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Secretary of the Senate, 1966-1977

Secretary to the Majority, 1963-1966

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**WATERGATE**

Interview #14

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**RITCHIE:** Today I'd like to talk about Watergate, and I'd like to begin by asking if you could give your perspective of the Senate's role in Watergate, beginning from the beginning and the earliest revelations you had about it.

**VALEO:** I must confess I did not see immediately the significance of the issue. I did not think it was going to be blown up into the proportions it was. That surprised me. However, I didn't have a lot of company in the Senate. Senators immediately saw it. Teddy Kennedy saw it, and reached for the investigation. Mansfield saw it, and reached to cut off Teddy Kennedy's investigation. He talked to Sam Ervin about taking it on. Sam Ervin at that point was somewhat reluctant, but Mansfield insisted it belonged under his jurisdiction and he agreed to do it. I was present through some of the phone calls but, I don't believe, at the private meetings that went on in connection with this. I think I asked Mansfield what the reasoning was behind his approach. He said, "If you give it to Teddy Kennedy it will make it into a political issue, and that will be devastating to him, and to the Senate, and to everyone else. The person to do it is Sam Ervin." He had an uncanny judgment in this sort of thing, and

he was, of course, absolutely right. Ervin gave it a status and a quasi-judicial stature that it would not otherwise have had.

Of course, the hearings themselves are a matter of public record. I'm giving you now only the parts that came specifically to my attention, and may not have come to the attention of the press. It may have been at this point that we had instituted the regular meetings with the House leadership, which at this time was under Speaker Carl Albert. Watergate was certainly a subject which came up rather quickly and frequently. In those meetings we used to meet on alternate occasions either on the House side or on the Senate side for breakfast. Tip O'Neill was at those meetings, Carl Albert and one or two other members of the House. One was a congressman from California whose name now escapes me, but who was later defeated. He was reluctant to push the investigation. Tip O'Neill was not out in front on it. Carl Albert was not out in front on it, nor was Mansfield. I think both left it respectively to [Peter] Rodino on the House side and to Ervin on the Senate side, and of course that's the pattern in which it developed. Rodino came to one or two of those breakfast meetings to report on what was happening, and he indicated that it was looking worse and worse for Nixon. Occasionally, Ervin would do something similar at the committee chairman meetings that Mansfield would have periodically. So one could see the heat building up.

Mansfield began to get very worried about Nixon in this period and what he might do in certain circumstances. One line that sticks in my head from what he said at the time was, "You have to be very careful with this fellow, Frank. If you get him in a corner you don't know what he'll do." That was one of his reactions. He said, "You have to treat him very, very carefully." Well, the thing kept building up and building up. Then everybody saw the significance of it, including me. I was one of the later ones, but I finally saw it. It began to get very close to impeachment on the House side. I think there were frequent meetings and regular discussions between Scott and Mansfield on the Senate side as it looked that way more and more. Finally, I got the order from Mansfield, but I'm sure he must have had Scott's concurrence in it, to start planning for the trial in the Senate, because it seemed to be a foregone conclusion that he would be impeached in the House.

So I began preparations. I met with the press. Mansfield had said, "This is one we will do with TV." He said, "We have to do this one on TV." He was not in favor of using TV in the Senate chamber prior to this. I guess for ceremonials he did not have any great objections, but he was opposed to the use of TV in the Senate. Still, he said this was one we would have to do. We got Doc Riddick to do the research, or he did it on his own initiative, on previous impeachment cases. I met fairly regularly

with Darrell St. Claire to try to conceive of the physical arrangements that would be involved in it. We ordered from the company that makes these Senate pins and awards, Baldwin or Balfour or something like that, this was Darrell's suggestion, we ordered identification pins for people who would have the privilege of the floor during the trial in much the way you have people identified by a button as being part of a presidential party. We thought we needed something like that to make sure that nobody got on the floor who shouldn't be there. We began to discuss the matter with the press galleries and this brought in the sergeant at arms, I can't remember whether Nordy Hoffman was at that time sergeant at arms, or whether it was still Bill Wannell, but we had discussions with them. The arrangements were essentially being made in the secretary's office. We were prepared to go ahead with the trial. I mean, physically we had figured out what would be done by that time. But of course Nixon resigned and that changed the equations.

The behavior of the Congress, particularly, I think, the House, was excellent, and Ervin's behavior on the Senate side was very critical in keeping the country together in this period. Had they not handled the matter with the kind of discretion and yet honesty that it was handled there could have been very, very serious repercussions. Again you come back to what Mansfield said about Nixon: I don't know what he'd do if you get him into a corner.

Well, he was in the corner, and he resigned. But by that time the weight was overwhelming.

My great fear in all candor was that he would order the chiefs of staff to shut down the Congress. I thought that it might go to that extreme. My wife at the time, who was Canadian by background, said, "I'll take Jamie and go to Canada, and you can stay here and deal with it as best you have to." I mean, that was the way some people's minds went. I never felt it was going to go to quite that extreme. It always occurred to me that had he given such an order, that the joint chiefs would have probably gone down to see Stennis before they obeyed that order. And having talked with Stennis they would probably not carry out that order. One has to speculate on the things you shouldn't be speculating about—you can do this in an oral history—that was the way I saw it happening. But fortunately Nixon was not that far gone, and fortunately it worked out the way it did. I must say, she was not alone in that kind of a view of the situation. I think [James] Schlesinger was quick to say that he was in there to protect the constitutional structure.

But I don't know that I can give you anything more on the Senate's view of Watergate. It was a kind of day-to-day drama, much the same, much more serious but in some ways similar to what had happened in the earlier McCarthy thing as Nixon gradually fell apart and was brought down. I don't know if we got into that in

our earlier discussions, but it was fascinating to watch the effect in that case of censure on McCarthy, and what it did to him as a personality. I don't know whether it was a consequence of what happened in the Senate, or whether events just happened to coincide with a personality disintegration, but when McCarthy was in his heyday he used to have dozens, literally dozens of reporters following him wherever he went. He took the Senate censure vote as being ridiculous and of no meaning at all, it had no effect on him whatsoever. He found it laughable that they'd even try to stop him. There was a Republican senator who ran that, as I recall, it was a bipartisan group. I think his name was [Arthur] Watkins. They were very firm in their handling of it, and again it was well done. Margaret Chase Smith was a key figure in bringing it on, in precipitating it. Her stand against McCarthy came before the Senate's.

But after the censure vote, from then on, it was interesting to see the transition that took place. The press no longer followed McCarthy. Then he'd write these enormous tracts, nobody would be on the floor to hear them anymore. He would run them up to the press gallery personally and say, "Boys, look at this one, I've got some real hot stuff here." And they'd say, "Oh, yeah? Okay Joe, lay it on the table." It was that kind of thing, and gradually the spotlight ceased to shine on him. As it ceased to shine on him he shriveled more and more in every respect,

physically along with everything else. He was heavy on alcohol at that point, towards the end. He more and more lost interest in what was happening. Or I should say, people lost interest in McCarthy.

**RITCHIE:** Those are two examples of very trying situations in which the Congress, which is normally partisan and divided, came together and handled things fairly well and responsibly. What is it about the institution that enables it to rise to the occasion?

**VALEO:** I wish I could answer the question. I think it eventually had something to do with a sense of national responsibility, which in certain critical situations rises above local responsibility or a sense of responsibility to your state, or to any special interests with which you might be associated. The institution seems to produce that kind of response, especially when it's pushed in that direction by a man like Mansfield. In the Mansfield Senate I could not have conceived of them acting any differently, in retrospect, than they did in the Nixon crisis, and in a number of other major issues, as in the Vietnamese thing. It took time to bring the Senate to that point, the consensus had to develop slowly and be very carefully nurtured, but they eventually came together and saw clearly where really the national interest lay in a vital sense, using the word vital very carefully in this case.

You can't underestimate the significance of the minority in this process. If the minority is not prepared to do this, you can't do it. I think in a way, at least during the Mansfield Senates, we were blessed with some very fine minority leaders in both Dirksen, in his time and in his context, and Scott. I went to an eighty-fifth birthday party for Scott last night and I thought back over really the tremendous contributions he has made to the United States. Petty people can tear at that and denigrate some of it, and he had his pettinesses like everyone else, but when the chips were down you could count on him. You saw that in the Vietnam situation, you saw it certainly in Watergate, which were the two great crises of that period.

In the case of Dirksen you saw it repeatedly; you saw it in civil rights, you saw it in the Nuclear Test Ban treaty, which was a very critical decision at that time. Without that test ban I think the nuclear rivalry would have gone far beyond where it is now. Only God knows where it would have been at this point. It may very well have blown the whole thing up. But Dirksen knew it was time to change it, that we had to move in that direction if there was going to be survival for anyone. So he moved in the right direction. If you went through the whole record you could find this, and you could pick out those items which particularly underscored the idea that they can converge when they have to.

But I must say I would not underestimate also here the significance of Mansfield. If he had been a different kind of leader; if he had promoted the kind of petty party struggle, synthetic struggle really, which used to go on during the Johnson period—much of it was synthetic—if he had promoted that kind of struggle you would not have seen this result. I'm thinking now of another incident where it happened and why the Senate has its own particular genius. Back in the early days of the problems with Cuba, there was a hijacking of a plane. It was one of the very first of the hijackings, and the plane wound up in Havana. Before we had any facts on it, [Robert] Kerr was on the floor offering a declaration of war against Cuba. Thanks to Dirksen or Taft, the Senate adjourned until the following day. He thought the Senate should not act on a declaration of war without at least laying over one day. So we did, and of course during the night we found out the plane was hijacked not by a Cuban but by an American and I guess Castro was asking, "What am I going to do with the plane?" But that is the kind of thing—there are people who rise to the occasion—you never know where it's going to come from, but somehow it comes out in a crisis.

We can probably get into this more when we talk about the different personalities in the Senate. But you take a man like Ervin for example. Whatever his other shortcomings, and God knows he had plenty, he was born to protect individual rights and to

finish off Nixon as a force in American politics. He rose to the occasion in both instances. On civil rights for Negroes he was absolutely abominable from my point of view. He was difficult, he wouldn't let go, far more difficult than Russell. But on these other issues of protecting individual legal rights, and on Nixon, he performed nobly, and of course found his place in American history probably on that basis, not on his obstructionism in the civil rights issue.

**RITCHIE:** I was going to ask you what Mansfield's prime motive was in picking Ervin as the chairman of that committee.

**VALEO:** Well, I think he believed him unassailable from the point of view of politics. He was not running for any office. Everybody knew he didn't want to be anything else, and they didn't even know how long he wanted to be the senator from North Carolina. So he was unassailable, nobody could say this is politics and he'd run a political campaign. The second one was he was a brilliant lawyer, and Mansfield recognized him as a brilliant lawyer. And third, I think he probably sensed that his sense of humor would be helpful in this situation, and it was. I think those were principal reasons why. Mostly though he wanted to sidetrack the bid by at least Kennedy's people—I don't know if it was Ted Kennedy himself, but Kennedy's people.

His motives on that were never very clear to me. I think I mentioned he regarded the Kennedy family as ill-starred in a Shakespearian or Greek tragedy sense. He may have been doing it to protect Ted Kennedy, and I think properly so. In retrospect, I think it was a very wise decision, even from Ted Kennedy's point of view. I think he was afraid of another assassination, which was certainly conceivable.

I must tell you an incident in this connection. It was a rather important one, and it shows sometimes how short-sighted procedures can be when you get too wedded to them. When Bobby Kennedy was assassinated, I was at home. Mansfield called me at about two o'clock in the morning to tell me about the shooting. I was appalled, obviously, as he was. He said, "Can you come down to the office? I'm going to go in in an hour or so." So I got to the office about five o'clock in the morning. By that time I guess Bobby was definitely dead and they knew it. He said, "I've talked to the president and the president said, 'I don't know what to do, I don't know what to do. How can you stop this kind of thing? Give me whatever ideas you have.'" Mansfield asked me if I had any ideas. Well, I didn't know what ideas to give him. It was so overwhelming, coming so soon after the first and in the same family, I just didn't know what to do. I finally thought about it and said, "Well, what else can you do? Set up a

commission." This is usually a solution when you don't know what to do, maybe you'll find some answers.

We drew up a resolution calling on the president to establish a commission on political violence. It was zeroed in on that point, only that point. Dirksen, I believe, was minority leader at that time, and he went along with it, so it was a joint resolution by the two leaders. It passed—I'm trying to remember now whether it passed—no, I think what he did was to send it down to the president. It came back in the rather elaborated form of the Kerner Commission on Violence. Well, that was violence from A to Z. It was a very lovely study and beautifully done, but I think the very scope of it tended to minimize its utility because you cannot cover all of social violence and expect anybody to focus on an aspect of it that you can deal with. So the effort to get at political violence in the United States through a commission was sort of lost in that larger shuffle.

One thing did come out of it, and that was the providing of Secret Service protection to candidates in presidential elections. This was not our idea, this came from downtown. I think it may very well have been Johnson's own idea. The first test of that came in the second Nixon campaign. George Wallace was also a candidate. The question arose in the Democratic primaries. Under the law that was passed on extending the protection, the secretary of the treasury, who was then John Connally, was the administra-

tive person involved in deciding who should get protection. The primaries began and we began to see Gallup polls and Harris polls about how the candidates were jockeying for position. Ted Kennedy was running ahead, way up front on most of these polls, on the Democratic side. But he had not declared himself a candidate, quite the contrary, I think he indicated he had no intention of running, although he was speaking a lot around the country. Connally's Secret Service people asked for a meeting with congressional people because another provision of the law was that they were to have advice from the leadership of the Congress, both houses.

There was one joint meeting with the joint leadership—Republican and Democratic—in which they explained their problem of trying to define who should get protection. It was left for them to work out some formula. Mansfield and either Dirksen or Scott—it must have been Scott—turned the matter over to staff people. I was one of the people on the advisory group who worked with the Secret Service. There was someone from Scott's office, Ken Davis and Tom Kuchel, then a private citizen, was on the advisory group—he was designated by the leadership as a third person on this advisory panel. Well, we had our first meeting with the Secret Service people and they listed the people they were going to give protection to: they included George Wallace and they included one or two others. I asked, "What about Ted

Kennedy?" "Well," one of the agents said, "he doesn't fit our criteria." I said, "What do you mean he doesn't fit your criteria?" "Well," he said, "he's not a declared candidate, and the secretary of the treasury has said that a person, in order to get the protection, would have to be a declared candidate." "Well," I said, "I think that's really kind of foolish. The only persons I know who are probably going to be in danger are George Wallace and Ted Kennedy. They're the two obvious marks for an assassin. If you'll read back through history, you'll know that that's the kind of person in political life who attracts an assassin." The response was, "Well, we have no way of doing that."

We registered our protest, we made it very clear we thought—and this was universal on the part of the congressional advisors—that Ted Kennedy should also have protection. Nothing more was heard of it, until George Wallace was shot. A half hour later, Nixon ordered protection for Ted Kennedy. Either it was shortsightedness or John Connally was trying to smoke out Ted Kennedy on his intentions and trying to force him to declare himself as a candidate. In view of the rest of John Connally's record, I would think the second was the more likely rather than the first. But that's the kind of thing you run into. My own view of Secret Service protection is you can only go so far with it, otherwise you destroy the very meaning of what you're trying to do. If a candidate can't get anywhere near the public, you might just as

well not have candidates, except on TV, which may be the direction in which the country is moving.

**RITCHIE:** I came to the Senate in 1976 when just about every other senator was running for president, and there were more Secret Service agents in all of the office buildings, surrounding people like Birch Bayh and Henry Jackson and Frank Church, great mobs of them.

**VALEO:** Yes, and their families and everyone else. It's enormous and I think quite unnecessary and quite overdone.

**RITCHIE:** Going back to the Ervin Committee, I was also curious about the other Democratic members of the committee, who were sort of an unusual bunch: Herman Talmadge, Daniel Inouye, Joseph Montoya. What was the motivation behind their choice? Did Mansfield pick all of them?

**VALEO:** No, he did not. Ervin, I believe took them from—that may have been a special committee of what? Government Operations? I believe that's the way it worked, and they were probably all members of that committee. So far as I am aware, there were no additions from outside of Ervin's immediate committee jurisdiction. No, if there was any choice at all it was a choice made by Ervin, not by Mansfield. Ervin was Mansfield's choice to handle the whole question, but after that he left it entirely up to Ervin.

**RITCHIE:** None of them were people who had presidential ambitions. Was the Democratic leadership deliberately trying to avoid any partisanship?

**VALEO:** That certainly was Mansfield's view, that there should be no political suggestion in it. How much he talked to Ervin about that, I don't know. Whether he communicated that idea to Ervin or whether Ervin himself reached the same conclusion, or whether it was just the automatic given nature of the committee membership at the time, I'm really not quite sure. But if it's the latter, I think you could just check that and would find that in the records on the membership of that committee. As far as I know, no one was brought in from outside of that particular committee grouping.

**RITCHIE:** I was also interested to hear you say that you were among the last to think that Nixon really was connected with this.

**VALEO:** No, no. It wasn't that. I suspected he might be connected with it, but knowing some of the shenanigans that go on at elections, I wondered if they were going to make so much out of what amounted to stealing the other people's thunder. I didn't realize that it would rise to quite the level of crime that it did. I think it probably would not have, if they hadn't gotten involved in the perjury, and not acknowledging from the outset what was involved in it.

**RITCHIE:** I was going to ask about your general impressions about the Nixon White House, if you had any dealings with the Haldemans and the Ehrlichmans and others on Nixon's staff in the period before the Watergate, and what you thought about the way Nixon dealt with the rest of the government.

**VALEO:** I didn't know them. I may have met them on some occasions, but I certainly didn't know them before, nor did I know them during and after. The only favorable thing I knew of them was that they had pushed for Frank Meloy's ambassadorship. Frank told me the story of that later on. He said that when he was in Rome, I believe, Nixon came through—and was all but forgotten at that point—Frank Meloy was the deputy chief of mission at the time and went out of his way to help Nixon. But that was in his nature, he was a very decent human being and a very warm person. Nixon said, "I'm not going to forget you," or something to that effect. So when Nixon became president, Frank, who was a careerist, Frank's name was submitted by Rogers, I believe, and was immediately approved by the White House. He said Ehrlichman called him personally, remembering also the incident of the experience in Italy. That's the only thing I knew about them that was positive.

The story on Meloy ties in with Vietnam. Johnson was trying to get Henry Cabot Lodge to go out as ambassador; it would have been his second tour of duty out there, if I'm not mistaken. But

anyhow Johnson tried to get Cabot Lodge to go out. Lodge agreed to go as ambassador, and Rusk called Frank in. I can't remember where Frank was stationed at the time. I think he was still in Italy. Rusk called him in and said that Lodge wanted a very fine Foreign Service Officer as his second in command in Vietnam, and that his name had come up in this connection—I don't know whether Rusk actually suggested Frank to Lodge, or whether it just came up in the course of recommendations along with others. So he asked Frank to talk with Lodge. I remember this, because Frank called me immediately after he had the meeting with Lodge and I met him at the Metropolitan Club. He related the whole story to me.

He said he went in to see Lodge and they chatted for a while, and Lodge offered him the job and told him that he had heard so many good things about him, and so forth. I don't know whether he had actually met Frank before that. He may have, but I'm doubtful that he knew him. When he finished, Frank said, "I said to him: Mr. Lodge, I will go if I am ordered to go to Vietnam. But I am totally in disagreement with American policy on Vietnam at this point and I think you would be better advised to take someone else who would be more sympathetic to what you will be required to do there as ambassador." Lodge was flabbergasted. When Rusk heard about it, he was furious at Frank and said "He'll never be an ambassador as long as I'm secretary of state." And that, of course, was what happened. He wasn't.

Frank told Lodge the truth. Frank did it much more elaborately than I'm giving it to you here, but basically he told him all his reasons for his feelings about it, having been there as a young Foreign Service Officer many years before, having gone through the whole agony of the French experience, and having seen exactly the same mistakes being made by us, he was absolutely adamant that it was the wrong policy. But as a good Foreign Service officer he would have done it, and would have done the best he could with it. But he just could not see his way clear to go with Lodge without first letting him know how he felt about the policy.

Later on, Nixon made him ambassador to the Dominican Republic. He did a very good job in the Dominican Republic. He was later assigned to Guatemala. He again did a very satisfactory job. Then he was named ambassador to Lebanon. He called me—I believe he called me from Guatemala. They had just had a large earthquake down there and he was badly shaken up. It did a lot of damage to the embassy and to his possessions and what-not in Guatemala City. He said, "I have practically no time. They want me to go out there in two or three weeks." He said, "If I don't get confirmed quickly, I'll be months trying to get my things out there." So he said, "Could you possibly do something to get the confirmation through as quickly as possible." They all knew him on the Hill, so it was not a difficult job. He had been confirmed

two times before without any objections. I mentioned it to Mansfield, and Mansfield said sure, we'd try to do it. And we did, we got him confirmed within a day or two.

He came to Washington, and my wife and I took him out to dinner. He was very, very distracted during the dinner. I attributed it to his experience in the earthquake and then going from there to Beirut, which was certainly not the kind of thing that you would expect to follow. It was just one disaster area after another. I remember we tried to talk him out of it and suggested it might be time for him to quit, just resign and let it go at that. But he said no. He said, "This is my whole life. I can't do anything else but this." So he went, and he was killed. He was assassinated.

John Thomas, who was administrative assistant secretary, I believe, at the State Department, called me to tell me of the assassination. He knew I was a close friend of Frank's. He asked me to go to Syria, to Damascus, to accompany the body back, which I did. I went with Frank's only close relative, his brother, who had also been in the Foreign Service briefly and had, I believe, been selected out or resigned at an earlier point; the family of Frank's deputy chief of mission, who was also assassinated with him, was on board. So we went as a group in a military plane to Damascus. The embassy had brought the bodies from Beirut by road

to Damascus. We came back and went through a ceremony at Andrews. President [Gerald] Ford was there, as was Kissinger.

About six months later, Dan Meloy, Frank's brother, came through Washington. By a strange coincidence, Frank's lawyer was a personal friend of mine—I didn't even know it, but he knew it and he called me and said he was handling Meloy's estate. Dan Meloy came down to see him about the estate. We invited him to come back for Christmas, I believe, and he said that he was going on down to Cancun or somewhere on his way to Guatemala. He wanted to do some swimming and snorkeling. He said he'd drop by on the way back. Dan was very, very unsatisfied with the State Department's account of Frank's death. He really tried to get me to have someone in Congress investigate it. I felt I had not enough to go on, that I couldn't open a question like that without something more than his surmise. But he was very adamant, and he kept pressing it himself. Well, he left, and died a week or so later in very strange circumstances in Mexico.

You know, I don't like cloak and daggers, and I don't know if there's any relevance at all in this. But Frank was killed and Dan died a few months later in Mexico; he may or may not have been killed. The evidence was inconclusive but Frank's lawyer was very disturbed by the inadequacy of the autopsy. The story of his death was never fully understood. As for Frank's assassination, a Paris newspaper later on carried a story that the persons who had

killed Frank and the deputy chief and the chauffeur was a member of an obscure Moslem religious group in Lebanon. According to the story, they were determined to show their dissatisfaction with American policy in the area. This was how the article described the event. The chauffeur, who had been raised to great honors in this country, along with Frank and his assistant at the time, according to the story in the Paris papers, had been part of the plot not to kill Frank but to kidnap him and he had been involved for money. The incident occurred when the car was going from the Christian area of Beirut into the Moslem area, where Frank was to present his credentials to the president, whose palace was in the Moslem area. The actual waylaying of the car occurred in the Christian zone of Lebanon, before they reached the no-man's land between the zones. I never knew what to believe. But it certainly was a tragedy. It wiped out that entire family. In the case of Frank, I don't know much about his brother, but in the case of Frank, his death was the loss of a man who had really been a great public servant and had made very substantial contributions to American policy. I think that belongs in the record somewhere.

**RITCHIE:** When you mentioned about Rusk's determination not to make Meloy an ambassador, I wondered if Meloy's close association with Mansfield and with you and with the Congress might have worked against his career in the State Department, and

if Rusk saw his opposition to the war as somehow connected to his congressional ties.

**VALEO:** I don't think his connections with Mansfield worked against him. Generally speaking, the State Department was not hostile to Mansfield. I think some secretaries were at various times, and for various reasons. But Mansfield had a very deft way of handling his differences with the State Department. I watched it beginning with Dulles. If he was critical of policy, it was never on a personal basis. He used to always talk of it as sort of covering your flanks, but he was always deferential to the secretaries and the department in terms of the conduct of foreign policy. He was always very good to them when he could be in terms of their financial needs and that sort of thing. He was never petty on that, quite the opposite. He was always very generous if he could be. So I think the one neutralized the other.

He was known essentially as the friend of the Department of State, not necessarily of the Defense Department, but of the Department of State, so that when he criticized it, it carried greater weight than would have been the case, had he been someone who was dug in continuously, as some of the House people were. There were one or two over there—Wayne Hays was one—who used to criticize constantly and who really tried to dominate and run the State Department from his committee. Mansfield never did anything like that, would never even have considered it. He always

recognized the bounds of where the executive branch's authority lay, and where the congressional authority was. There would be no basis for them disliking Mansfield. So I don't think that that was the factor that hurt Meloy. Rusk would not have recommended him to Lodge, or had Lodge talk with him had he felt that way.

I think quite the contrary, the fact that he did command some respect, at least on the part of Mansfield and others on the Hill, would have been a factor in his favor. Frank in turn never played cozy with the Hill. There are some people who come up to Congress, as you well know, and try to make their own separate contacts with members of Congress to strengthen their own individual position. Frank never did that, would not have known how to do it. He was a complete Foreign Service officer. That was all he knew. That was all he wanted to know. He liked the idea of coming up to the Hill from time to time, but it had nothing to do with trying to develop his own influence on the Hill. He was an extraordinary person.

**RITCHIE:** What did him in was his honesty.

**VALEO:** In a way, it was his honesty, yes. And that's of course something we need more and more of, not less of.

**RITCHIE:** But it's interesting that the State Department was unable to tolerate someone who spoke his mind and said what he believed in, but it happened to be opposite to their policy.

**VALEO:** Yes. At least the secretary had not been able to do that.

**RITCHIE:** But this case was one case where the Nixon administration was able to reverse the policy.

**VALEO:** Yes, and performed a service in the process.

**RITCHIE:** Other than the Meloy incident, you never saw anything positive in the way the Nixon administration was operating?

**VALEO:** I thought that Kissinger—you remember I related an earlier incident when he was considered for the job as my successor at the Library of Congress—I thought that Kissinger on the whole had done a rather exceptional job, particularly in that administration. It would have been the wrong kind of job in a Democratic administration, but given the Nixon administration, I think that he did a great deal to bring about a degree of accommodation with the Soviet Union, at least in the nuclear field. At least there was a beginning. I think Nixon and Kissinger moved in the right direction in dealing with the Soviet Union. That has been seriously reversed and seriously damaged since, but I think that he was on the right track. Again, just as Nixon was the key factor in starting the Chinese rapprochement, he and Kissinger would have been the key people in trying to get off that merry-go-round of Soviet-American animosity, where it's just

"you're one and you're another," that kind of name calling which had led to nothing, and which of course, has had a great revival in the last few years.

**RITCHIE:** It's a strange administration, looking back on it, in the sense that it had grand designs and also very petty operations.

**VALEO:** Yes.

**RITCHIE:** And its treatment of people was on a very petty level. Hugh Scott apparently had terrible relations with the Nixon administration.

**VALEO:** I'm not surprised.

**RITCHIE:** And I wondered if the fact that Scott was not a favorite of the Nixon administration might have helped to depoliticize the Senate's response to Watergate, and did that help Mansfield's relations with Scott during that political crisis?

**VALEO:** It would certainly not have hurt them. I think Scott and Mansfield would have had the relationship anyhow. Given the kind of person Scott is, I think it would have had to go that way. He had a great sense of national responsibility. There's an interesting story on Scott. I'm told that when he was running up in Pennsylvania—this was sort of underscored last night at the reception for him—there was some confusion over whether he was a

Democrat or a Republican to begin with. Well, if you're going to run in a state like Pennsylvania there very well better be some confusion; otherwise you don't have a chance if you're a Republican. But it was so bad at one point, this view of him, that the Republican machine there was on the verge of reading him out of the nomination at least, maybe more. From that point on, Scott had to be more Republican than anyone else when it came to party affairs.

He had this very touchy button. If you pressed that Scott button which had any suggestion of partisanship in it, his Republicanism would come out in full fury and you could get absolutely nowhere with Scott, on any question, it didn't matter. He has an acid tongue, knows how to use it. He has a wonderful command of the English language. If you press that partisan button, for some reason or other, even the slightest suggestion that you were reducing the discussion to a partisan level, he would be out in full force in partisanship. If you stayed away from that, and didn't go anywhere near the partisan element, he was a totally reasonable man and very farsighted, extremely cooperative and warm to deal with. That was my own experience with him. I never pressed the button, but I saw it pressed on occasion and I saw how he reacted.

**RITCHIE:** Mansfield was very careful not to press that button.

**VALEO:** Oh, Mansfield would never have touched it, no.

**RITCHIE:** Did you work with the Republicans when you were doing the planning for the impeachment trial?

**VALEO:** Yes. I'm trying to think of the chap, he was there last night. He was before Hildenbrand.

**RITCHIE:** Mark Trice?

**VALEO:** No, it wasn't Mark Trice. It was somebody out of Scott's office. His name escapes me. He was a rather big fellow and considerably younger. It was Ken Davis. He was in on all of these matters which effected the Senate in its entirety, and there were a lot. Wherever they did, we brought the Republican leader's people into it. I insisted on that.

**RITCHIE:** Was the Senate ready for television? Could they have televised at that stage? Had you made all the provisions for it?

**VALEO:** Not the electrical hook-ups, but other than that, the arrangements under which it would be televised had been pretty well discussed and agreed upon.

**RITCHIE:** I suppose if they had introduced television at that stage it might have promoted quicker acceptance of it; they're still fighting over it ten years later.

**VALEO:** Well, that question came up during the Commission to Study the Organization of the Senate. I opposed it then, reflecting Mansfield's views and my own. I think it's a bad way to conduct the legislative business of the country, particularly in the Senate. I don't know about the House, but speaking for the Senate, my own concern is with the impact of television on the consideration of national issues. This has been brought home forcibly to me in the recent incident with the Soviet sailor who jumped ship down in Louisiana, or fell overboard, depending on which version you want to take. But again, it doesn't matter what the version is. It really doesn't change the picture, which gives me great cause for concern about the role of television and its relationship to the First Amendment.

If that incident had occurred forty or fifty years ago, regardless with what our relations were with the Soviet Union, my guess is that it would have been headlined in the local newspaper where it happened, and it would probably have been treated with amusement. Sailors are always jumping ship. Sometimes they don't jump overboard, but they jump ship. It's probably one of the most common occurrences on the high seas. I would think that it probably happens five, ten, fifteen, twenty times a day somewhere in the world. This chap would have had a moment of glory in Louisiana. The authorities would have been glad to get rid of him, get him back on the ship and get him off their hands. They

wouldn't have known what to do with him had they not. Whether he wanted to go back or not my guess is he would have been put back on the ship. That would have been an end to it. No great significance would have been attached to it. It's barely possible that it might have rated a line or two in the national press if the relationship with the Soviet Union were bad at the time, and if somebody picked it up from the news services. It might have rated a paragraph in the *New York Times*, maybe, or in the *Washington Post*, or other papers around the country, but not more than a paragraph. That would have been about it.

Well, this one incident, which in itself is a very commonplace incident, was elevated to the central focus of attention in the nation by TV, and when the American people think about foreign policy, they are supposed to think of it in the terms of the context of a sailor jumping ship in America, as relevant to a Soviet/American summit, ignoring the reason for which he jumped off the ship. Now, it's very difficult to see that as a relevant exercise of the First Amendment privilege. When a trivial incident is elevated into a national issue of this kind the press becomes the determinant, through TV, of what will be the national issues at any given time; that that ought to be discussed and focused on by the public.

This was brought home to me too in the Carter administration with the Iranian hostages. God knows one is very sympathetic to someone who is taken while in the service of his country as a prisoner in another country and held in a state of limbo until other questions are resolved. But if one thinks back to that, I would guess that somewhere from 20 to 25 percent of the president's time for almost a year went into concern about the hostage question in Iran. That is a gross misuse of presidential time. Now, I would contend that had this happened in another period of our history, an earlier period, Carter might have been very much concerned with it in the first day or two days in which it happened, but the question of negotiating the release of the hostages would have been turned over to the secretary of state, who in turn probably would have turned it over to an assistant secretary of state or some ambassador to work out the arrangements whereby those hostages could be released.

But the TV, not the press per se, but the TV forced the president to stay on that issue, which involved 150 Americans, in a nation of two hundred million Americans. They forced Carter to put an inordinate amount of his time into dealing with a problem which at best was peripheral to our main concerns. Now, I'm not sure that I know how deal with that kind of situation but, I don't think that that problem is being properly considered where it ought to be considered, which is in press circles, and in

intellectual circles. I do think we have to deal with this, and I'm very deeply concerned at that kind of an influence in the name of the First Amendment on what happens to our nation's policies and priorities. It may be that in the name of the first amendment we're blotting out the usage of the First Amendment as it should be used, which is to put many, many ideas into the ring, and have them all considered.

**RITCHIE:** Do you think that television would distort the legislative process by focusing on the wrong things?

**VALEO:** I've watched the House version of this. The networks don't normally run the proceedings unless it's got something to do with a hot issue of some kind, and I think that does distort it. Yes, there's a lot that goes on there day in and day out. Again, people's impression of the Congress will be formed by those rare instances when the press decides that they want to show something from the House. I would force them to show it all the time if they really wanted to do it, not to pick the moments when they want to show it.

**RITCHIE:** Do you think it might also cause the members to act differently as a way of playing to the cameras?

**VALEO:** Of course, that's a very great danger. I would say when the courts are ready to have television cameras, when the Supreme Court is ready to have a television camera in the chamber

when they give their decisions, then I think it's time for the Senate to consider doing it. But I would not do it before that, and I don't think the court will ever get to that point for very good reasons.

**RITCHIE:** Having spent so much time preparing for an impeachment trial that never took place . . . .

**VALEO:** It wasn't a lot of time, but we had dealt with it.

**RITCHIE:** Did you get a sense in the Senate that there was great relief that Nixon had resigned, or did people feel . . . .

**VALEO:** Cheated?

**RITCHIE:** Cheated, or anticlimactic, or that the process should have been completed?

**VALEO:** I think it was a mixed feeling. I think there were some who felt that it ought to go through. I think they were very curious to know how the procedure would work, and it would have been a historic moment and they would have been part of a historic interlude. I don't know. I'm only thinking out loud on this. One can't judge other people's attitudes, but that would be my impression that they felt in part great relief, that it didn't wind up in some kind of a disaster such as I suggested earlier. Either they felt that on the one hand, but on the other hand they probably felt cheated out of a little chapter in American history.

**RITCHIE:** That was a big chapter!

**VALEO:** A big chapter, yes, not a little one.

**End of Interview #14**