simply caught up in a trend that was evident in the Senate as a whole. I think it possibly was more noticeable in the Foreign Relations Committee because of the change between Fulbright to Sparkman, but another change that occurred at the same time was that George Aiken left the Senate also at the end of '74. Aiken had been a very strong restraining influence on these tendencies on the Republican side of the committee. So both Fulbright and Aiken were removed at the same time, and that I think tended to exaggerate the effects of this.

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RITCHIE: Did the subcommittee structure change in the Foreign Relations Committee? Did the concept of the consultative subcommittees tend to be replaced by more independent subcommittees?

HOLT: Yes. This had started of course with the creation of the Subcommittee on Multi-National Corporations way back in '72, I guess it was. But one of the things I did when I became chief of staff, or just before when I knew I was going to, was to go around to various selected members of the committee and ask them their views about the staff, what it was doing that it ought not to be doing, what it wasn't doing that it should be doing, and so on. One of these was Humphrey, and Humphrey said, "We need a subcommittee on foreign aid." This was in late 1973. He said, "We don't really give that program the kinds of oversight that we ought to." I don't think I really reacted to that conversation with Humphrey other than to take note of it. As long as Fulbright was chairman it never happened. Right after he left it did happen and the whole orientation of the approach of the committee to foreign aid changed from trying to kill the program to trying to

reform it. That was mainly the work of Humphrey. That subcommittee had a considerable degree of independence under Sparkman, and a considerable staff as well.

Towards the end of 1976 the Subcommittee on Multi-National Corporations was supposed to come to an end.

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Church didn't really want it to, I think he probably wanted to protect the jobs of the staff people and maybe his own position as chairman of it. He didn't really want to have a fight about continuing the multi-national corporation things, so he persuaded the committee to change it to foreign economic policy, or something like that, and so you had that. But in addition to the subcommittee--and at the same time you did have the consultative subcommittees continue not very much different from what they had been--but in addition to that what was noticeable in 1975, again in considerable part reflecting changes that were buffeting the. Senate as a whole, was the development on the part of senators of damn near a mania about having more staff. Furthermore, having more staff which was responsible to individual senators rather than to the chief of staff or to the committee as a whole.

I remember in early '75 I went into the committee with the committee's budget, the annual ritual of doing these things, and what I presented was substantially a continuation of the status quo. I'll be damned if the committee on its own didn't increase that by seventeen professional positions, which was a source of great distress to me! I remarked to somebody that I was the only bureaucrat having an empire built against his will. Well, the Rules Committee didn't go along with it, but this was a part of the movement in the Senate that led to the adoption of

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S. Res. 60 which did give every senator on a committee a staff man for that committee, and so on. Then you had the other things which followed from that. But there was constant pressure to increase staff. The staff did grow, I don't know whether I mentioned this but when I got here in 1950 the staff was eight. When I left in 1977 it was sixty-two.

RITCHIE: And the biggest jump you feel was between '75 and '77? What was the staff size in '75?

HOLT: Well, I wouldn't want to be pinned down. I guess forty maybe, forty-five. Now, in all honesty, I have to say that a considerable amount of that growth came from me, and consisted of people to run the committee's computer project, which got off the ground about '73 or '74, somewhere in there.

RITCHIE: Your feeling about the seventeen more staff members was that they would complicate matters rather than make things more efficient?

HOLT: It was partly that. It was also apprehension that this would contribute to the fragmentation and the centrifugal forces which I mentioned earlier. That they would be harder to control and supervise and tend to shoot off in all directions, and it would make it more difficult for me as chief of staff to know what the hell the staff was doing.

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RITCHIE: I have a number of additional questions dealing with your role as chief of staff, but I think considering the time we should perhaps cut it off and have one more session.

HOLT: Well, all right, but I could stay another fifteen minutes . . . I remember one story in connection with the Democratic Caucus in the days when Fulbright supported foreign aid, before he turned sour on it. He wanted to try to generate some support for it in the Democratic Caucus and had me prepare a lot of material for him, talking points and back up data and figures and so on. I did and I said, "Do you want me to go with you?" Because I always went with him to the Senate itself when he was doing something like this. He thought about this for a minute and he said, "You wait outside. I don't know whether I can get you in or not." But he said, "Wait outside in case I need you." So I sat there in Mansfield's outer office for half the morning and finally somebody came out and said, "Fulbright wants you in there." So I went in. I was allowed to stay about three minutes or so to answer questions and then I went.

RITCHIE: Except for the Majority Secretary, they don't allow any staff in there.

HOLT: Well, I think that's all right. I'm inclined to think that meetings ought to be

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either open or closed, and there ought not to be any half-way point. You get a bunch of staff hangers-on then you really get a sort of ambiguous question as to whether it is open or closed.

RITCHIE: Which I suppose affects how the information is released later on.

HOLT: More importantly than that, it affects how senators behave in the meeting. We're not really talking about the kind of information that would appeal to Jack Anderson or the *Post* or the *Times*, we're talking about what the senators say to each other, which is going to be different if they think they're really talking just to each other than it is if they think that Senator X who is not present, has a guy sitting over there who is going to report it not only to Senator X but maybe to his wife or girlfriend and what not.

[End of Interview #8]

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