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RELATIONS WITH CHINA

Interview #13

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RITCHIE: You mentioned last time that you wanted to talk about the setting up of the Chinese liaison office after your trip to China. What was the story behind that?

VALEO: Well, of course, Nixon had made the basic arrangements for the liaison offices. We made no particular contribution to it on the first China trip. It did not come up in the course of our discussions. We didn't think it appropriate for us to do it in any event. It's essentially an executive branch function. Somewhere after we got back, I can't remember how much after, it was announced that they were setting up liaison offices in both Washington and Beijing.

The first Chinese officials to come were gathered from various places. Some came from Europe, and some came from China. They were not numerous. There were at most a dozen, I would think, and that included probably some personal servants. But the three principal officers of the first Chinese liaison were Han-Xu, and Huang-Zhen, who was the chief of the liaison office and later became the first ambassador. Han-Xu also had the rank of ambassador, but he was second to Huang-Zhen, who was a major party figure, who had had extensive experience in foreign relations.

He had been a general on the Long March. He was also a painter and later became Minister of Culture. The third person was Ji Chao-zhu, who was Harvard educated. His father had been the publisher of a newspaper, I believe in New York City, in the Chinese community at one time. Ji Chao-zhu spoke Chinese and English with equal fluency. It was a very beautiful Chinese and a very good English. The three of them were the key people.

When they first arrived in Washington they were housed in the Mayflower Hotel. They took a suite of rooms for their headquarters. By coincidence, a personal friend of mine who owns a Chinese restaurant in town, named Van Lung, he owns the Yen Ching restaurant at Porter Street and Connecticut Avenue, was engaged to feed them. He himself is a very interesting personality, and a very significant one in this period. His father had been the chief political leader, the governor of Yunan Province during Chiang Kai-shek's time. He was independent of Chiang Kai-shek but loosely allied with him in the war against the Japanese. Some people called him a warlord; that's a misnomer. He ran his own province, and he ran it as one of the more progressive provinces in the China of that period. We had heard his name as soldiers in China because the routes that led into China from India went through Yunan Province. The capital Kunming, was a major center for the dispersal of American forces throughout China. His name was Lun Lung, the father.

Van Lung was a student here, with his brother, for most of World War II. This was not uncommon in the period. A lot of the leading Chinese tried to get their kids out of China because of the difficulties of life during the war. Van Lung went to school here, as did his brother. In the early '50s, his brother left in anger, saying that he had been bothered by U.S. security forces of some sort. He left to go back to China. What had happened in the interim was that Lun Lung broke with Chiang Kai-shek and became a vice president in the new People's Republic, bringing his whole province into the new government at the time when the Nationalist Government was collapsing very rapidly, in the period about 1948-1949. So he had been given a vice presidency in the People's Republic of China. Later on, during the Hundred Flowers Bloom period, he was disgraced, and then posthumously was reinstated after Mao's death as a bona fide Chinese nationalist.

Well, Van Lung was his son. Unlike his brother, he stayed here, opened a restaurant and other businesses. His name was known to the Chinese liaison people when they came so they asked him to provide food for them. There's one thing about the Chinese, they tend to prefer their own food. They're very insular in that sense. Since I'd known Van Lung for twenty-five years or thereabouts, we shared a lot of our experiences with the early Chinese liaison people. They didn't have their own cooks at that point. We would go there occasionally to the Mayflower for lunch,

to talk with them, Mansfield and I. Mansfield was already planning ahead for his next trip to China, which was to take place in 1974.

We opened this connection with the liaison people very quickly because they, of course, knew that Mansfield had gone to China with Scott after the Nixon trip, and they really knew nowhere else to turn in Washington at that point with regard to the Congress especially. They knew a few people in the Department of State, John Thomas was one. As an administrative officer he was helpful to them in that early period. But apart from John Thomas and a few other people downtown, they really didn't know anybody else in the city. Mansfield immediately invited them to lunch at the Capitol. I think I have some pictures of that first luncheon with the liaison office somewhere in my collection.

They also turned to me. The word "secretary" had a meaning that's very important in the Chinese Communist structure; whether it's the party or whether it's the political structure, the secretary—Mishuzhang is the word in Chinese—is a key figure. He is the doer, so to speak, not as it is in our situation by any means! So they turned to me on two matters. First they needed to move out of the Mayflower. Ji Chao-zhu in particular talked to me about the building they were thinking of buying on Connecticut at the bridge over Rock Creek Park. It was a hotel at the time. He said, "We're thinking of taking that property. We've discussed

it. What do you think?" I said, "Well, from the point of view of an investment, I don't think you can go wrong. It's right next to the French embassy. It's on Rock Creek Park and Connecticut Avenue, and I think it's the kind of property that inevitably will grow in value." But I added, "What do you need all that space for?" I don't know how many rooms there were in the hotel, but there were many. I said, "You're only about a dozen people at most." He said, "Well, as things grow we may need more space." I said, "Well, if the size doesn't bother you, the fact that you will have a lot of excess space, then I think it's probably a good place to move." They bought that property, and moved in.

One of the first things they wanted to do was to give two dinners, one for Senator Mansfield, and a separate dinner for Senator Scott. They called me and asked me about the distribution of invitations. I guess it's one of the few times I ever went out of my way to get involved in a foreign nation's problems in the United States, but I explained to Ji Chao-zhu, who had called me, that I thought it would be most inappropriate. They wanted to give a dinner for Senator Mansfield and then a separate dinner for Senator Scott, and have only Democrats at one and Republicans at the other. I suggested that would probably be bad form, that they really should invite both, that they really shouldn't show that much knowledge of American politics at this point. I explained that party structure here is somewhat different than it is in

China. I said, "I'll be glad to help you no matter what you do, but I have to advise you that I think it's best if you invited them together and mixed up the invitations as between the two parties." Well, they were very deeply appreciative of that advice. The head of the liaison office Huang-Zhen recognized immediately what was involved. He called me personally to thank me for giving them the advice. I didn't know whether I should do it or not, frankly. But I just felt they were getting off on the wrong foot. They sent me over a box of invitations to address as I saw fit.

They gave that first dinner for Mansfield and Scott at the liaison office. Well, it was like dining in an immense cavern. They were using about one-fiftieth of the space, and the rooms echoed with the emptiness. Invited almost exclusively were members of the Senate, and most of those who were invited, I believe, accepted. There were maybe twenty members. They had obtained one or two chefs from China by then and it was an excellent dinner. It was the beginning of their social contacts in Washington. A lot of people were still very leery about going anywhere near the Chinese Communists. The contrast with the present has always fascinated me. When you go to a national day now, they have to screen people, there are so many hundreds and over a thousand on some occasions. In the meantime, they have had to use all of the space in the old hotel and get some in addition.

The food has deteriorated in quality as it has gone up in quantity. In the early days all pitched in to help prepare the food for the national days. Now, of course, it's a highly organized operation that involves I don't know how many chefs. But the professional diplomats actually helped to prepare the food for some of those early receptions and dinners.

Huang-Zhen stayed for a considerable period of time; he became ambassador when the liaison offices changed into regular embassies. I'm trying to remember when that happened; I believe it came in the Carter administration. I'm not sure when they raised them officially to ambassadors; I think even before the agreements were reached on full recognition. He was replaced by a person from China whom I did not know too well, Chai Zemin, and then another ambassador, Lin Zhaonan. And now Han-Xu, who was second in command at the old liaison office, is ambassador in the embassy. Ji Chao-zhu was there through a part of this period. He became an interpreter for Deng Xiaoping for a while and then came back as, I guess, the number two person in the embassy, and is now an ambassador in his own right to the Fijis.

The other things I associate with the embassy were the services on the death of Mao in '76. We went to that. They had posted an honor guard for Mao. They were in constant attendance to receive visitors for formal condolences. But Mao's death occurred shortly before we went on the third trip, so I'd better

go back to the second trip to China, which came in '74. Mansfield kept a constant pressure on them to permit a second trip. They were a little reluctant at that point. I think they wanted to spread it out in other ways, but he kept the heat on Huang-Zhen. At one point they had okayed it, and then they canceled it, very abruptly at the last moment. I think it was put off for at least several months. But we did finally go on a second trip and it was a very long one, there were no other members of the Senate with him.

He took along Jane Engelhard, who was then I think a member of a commission to study the machinery of the United States government in foreign policy, of which he was also a member. Jane Engelhard was an old friend, someone whom he had been helpful to in putting on the Library of Congress private citizens board. She later organized the friends of the Library of Congress, a number of things of that sort. She had similarly worked with the Johnson and Nixon administrations in some of the restoration work at the White House. She's a public-minded woman and a very wealthy woman. She had been born in China and she was a member of that second trip.

The thing I remember most about it was that Deng Xiaoping was back in the premiership in '74. He had been restored to favor, probably as a result of Chou En-lai's support. Mao may have made the decision on that basis. Again, this to me illustrates our

tendency to treat Chinese politics in our terms. We have in recent years juxtaposed Deng Xiaoping's views against Mao's views. We forget, conveniently in that kind of logic, that without Mao's concurrence, Deng Xio-ping would not have been brought back from disgrace the first time and placed in the premiership, whether Chou En-lai wanted it or not. This would have to have been done by Chou plus Mao, not by Chou alone. There would be no way that it could have been done in that period by Chou alone. That has been conveniently overlooked by some of the professional China watchers.

Deng was the enfant terrible of the early Communist party leaders. He was in and out of favor. He was a very strongly opinionated person and made enemies, and of course clashed repeatedly with Jiang Qing. That certainly would be the case, but it again shows that at a critical moment if he had his facilities, Mao would have been more governed by what Chou felt was essential than by what Jiang Qing may have desired. Our inability to deal with that reality, I think, was due in part to our feeling that Mao should never have been, that somehow or other he was a fluke of some sort, and that he was not the real voice of China, that Chiang Kai-shek was and, if not Chaing, then Chou En Lai . I think again this was a horrible misreading of the situation and it helped to keep us in this limbo-like Chinese policy for such a long, long period of time, much to our

own damage as well as to, I'm sure, China's damage—maybe not to China's as much as to our own.

But in any event the issues that were raised essentially came down to the same one: Taiwan. There was not a major trade issue at this time, that had not yet developed. There were some issues involving frozen assets and expropriations but the main issue was essentially Taiwan. I have less recollection of that trip than the others. I was ill in Beijing for several days, almost got left behind as the party moved out and moved southward and westward, but I finally managed to make it and travel with them. It was an exploratory trip in the sense of finding out what was happening in China. We went to many communes. I think we went to Yunan. Again I looked for familiar things and found none. China had changed very substantially. The city of Kunming, where I had spent a week or ten days during the war, was totally unrecognizable to me. There were some old green-painted wooden buildings in one spot, which were about the only thing I could even vaguely remember of the original city.

The Chinese treated us royally again, gave us a marvelous experience, and we learned a great deal. We found out much about attitudes on internal Chinese developments—Deng Xiao-ping was the prime minister, so there was none of the "Hate Deng" and "capitalist roader" campaigns which were to come a little later, again as it had come earlier. We had the usual number of

conversations in Beijing and then in each of the cities we visited. We wanted to see particularly a minorities province, in this case it was Guangxi Zhuang, where there are large groups of minorities peoples. We got our first exposure to the differences in Chinese policies as, for example, on population control towards minority peoples as distinct from those directed at the majority of Han Chinese.

What we found was that in most of these places industry was growing up on a small scale. The belief that suddenly China began industrializing after Deng Xiao-ping took over is really quite erroneous. In the northeast Shanghai and elsewhere there was already a very large development of heavy industry. Very often this development was at the expense of consumer industries in this period, but not entirely. The consumer industries were beginning not so much on the basis of national planning, but on the basis of provincial and local initiatives. The communes were a center not only for major development in agriculture but also for the development of small manufacturing. What we found was by no means a system that was alien to the needs of China at that time. The problem was largely to keep—I guess the population was about nine hundred million then—to keep nine hundred million people active and occupied and constructive. And they succeeded extraordinarily well in doing that. The commune structure was part of that success. It was by no means the horror that has

sometimes been painted, insofar as I know it still operates in many parts of China.

The development of "agricultural capitalism," if you will, that has become common in the last few years, has been an add-on to the original commune structure. It has not replaced it. They managed through the commune system to keep people fed, to give them a minimum of housing and clothing, a relatively adequate amount of medical attention, as distinct again from the pre-liberation situation as they constantly referred to it. It was egalitarian. There were exceptions to that, particularly in the minority areas, even in that period, but basically it was very egalitarian. I would say, in my own personal opinion, in the then existing situation, there would have been no other way to handle the rural problems effectively. They were not ready to move to another stage of development. Their first obligation was to see that everybody was fed, clothed and taken care of, and they succeeded in doing that in a rather extraordinary performance.

By the time of the last Mansfield trip, which was '76, he asked me first to go out on my own, which I did. I went to get a view of how countries around the periphery were reacting to the restoration of China-U.S. contact. I went on a trip for two weeks on my own. That may have been in '74, I'm not even sure now. But he asked me to take a trip out, and I did so. Most of the countries in the area were either developing their relations with

China or wanted to develop them. Even South Korea was anxious for contact with China. Japan was moving clearly into the vanguard of foreign economic contact with China, even in that period. And the Philippines had already established full relations with the Chinese. They had managed to work it out and still keep a good economic tie with Taiwan. The Chinese were very understanding of the Philippines' needs in that period. I think it was Mrs. Marcos who went first, and then President Marcos went afterwards. They established a good working relation. This was before we had yet established full diplomatic relations with Beijing.

I remember talking with Mrs. Marcos' brother-in-law, shortly before they decided to make contact with Beijing. He said that they were considering doing that and he asked me for my reactions, what I thought of the idea. I said I thought it was the way the world was going and that it would be very wise for them to do it as soon as they could. I didn't see any reason why they should have to hold back. He was wondering whether they should wait until the United States did it first. I said I didn't know of any reason. I said, "If you do it it may help to stimulate us to do the same thing, and we eventually have to go that way anyhow." I don't know how soon after that that decided to do it.

As a matter of fact, I sent him to see Han Xu, who was then in the liaison office, I said, "Why don't you go and have a talk with them." The Philippines had had no contact with China except

for a visiting group that had gone over, journalists, I believe. I said, "Why don't you go to talk with him and see what he might suggest to you? He's a very able diplomat and he'll be helpful." He did, he went to see him. From that I suspect they began to work out some arrangement.

Then came the '76 trip. Mao had died, scarcely a year after Chou En-lai. Deng Xiaoping was again in disgrace. Hua Guofeng was premier. It was towards the end of Mao's life when Deng Xiaoping was removed from grace a second time. The idea that Hua Guofeng was Mao's selected candidate again was an erroneous one. If I recall correctly, he was probably suggested to Mao by Chou En-lai probably on the grounds that Hua would be someone that Mao would be comfortable with. Hua was Hunanese, from Mao's home province. Mao apparently knew him well. He was very orthodox in his views, very much a party man. So my guess is that he wasn't Mao's selection at all; he was probably Chou En-lai's selection as somebody whom Mao would find satisfactory and who would yet fit into the needs of the situation that was developing, as both he and Mao approached death. The overthrowing of Deng Xiaoping the second time could very well have been the doing of Jiang Qing. By getting a hold of Mao's ear in that period when he was very feeble, and with Chou in failing health, filling him with stories about how badly Deng Xiaoping was doing things. It must have been something of that sort. I must say, Deng Xiaoping being the kind

of character he is—he's blunt and outspoken—would have lent himself to irritating Mao, particularly on a second-hand report of his behavior from Jiang Qing. So he was down again when we arrived on the last Mansfield trip.

When we got to China, the mourning period was still in process for Mao. Tens of millions of black arm bands and huge floral displays everywhere. The Chinese changed our plans so that we did not go directly to Beijing. I think there must have been a great deal going on already in terms of the reshuffling of power and the Chinese did not want us in Beijing. We went instead all the way to the west, to Xinjiang province on the Soviet border, and then came back in stages from there. Senator Glenn and his wife Annie were in the party. It was again a fairly long trip. Deng Xiaoping was still being criticized, that was part of the official campaign that was being waged. Hua Guofeng was being elevated very rapidly into a kind of super position in the party and government by those who had control of the basic machinery of propaganda, in retrospect, clearly Jiang Qing's faction. You got it every morning on the loudspeakers in the communes and everywhere else, along with music.

Then we finally got to Beijing at the very end of the trip. We had no inkling whatsoever of the impending disgrace of Jiang Qing. A friend of mine here at the British embassy had suggested that I talk to the British ambassador in Beijing, and called him

on my behalf. I dropped in to see him. His name was Youde. He later became—I guess he still is—governor general of Hong Kong. Youde was a real old China hand in the British tradition. He knew the language. He had been in China a good part of his career. He had been asked to leave at the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution and then had come back again as ambassador. I went to see him and I raised the question of what would happen with Jiang Qing now that Mao was dead. He said something like this: "You know, she's not been in very good health to begin with, some trouble with her legs, so I think that she'll probably just kind of fade out of the picture gracefully, command respect as the widow of Mao, and younger elements will gradually be coming into the control of affairs." There was no suggestion, and he obviously had no idea, that it was going to hit the way it did. Nor did I know of anybody who had any idea that the situation would develop the way it did.

We found out about it for the first time when we came out of China into Hong Kong. There were the first reports at that point that there was a major upheaval underway in the Communist party in China, and that Jiang Qing would probably be forced out. Again, it was not seen necessarily as Deng Xiaoping being the next major power figure in the situation. Hua Guofeng was regarded as leading the anti-Jiang Qing forces. Well, the rest of it is all in the newspapers. We learned little more from anything that we saw.

RITCHIE: What was the general purpose of these trips. Was it just to educate yourselves?

VALEO: Essentially, Mansfield wanted to educate himself, and he wanted to increase the amount of contact with the Chinese, to move it as quickly as possible towards a normal relationship. I think that was basically what he had in mind. Now, he had a great personal interest in China, and I'm sure that that was part of his inclination to go to China. He wanted to see it. He was impressed by the way it was developing. And as I think I've said before, so was I. But the main reason was to get as fully familiar with the situation as possible. There was nobody around who really had had that much exposure to it in those years, and certainly nobody in the Congress. There was a need to have in the Senate people who at least knew something of the situation firsthand. There was the desire on his part to educate himself so that he could talk with some authority on it in the Congress and also in discussions with the president.

RITCHIE: Did you have other members of the Senate asking you about China at that stage, or inquiring about traveling to China?

VALEO: Some, not a great deal. You know, senators are awfully individualistic and each one likes to do it in his own way. Unless you've been with them for a long time, they don't normally ask you for advice. It would be an unusual charac-

teristic of a senator to ask someone to whom he's not closely attached for advice. But there were some, of course.

RITCHIE: You mentioned that the Chinese liaison consulted you in terms of the protocols of setting things up here. Did the American liaison to China ever contact you or Senator Mansfield about your views? Or did you ever have any input into that operation?

VALEO: No. We saw them, of course, in Beijing and we were always welcome when we were there. There were various people in that office during the period when we were going to China, and we saw them, of course, on every trip, and had conversations with them. They were interested in what the reactions were in the Congress. But it came up in the course of informal conversation, never in the sense of formal briefings or anything of that sort. For one thing, I think they felt that they had no right to ask that, since we were there for a short period of time and they didn't want us to use a lot of the time briefing people at the embassy. But we always had conversations with whoever was in charge of the office, and with his associates.

RITCHIE: The reason I asked was that it strikes me that the State Department generally assumes that it knows what's going on and that no one else could possibly have any information that would be valuable to them.

VALEO: This disease is particularly applicable in the case of China, for some reason or other. It has always been. It's not a new situation. It was part of the whole difficulty in the McCarthy period. The State Department didn't want to hear anything else.

RITCHIE: Have you been back to China since you left the Senate?

VALEO: Yes, I was invited in '81 by the People's Institute for Foreign Affairs. It was right at the time of Reagan's first victory. I was in Manila and I went up for a week. I gave one or two talks about American politics to the Foreign Office people. They asked a lot of questions about what they could expect from Mr. Reagan as president. Of course, they knew his connections with Anna Chennault and many of the Nationalist Chinese groups in California. They already knew that. They were quite concerned that he might take a tack that would be different, because he'd been making speeches on Taiwan, of holding Taiwan and so forth, so they really didn't know what to expect. I suggested to them that they shouldn't worry too much, that he was not going to order the nuclear bombing of China, that it would be a different policy but not necessarily as much different as they might expect. That's about the way it's come out, I think. He's made a lot of modifications in what were then his campaign speeches.

I just went to Beijing on that trip. I was not anxious to be traveling, and went up only to get a line on what were supposedly massive changes. At that point they had not yet gone very far. They've gone much further since. There was western dancing, for example, in Beijing in 1981 as contrasted with 1976, but they were foreign communities that were doing the dancing and a handful of bold Chinese, but they were very few. The advertising still hadn't gone much beyond toothpaste. The political sloganeering was more subdued, but it still existed. Those were the external manifestations of it. The Chinese clearly had not abandoned Marxism.

I did a report for my own edification, out of habit, I guess and I sent it to some members of the Senate whom I knew. I think Pell put it in the *Record* at that time. The tone of the report was that the revolution had gone from the stage of self deprivation for the common good to one where people wanted to indulge themselves a little more. I noted that the Chinese didn't fight the revolution to make life worse, that revolutions usually were fought to make it better. And they were moving into that stage where life would get a little better; I think that's probably about what's happened. They've made a lot of modifications on a pragmatic basis, just as anyone in his right mind would do. They found some things worked better than others. I don't think they're being particularly shortsighted. The danger in any

situation of transition of that kind is that we sometimes so concentrate on the immediate improvement that we forget that there is also a long range. It's a little bit like a gasoline shortage: once you get the gasoline back then you don't worry about where you're going to get it maybe ten years from now. They may be suffering from some of that. But I would guess to a lesser degree than we are.

They still use the technique of long-range national planning, which is a critical element in their system as distinct from ours. It's a critical need as everybody knows who has a bank account and is trying to stay solvent or save some money. Our finding planning anathema in this country has always appalled me, because in our own personal lives anybody with any brains does some planning. When it's done on a national scale however, we seem to have great abhorrence of it. Well, the Chinese obviously don't. They do it with enthusiasm and it will help them to avoid a lot of mistakes that tend to plague people who are too shortsighted in defining the public good or their own good for that matter.

RITCHIE: That whole story is being replayed all over again with Senator [Jesse] Helms' opposition to Winston Lord as ambassador because he's not critical enough of family planning in China.

VALEO: Precisely. My own feeling on that, knowing the Chinese I think fairly well, and knowing something about their culture and their usual behavior, their sense of family, and actually from my conversations with my two escorts when I was there in '81, is that the charges are preposterous. The two women, perhaps around thirty, who were assigned to me constantly for the week I was there, to help me in any way they could, expressed concern with the policy but for other reasons. We got into discussions of the one-child family, which had only recently come into policy. These two women would obviously have had to have been very strong members of the party, otherwise they wouldn't have been assigned to that kind of work. Anyway, they each had one child as did I, and they were very concerned about the fact that they had only one child, as they explained it to me, because in China they're afraid that one child is easily spoiled. They said they're so used to large families that they were wondering about the social effect of the one child concept. However, they understood it from an economic point of view, and the necessity for it.

I would have the greatest doubts that as a matter of national policy the Chinese would encourage infanticide in any form whatsoever. That is a resurrection of a nineteenth century missionary story, which undoubtedly may have had some validity at the time because when people were starving they had no means to feed

another mouth, so it became a kind of horrible form of birth control. But the reason for it had to be because of a situation of starvation and not because they disliked women children more than male children. Sure, in an agricultural society, as China was, male children are more desired for a number of reasons. I'm sure it started out because they were stronger and could do farm work better. Eventually that concept was formalized almost into a form of religion—Confucian ancestor-worship—to reinforce the concept. But insofar as the Chinese relationships that I've observed over the years, where their children are concerned, they don't differentiate a great deal between boys and girls. They tend to love children and put up with a great deal from children. So the idea that Chinese have a deliberately cruel policy, I think, is outrageous. It's totally erroneous and I don't know who would want to propagate that idea. It's just so totally out of character.

RITCHIE: I have a couple of other questions about foreign policy, although not necessarily about China

VALEO: Excuse me, let me add one more thought on that, if I may. What you have probably got in some remote areas, which are not reached by government policy so well, except in a sort of fifteenth hand way, it is entirely possible in isolated local situations there could be occasional outrageous occurrences of this kind. But I fully accept the view that the Chinese have

expressed that when they find such instances they not only punish the people but also go into an educational program to explain to them that they're not supposed to kill children or girl children just to keep their families down to one. I think that must be the way that they're handling this. I can't imagine it being done any other way.

RITCHIE: I wanted to go back to finish the Vietnam story. We talked about it in all of its aspects from the time you went there in the early '50s all the way through the Johnson and Nixon periods. I'd like to talk about the winding down of the Vietnam War, which was going on at the same time you were traveling to China. In 1972 Senator Mansfield said that "Congress can't end the war," and that only the president could end the war. Yet at the same time, Congress was trying everything possible to end the war. I wanted to ask you about what Mansfield meant by that, and what really the Congress' role was in the ending of the Vietnam War?

VALEO: He could only have meant one thing by that. To get a two-thirds vote in both houses, which in effect was needed to terminate the war, or to assert from Congress that there will be no more money for the war whatsoever, not another dollar will be spent in connection with it, either way would have worked, would have been a theoretical possibility, but as a practical matter, it would have been virtually impossible. To get two-thirds of the

members of Congress no matter what the situation would be to say "We don't care how you get out of that country, it's over, you have to stop it right now," was totally unrealistic and could not have been done. Of course, by the same token, the president can give an order and say "Start pulling the men out," and that happens overnight with only one person making the decision. Well, that's considerably different than trying to get two-thirds of the House members and two-thirds of the Senate members to say the same thing, which is, of course, what you would have had to do. If you passed a measure of this sort by majority vote, I'm sure that any president would have vetoed it, which means that you would have had to have found two-thirds in both houses to override the veto. And even then you wouldn't be sure that the executive branch wouldn't try to circumvent it in some way. So as a practical matter it was the president who had to end the war.

The role of the Congress was to do two things: one was to keep an irritant in the side of the executive branch so that they would know that they could not go in deeper—and there we were successful in some of the measures. It was a difficult thing and it took two or three years to get to the point where Congress was prepared to do that, where you could try to limit it by putting the provisions that Church and Cooper and others devised into legislation to control the actual extent of the warfare that we were conducting in Southeast Asia. That was one way in which

Congress acted. The other was: to become the sounding board for registering the views of the country. Now, a president is isolated to a considerable degree in this city, and with all due respect, people in the departments do not know what goes on in the country very often. They only know what they're doing, their own function.

Congressmen were constantly seeing the president. They were in turn getting the pressure from the public and they were transmitting that to the president. So the Congress became a formidable force in pushing the president's decisions towards eventually concluding the war, and concluding it as rapidly as possible. There was a lot of face-saving to be done at first, probably in retrospect it will be seen that the war could have been ended a year or two years before it actually ended, because I think the pressure was high enough even then in the country to suggest that that was the appropriate course to take. It certainly would have been better had it been done sooner, or had we never gone in, but the factor of the Congress as a place where you could get a registry of the attitudes in the country on the conflict and transmit them to the president was a very significant element in ending the war.

RITCHIE: I was wondering if Mansfield's comment was a commentary on the legislative role in foreign policy as well; that Congress is really not there to make foreign policy but to react to foreign policy.

VALEO: I don't share that view entirely. I think that's the consent clause in the Constitution, and that's the Senate. There's also an advice clause, in the same clause as a matter of fact, so I think that Congress is warranted in giving advice as well as consenting or not consenting. I think it's its option, and there is a value in the utilization of the advice clause—Mansfield may have said that about reacting in foreign policy but he was constantly giving advice in one form or another to all of the presidents during the period he was majority leader, and even before, he was constantly giving advice to them. The value of the advice clause is that if the president didn't get advice from congressional sources, he would get it really from only the executive departments, and there's an inbuilt inertia in government departments. Anyone who has been in government any length of time knows that.

If there are good new ideas, they are usually in the younger ranks of the bureaucracy, and by the time they get to the top they have been so filtered and watered that the prospects of change in that process are extremely limited. In the Congress you have a kind of free give-and-take of the debate on the floor, a free

contact with the public, that makes for the input of new ideas. So it is perfectly proper in my judgment for the Congress to discuss new ideas in foreign policy and then if they feel as a group that the ideas are warranted, to put them in the form of formal legislative advice to the president and if it's something that lends itself to legislation, to put it in the form of legislation. Let him veto it he will and then see whether there are two-thirds of the people in the Congress who think the same way. That's a proper role of Congress in any subject that the government is seized of.

My concern with what's happened in the Congress today, and particularly in the Senate, from whence I think most of the advice has to come in foreign policy, my concern there is that with the growth of staff, some of the same kind of bureaucratic process which goes on downtown is now going to be shifted into the Congress. You will in a sense dissipate the ability of the Senate to advise, or you may find also a tendency to look at the issues at a level from which it's difficult to give meaningful legislative advice. In a way, the effort to end the Vietnamese War by the Church-Cooper method of delineating where you can bomb and where you can't bomb is an example of what happens when you have, if you will, highly detailed staff work on a situation. It became a necessity in the Vietnam situation because there seemed to be no other way to break through to the president.

But as a general practice, I think it would be erroneous to try to run foreign policy on that level. I think the Senate has to act at a higher level, and give advice within that context. You might, if you examined some of these problems I think, come to a conclusion of this sort. The Congress, you might say that as a matter of policy, in lieu of giving aid to Third World countries, we should open our trade barriers a little bit further so that they could sell more goods in the United States. Now that might be a pattern for the role of congressional advice. Obviously, the chance of getting that kind of a statement in the present climate is very limited, but that kind of advice would be meaningful. Or vice versa, you can say let's give them more aid rather than opening our trade, because we have these other problems at home that we have to deal with, and we can't deal with them if we open trade further. That sort of level is fine, but when you start saying: give them twenty-five dollars for this, or two million dollars for this, and one million for this, but don't give them anything for that, you're beginning to get on shaky grounds. I don't say you can't do it, but I think that the chances of playing an effective role at that level is dubious. It's a little bit like the debate that we've had on the El Salvador thing. I think that the proper advice from the Congress to the president would be to say, "Get the hell out of that situation." But when you try to say you can use funds for ambulances but not for drivers, or something of that sort, I think you're at the wrong level.

RITCHIE: The War Powers Act was one of the major ways that Congress responded to the frustrations of that time. Did Senator Mansfield have much hope for the War Powers Act? Did he see it as a reasonable solution to some of the problems?

VALEO: I don't know that he saw it as a solution but he thought it was a step in the right direction. He thought it was an effort to define what, as you probably are aware Don, constitutionally is a twilight zone. The line has been set in the past, before the War Powers Act, by whether you had a strong president or a formidable Congress. That's what drew the line in the past that separated the president's individual powers, as distinct from those which involve the Senate or the whole Congress. I did not favor the War Powers Act. I thought it was not a desirable way to get at the problem. I felt it best to leave it in a flexible field, for two reasons. First of all I thought that there were times when you needed greater authority in the presidency and there were times when that was not a necessity and when it would be better to have a stronger counter-balance in the Congress. I thought the voters would produce the proper balance in the course of events. I thought that that would be a basic reason for not trying to legislate the precise line on which each body's powers end and begin.

But I had no strong feelings on the War Powers Act. I just felt that that probably would be a better way, that there would be

times when you would not want sixty days notice, or that sort of thing. I was thinking back to the Roosevelt period. Had the War Powers Act been in place during the Roosevelt period, my guess is that Roosevelt either would have totally ignored it and gotten away with it, or had he tried to follow it, it may have been a terribly difficult thing to do, and may have hurt us in the long run.

RITCHIE: Do you feel that Mansfield took a back seat to some of the other senators in pushing that?

VALEO: Yes, he didn't push it. I guess Javits was one of the main proponents, and Church, I guess, was involved in it.

RITCHIE: [Thomas] Eagleton originally

VALEO: Was it Eagleton originally?

RITCHIE: But he turned against it in the end and decided it was a mistake.

VALEO: I have some real reservations about it. I'd like to think that if I had a vote, I suspect I would have voted for it, but it would not have been an easy decision.

RITCHIE: What was your reaction to the congressional cut-off of funds to Southeast Asia after the Americans had pulled out, in 1975 when Vietnam and Cambodia collapsed? Do you think that was the best way to handle the situation?

VALEO: You mean the cut-off of all funds to them? No. It probably would have made it easier to bring about more satisfactory relationships in that area had they had some flexibility in keeping alive the contacts with Vietnam. It's much the same thing that happened in China. I have always seen this whole Vietnamese situation as a microcosm of China. In fundamentals, it was almost the same thing.

RITCHIE: Was there anything else we could have done at that stage? Or was there just such a mind set in Congress that that was the only thing that they could conceive of?

VALEO: Oh, that's all. There would have been no other way in which it could have been done in Congress at that point. As a nation, we were angry enough about the war having been lost, we would have been doubly angry if you started paying off the enemy at that point. I don't know how else it could have worked in terms of the public. Although I personally feel that it would have made our relationships in that part of the world better if we had been able to do that.

RITCHIE: What was the influence of Watergate on all of this? If Watergate hadn't happened, would the foreign policy have been the same, or do you think Watergate was instrumental in bringing Congress back to the forefront in foreign policy?

VALEO: I really never thought of that. I think that it might very well have been a major factor. Particularly when we were leading up to impeachment. It made Nixon very wary of Congress and very concerned about keeping some kind of a relationship. I think we can probably get into that when we talk about Watergate per se. There's some background on that.

RITCHIE: Fine.

VALEO: I wanted to add something about the business of small being beautiful in the legislative staff situation. It has an interesting analogy. Detroit can't design changes into automobiles very easily. So for a while there they were going to Italy, where your carriage makers are in smaller units, where they could design changes a lot more effectively. The ideas for changes in design came a lot from Pinin Farina and a few other designers in Italy in the automobile field. It's really the same basic principle. If you get too structured it's very difficult to make changes. One of the joys and the beauty of the Senate was the fact that it wasn't so structured and therefore lent itself to the introduction of new ideas. I think all during this Mansfield period there was an enormous input of very meaningful ideas from many sources.

RITCHIE: One of the questions I wanted to ask was having started out in the Senate working for the Foreign Relations Committee, what was your opinion of the committee in that period of the '70s when the president and the Congress were clashing and the War Powers Act was coming along? Was the Foreign Relations Committee effective at that stage, or were you disappointed in their activities?

VALEO: Oh, I think it was all right. I don't have any great admiration for what it did, or any great hostility to what it did. I think the problem goes back to one I had with Carl Marcy in an earlier period. I kept insisting that the primary function of a committee hearing had to be legislation, that you had to keep its activities pitched to legislation, that you couldn't simply use a committee as a public relations forum, or as he would put it, as an educational media. I thought there were better ways of educating people than through a committee hearing, and that your effectiveness, in terms of your real contribution, came primarily from the closeness with which you related what you did to the potential for producing or not producing legislation as the case might be. I won't say exclusively for that purpose, but almost exclusively for that purpose. We never saw eye to eye on that. He believed that the public relations aspect of the committee was much more significant. And I must say that during the Vietnamese War, when many things changed, I mean many standard,

orthodox views had to undergo change, why, it probably served a very useful purpose by having those hearings. I don't think it helped much on China and a few of the other things, but it helped in the Vietnamese situation.

RITCHIE: One of the reasons why I asked that was because the *Post* recently ran one of their periodic articles on how Senator Richard Lugar has revitalized the committee. They ran the same sort of article that Senator Church revitalized it. The only chairman that they haven't run that article on was John Sparkman. We just seem to go back to the same place each time around.

VALEO: Yes, that's true.

RITCHIE: The committee has had a difficult time in defining its role in foreign policy, and has usually started out with a great amount of enthusiasm but then seemed to be frustrated because it can't exert that much influence.

VALEO: You come back to the treaty functions under the Constitution. You come back to treaty-making, and advice and consent, and confirmation of appointments, those are clear-cut functions. Beyond that, for many years when foreign aid had not yet become a big grab bag, when it had real significance in a broader sense rather than providing two hundred and fifty thousand dollars for a particular school in Kenya, and a hundred bags of wheat for somewhere else, when it was really trying to define

the usage of American material resources in terms of having a constructive influence not only on our policy but on the potential for peace in the world, then I think the committee had a great usage, going beyond just the treaty power, and also a very valid legislative usage.

The introduction of the budget legislation, which I did not favor by the way, the congressional budget legislation I think was the first thing that drove a nail into the Foreign Relations coffin, because it put everything then in the context of dollars and cents, and that is not the proper role for a committee of substance to be performing; that's the role of the Appropriations Committee. As far as a Budget Committee function, well, it's there, so I don't know that you can do anything about it at this point, but that seems to me to be a secondary function. It's become primary because of the emphasis on the budget, and deficit which means all of your authorizing committee, not just the Committee on Foreign Relations, have really lost a lot of significance. There would be nothing wrong, in my judgment, for example, for the Foreign Relations Committee coming out with some outlandish figure, to make a statement, because you always had the Appropriations Committee to control the amount anyhow. But at least it would show the way you thought a thing ought to go, or a policy ought to go. The control of funds was in the Appropriations Committee with its bookkeepers.

RITCHIE: Did you feel that the growth of the staff of the Foreign Relations Committee helped or hurt its mission?

VALEO: I don't think it helped. I don't know that it hurt. I don't think that the committee is producing anything better now with the thirty or forty people than it did with five or ten.

RITCHIE: Did you continue to keep close contacts with the staff?

VALEO: For a while I did. When Norvill Jones was there I did, and Bill Bader. And the present chap who works for Lugar, I know him but only slightly. He was very helpful to me when I was trying to get some money for the United Nations University in Tokyo.

RITCHIE: One other question was about the Congressional Research Service. You started out with the Legislative Reference Service. Do you think that they are fulfilling now the duty that they should be, or do you think that they've gotten too big and bureaucratic as well?

VALEO: Let me say this: if they are being used properly, I think they are much more capable now of fulfilling their role than they were in our period. When I was there, we really did not have the resources to do it. We were doing the best we could, but it

was essentially a rather limited job. And from what I've seen of the papers being turned out by the Congressional Research Service, I think they've improved immeasurably. On all of these Mansfield trips I used to define a request for the Legislative Reference Service to give us the kinds of things we needed to use on the trip. And they did. They wrote some awfully good papers. I now find that that is done as a routine matter on many situations. I used to ask for a situation report before we went out, from public sources, which gave you a good starting point from which to pursue it when you were abroad. But the ones that they're turning out now are much more useful in many ways. I must say, I don't watch it that closely, so perhaps I'm going too far in this direction, but the pieces I've seen have been very, very valuable.

RITCHIE: Is there anything else you want to say about Vietnam? We've covered Vietnam through a number of periods. Is there any other observation you have about your experiences there or the Senate's role in the Vietnam conflict?

VALEO: Yes, there's a sort of little O'Henry story that I think ought to be told. It was an earlier Mansfield trip. Mansfield was not given to dressing formally. A lot of people were taking evening clothes on these trips abroad; he was not. I think we got to Vietnam once and there was a formal dinner. He never had evening clothes, but he had them on that trip. I said, "How come you've got evening clothes?" because I knew he never

traveled with any, and he would avoid it completely if he could. He said, "Well, to tell you the truth, I just want to do it out of respect for Diem." We went to the function and he wore his evening clothes, and I guess I wore mine—I carried mine—and we were the only two people that showed up in evening clothes!

RITCHIE: Do you think they just anticipated that he wouldn't come in evening clothes?

VALEO: Yes, I think that's precisely what was involved.

I'd like to make one more comment about Diem, because I'm concerned by what's now happening in the Philippines. Diem understood that if he had to depend heavily on the United States, he couldn't stand in Vietnam, that the whole structure that he had tried to put together in South Vietnam would have to collapse. The nationalist movement was so strong and powerful in the country as a whole that it would not accept any longer the idea that their wars should be fought by outsiders. I think he understood that and he resisted deeper American involvement. We made the terrible mistake—and I must say it was made during the Kennedy administration—of looking for a Vietnamese administrator in lieu of Diem who would do our bidding more readily. I think that was the root of the disaster. This is quite apart from whether Diem was capable of dealing with the problems that existed in the country or not, but the course we took was bound to lead in the

opposite direction from what we hoped. We would eventually have to find that the cost of what we were doing in terms of lives and in terms of money would be so ridiculously out of proportion with any national interest that we had in that area, that we would have to pull out. I think Diem understood that; we did not. We were still confusing the technique and the machinery with the purpose. And we were good, and we knew we had great equipment, and we knew we had brave soldiers, and we knew we had a very professional military force, but that was not the answer in that situation.

In my judgment, exactly the same thing is true in the Philippines. We are insisting there again that we know better how to handle the internal problems of another country. We may think we're doing the right thing in this; we may put it in terms of stopping forms of totalitarianism, but the danger in this is you usually produce even a greater totalitarianism when you don't let a nationally conscious group work out its own way in that kind of a situation. It's a situation which has repeated itself too many times in American history. It really is at the root of what went wrong in China and the cost that we paid for that. It's the impulse—and it's only one of many impulses in our society—but it's the impulse towards imperialism, disguised perhaps even from those who push it, as being some sort of altruistic and worthwhile sense of service to mankind. I think this is where we go wrong, and we have got to deal with this. Otherwise it eventually will

lead us to a national disaster of the worst kind, because the world has changed greatly out there. You could afford these kinds of mistakes in the nineteenth century and really right up until World War II. But the worldwide situation in which this is now being attempted is one that can only promise the greatest devastation to us if we continue as we are. That's all I'd want to say. I think Vietnam should have taught us that, but I still see signs that it has not taught us that.

RITCHIE: I'd like to talk about Watergate next week, but eventually I would like to talk about your experiences in the Philippines.

VALEO: Sure. I'd be glad to do that. I've kept in close contact with that over the years.

RITCHIE: I think it has so many parallels to what we've been talking about.

VALEO: Very much so.

End of Interview #13