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**RITCHIE:** Senator Karl Mundt, I know, had a stroke and stayed in the Senate for about a year after that.

**RIDGELY:** Yes, it's a very difficult thing, and I think that the House was certainly very fair in the case of Gladys Spellman and waited to make sure that there was no possibility that she could ever recover.

**RITCHIE:** I've never heard of the Senate doing anything like that. Can they declare a seat vacant if the member is still living?

**RIDGELY:** Oh, yes. The Senate can expel a member.

**RITCHIE:** But is that the same thing as expelling a member? You wouldn't say that Gladys Spellman was expelled from the House.

**RIDGELY:** Oh, declare a seat vacant you mean? I guess expelling and declaring a seat vacant--circumstances might dictate the use of one of those terms or the other.

**RITCHIE:** But usually, in cases where senators become seriously ill, they are not replaced.

**RIDGELY:** That's right.

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**RITCHIE:** Carter Glass from 1941 to 1944 never showed up in the Senate at all. He collected his salary but he was in his eighties and in very poor health. Mundt, and Clair Engle, I remember, were incapacitated.

**RIDGELY:** Well, Clair Engle's illness was not nearly as long lived as Mundt's was. Mundt's ran on in my recollection a couple of years at least. I guess you'd call it a matter of senatorial courtesy. In a way they say: the states elected them and who are we to say they should go; particularly when they are living and incapacitated. I think today that you'd probably get a lot more notice of something like that than you did when Senator Mundt was ill. I think the news media would focus on it. I guess it would depend

on who it is, too, how much hammering they would do at it and get people riled up about it.

You know, one of the things is that here in Washington, I've often said, we're right at the pulse of our government. Everything in our paper is national news, and we're so up on it. One of the things that my daughters and my sons miss the most about not being in Washington is having the Washington newspapers to read, because where they are the things that are front page for us are back page there. They really do miss it for a while, but I guess they get used to it. We go up to Rhode Island to visit our second oldest daughter and her family and you sit there and listen to the television news and

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it's all local stuff. People don't appreciate--they really don't know what's happening. So you could go out into a state our west that is not heavily populated, maybe the Dakotas, Montana, Utah, Wyoming, and put a big blast in the papers about their senator being sick and he maybe ought to be taken out of office, the people would start wondering about it. Here it's understood more, where they wouldn't out there. I know my wife's relatives, they're cynics and have one-track minds. It's amazing.

**RITCHIE:** On what?

**RIDGELY:** They think everything in Washington is rotten to the core. I get in such a battle with them--verbal battle with them--that now it's gotten to the point that it ruins any visit we have, so I don't even discuss it any more. If the political situation is brought up I just ignore it, because there is no way--there is no way--that you can bring them around to a compromise attitude on something like this. All I can say is that it's a little bit of a part that makes up this grand old world of ours!

**RITCHIE:** I meant to ask you when we were talking about the trip to Cuba if you had a chance to see any of Cuba while you were there and what your impressions were on that trip.

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**RIDGELY:** What I saw, and what I was told, in talking to our people in the United States Interest Section and to some of the people who are Cuban natives who work for our United States Interest Section in non-sensitive jobs, they were helping out the United States Interest Section with the duties they had to take care of for us, you know, Castro talks about progress, but I came away saying that the

only thing that happened when Castro went in there was that the poor got poorer and the rich lost every blessed thing they ever owned. And that's just the way it is. The government owns the land, they own all the buildings, all the homes, all the businesses, and the souls of the people. For instance, all private homes were confiscated by the government. The only people who still own their homes now, are those people who were living in that home twenty years ago when Castro took over, but when that last person leaves that home who was there then, it automatically becomes the property of the government with no remuneration. They have a whole generation of men and women down there who have never seen a Babe Ruth or Hershey chocolate bar or anything comparable to it. They don ' t have such a thing. We have a grown woman in our control room there, somebody went in and got to talking with her about the cheese in the cans that you use for parties and decorating, she said, "No way." He took a cracker in to her with some of the cheese. She couldn't believe it, and she was a woman in her thirties and had never seen such a thing.

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They can't buy anything. One of the ladies who was helping out and was very good, she said women's lingerie is one of the most difficult things to buy down there. The rationing of things: you get eight ounces of meat per person per month! They get either three or four meters of yard goods per year, so they can make their own clothes. They have shops with clothing in them, but the average Cuban can not go in and buy them. They have a good medical system. Our delegation was accompanied by a doctor who was of Puerto Rican origin and spoke Spanish very well. He took time to go to a couple of the hospitals there, and agreed that they have a good system. There's nothing else good. The buildings are falling apart. It's a beautiful Spanish architecture, and I said the only reason those buildings are standing is because they're made of stone. Otherwise if they'd been brick or frame they would have come down, because in twenty years they've had no maintenance, and you can see it, readily.

**RITCHIE:** Were you able to get away from the hotel at all when you were at the conference?

**RIDGELY:** Yes, we went to a couple of places. They have, for the accompanying persons, a schedule for visiting different places. The conference center where the meetings were held was a good ways off and you ran through some of the communities there. We were right on the Gulf of Mexico waterfront, but I found out that Havana has only one park.

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The average wage there, median wage if I remember correctly is \$230 a month. I don't call that progress. When the people can't buy stuff, if they've got the money to buy it, you can't call that progress. The schools are very regimented. Everybody from the lowest grades right on up are in a school uniform, and there are different color uniforms to designate the level of school that they're in. Their formal education doesn't cost them anything, but not everybody can go--they're selected, the elite, if you want to call it that, the better students, the A students. It's depressing. It was depressing when we were in Czechoslovakia. I've often said about Czechoslovakia, you walk down the street and you could pass a hundred people and you'd never see one of them smile. I compare that to F Street here in Washington, where people are walking along speaking to each other, total strangers, smiling, chatting, joking, all of this. You don't see any of that in these countries.

**RITCHIE:** Were there any signs of Soviet presence in Cuba when you were there?

**RIDGELY:** No, except for the members of the Soviet delegation.

**RITCHIE:** Tell me, since so many of the members go back to these meetings frequently, do they build up relationships with members of other parliaments?

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**RIDGELY:** Oh, indeed. I know that Senator Stafford and Mr. Derwinski and Mr. McClory, and others, have built up a very good, and strong relationship with many of the other members of parliaments. Of course, Great Britain, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia, there are strong relations there, and the European countries the same way. And with some of the African countries too, and South America. They do that, yes, because they're working with them for a good number of years. These people too are long standing members of the IPU from their countries, just like some of ours are, who get interested in it and dedicated to its cause. So they do have some very close friends, yes.

**RITCHIE:** I meant to also ask you: how long have you been working with the IPU? Was it when you became Assistant Secretary of the Senate, or did you have any connections with them before.

**RIDGELY:** It was 1979, when I became Assistant Secretary.

**RITCHIE:** Is that a traditional function of the Assistant Secretary now?

**RIDGELY:** No, because when Darrell St. Claire became Assistant Secretary he brought it with him. It had been with the Foreign Relations Committee before that. Darrell was handling it when he was chief

clerk of the Foreign Relations Committee. When he moved up to the Assistant Secretary job the IPU came with him. Up through the

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95th Congress the Senate always handled the financial affairs and arrangements. It was with the 96th Congress that the exchanging back and forth between the House and Senate began. The 96th Congress was the first time that the House had had it. It came out of Foreign Relations when Darrell was Assistant Secretary, and that was during Frank Valeo's tenure as Secretary.

**RITCHIE:** So a function which transferred with an individual has now in effect become institutionalized.

**RIDGELY:** By law too. Other things happened when they wrote that law to change things, because the executive secretary of the United States group could be anyone. As a matter of fact there was a Doctor [Jeffery] Zinn from the Library of Congress who was the executive secretary. Now the law says that it must be an officer or employee of the House of Representatives or the Senate, so it cannot be anyone outside of the institution.

**RITCHIE:** It sounds like it has become one of the more interesting functions of the Assistant Secretary.

**RIDGELY:** Yes, but I don't know what the future will hold. Right now when I'm finished this year, Senator Stafford will no longer be chairman, and my involvement in this, since I retired as Assistant Secretary, will be over. He asked me if I would consider working as a consultant to help him out with the IPU trips remaining

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during the 97th Congress, so that's going to wind me down in September, once we get back and I get all the foreign expenditure and travel reports done and I turn it over to the House side. Then I'll be finished. Then during the 99th Congress, when it swings back to the Senate, I really don't know what the situation will be. I do know the Secretary is a member of the Association, and I am a member on behalf of the Senate, and because I am involved in helping Senator Stafford and being the financial officer, he has kept me in as a member of the Association because I'm going to be there.

My successor [as Assistant Secretary], Marilyn Courtot, will become involved in it as a member of the Association when I am no longer involved with the United States group. For instance, she can get

involved in this thing because if Bill Hildenbrand [Secretary of the Senate] is not able to go and he says "Marilyn, will you go?" he can write to the Association and name her as his substitute, so she can sit and participate just as though she were a member, and she can get acclimated, if she gets a chance to go on one of the trips between now and the end of the year.

**RITCHIE:** Well, this is great, because what we're trying to do here is to record the collected memory of the Senate, and the way this function has changed over the years, from the Foreign Relations Committee to the Secretary's office, and your taking it over and passing it on to Marilyn Courtot, is something we do want to

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record. Often Senate functions develop because of some particular person and then change because of individual relationships between one senator and one staff member, but it's very hard to look back and find anything written about why the change took place, why some individual has the functions that he has.

**RIDGELY:** That's true. As I say, the United States group has always been authorized by law to participate, but the structure of it was not spelled out. The chairman of our Foreign Relations Committee normally was the president of the American delegation, because I know that Senator [John] Sparkman was, up until the law changed where the United States group would elect its president and two vice presidents and a secretary and a treasurer, its executive committee. When the House is handling its affairs the president would be a House member, when the Senate is doing it the president is a Senate member. Also on the administrative side, they've created in addition to the executive secretary an administrative secretary. So when the Senate is running things the executive secretary is the Secretary of the Senate, the administrative secretary is the Clerk of the House. Then it just switches when it goes back to the House.

So both sides have their administrative officer involved in it, which wasn't before when it was strictly a one man show. Right now we work together. Everything I get or know about, I give notice of it to the House people, a copy of it or whatever, so that they'll

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know what's going on. They do the same thing when they're handling it. A lot of times we both get the same thing, and we just touch bases and see if each has gotten it. But we keep each apprized of what's

going on because it's equally important to them as it is to us. It works out pretty well now.

I think the big difference between the IPU delegation and other delegations is that the course of the IPU is well established. The goals are things that they are all genuinely interested in. A lot of our delegations are formed for special reasons, you have investigatory committees, you have committees that are authorized to travel to support what they are doing as far as legislation is concerned. They have to travel. With the IPU it is busy all day long. Even when we have to stop for refueling, like going or coming home, if we have a long trip, the members make arrangements to get a briefing from somebody in a foreign government or our own government on something they are interested in.

For instance, when we went to Manila we couldn't fly nonstop from Washington, so we stopped in Honolulu, and what we arranged there were two briefings by CINQPAC. One was a non-classified briefing, the other was a classified briefing which the members only attended. We were there a whole day, and it took us the whole day. So they weren't joy riding or anything of that sort. And this is done all the time. When we went to Norway we stopped in Iceland. We got

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a briefing by the government there, by our embassy there, and by the NATO command there. This group takes advantage of those situations.

**RITCHIE:** You don't get a sense of that from the newspaper accounts.

**RIDGELY:** As far as the Interparliamentary Union is concerned--and this is felt by many, many of its delegates, not just in the United States groups but in other groups too--although it is the oldest international organization in the world, and is non-political, dealing with these things on the level that it does, and although the United States is one of the earliest members, having participated since 1889, even in today's mode of communications it gets less coverage or write ups than any of them do, as far as I know.

**RITCHIE:** Why would you say?

**RIDGELY:** I don't know. I really don't know. I know it got a write up back when Art Kuhl was Assistant Secretary of the Senate, in either '77 or '78 when they had a meeting in Germany. A news reporter from the *Washington Post* was nosing around and asked a few pointed questions and Art answered them and gave very pointed answers on them. He made big headlines. They ran about a five article series on this thing. We got pretty good coverage out of Cuba, because there were many

newspaper people down there. A very interested reporter was from down in the area in which Representative

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Claude Pepper--former Senator Pepper- -represents in Florida, because he has a large Cuban constituency. Senator Pepper is a big IPU member but he couldn't make this trip. It wasn't deliberate or anything, to my understanding, but he just hadn't planned on going on this trip to begin with. Of course, they were interested in whether or not he, who represents a Cuban constituency, was going to go down there to Cuba. So we got coverage out of that.

I don't know what kind of reporting you would call that, that would create such a situation. I think one of the things that helped it get coverage on this trip was that the President had come out and really was coming down hard nails on Cuba and everything. But by and large the members put items in the *Congressional Record* and that's probably the most coverage that it gets. Newspaper wise, I guess you have plenty of people from the press in the areas where the meetings are held, but by and large we don't get much here.

**RITCHIE:** That's interesting, especially when you consider that Washington has such a negative image to people outside of the city, and foreign travel by Congress is often belittled by the press, and yet in the case of the IPU with its serious and unglamorous work, the contributions of the organization are ignored, and that perhaps reinforces the negative image.

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**RIDGELY:** I guess in a way you would call the IPU the working horse and not the show horse. But they've accomplished things and they have an excellent history of things they have debated and come to resolutions on that have come to pass. They have a good track record. I don't know how much coverage the IPU would get even say in the European papers. I would suppose it would depend on who is in the delegation from the particular countries that creates some attention. I guess that's the way it will be.

End of Interview #1

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