

Assistant Secretary of the Senate

Interview #1

Tuesday, February 9, 1982

RITCHIE: Lately you have been spending most of your time working on Interparliamentary Union material. I know you've been exceedingly busy with that. Could you tell me what the Interparliamentary Union is, and what your functions have been in regards to that?

RIDGELY: Well, the Interparliamentary Union is the oldest international organization in existence, and the United States Congress has participated in it since 1889. The members of the Interparliamentary Union are members of parliaments only. So you have these people from the parliaments meeting twice a year, head-to-head. There's a good interaction. You say, what is it all about? First of all, whatever the Interparliamentary Union comes to a conclusion or decision on, has no mandate on any country. There are now ninety-nine countries who are members and have national groups in the Interparliamentary Union. They all have the same thing that they are concerned about, such as inflation, terrorism, air piracy, the kidnaping of parliamentarians and other officials of government, human rights and other common problems. That basically is what the IPU is all about. One thing I will add, there are two former presidents of the Interparliamentary Union who have won the Nobel Peace Prize,

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which I think is significant. This goes back sometime, I don't know who they are right now, but I've heard their names and they were people of renown.

RITCHIE: Are the members of the Senate who go to the IPU a regular delegation or do they change each time?

RIDGELY: They change. On an *ipso facto* basis all members of each parliament are really members of the IPU. In our Congress, the House side is limited to naming twelve members to any one meeting. On the Senate side there is no numerical limit on it, but the thing is that you wind up with two or three or four Senators on a trip. I keep looking at a 12 to 3 ratio on the IPU, the same ratio that there is between the Senate and House. Sometimes there is only one senator sometimes there are maybe only six or seven House members. It all depends on the situation at the time of the year, and the year. For instance, 1982 is an election year and any delegation might be a little thin. I don't know, it's hard to tell right now. It all depends on the primaries, the opposition the members have, and whether they are running for reelection, and then the general election in the fall. With the fall meeting of the IPU being in

September, it's six weeks before the election and may make it tough for some of them to participate.

RITCHIE: Do the majority and minority leaders decide who will go?

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RIDGELY: Yes, under the law, that's who names the Senate delegation. They recommend them and the President of the Senate then appoints the delegation and then names the chairman and the vice chairman. The Senate has a chairman and vice chairman of its Senate group, and the House has a chairman and vice chairman of its House group.

RITCHIE: Do the members tend to be members of the Foreign Relations Committee, or do they come from all over?

RIDGELY: My recollection is that the law requires that some members of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate and Foreign Affairs Committee of the House be named, unless the leadership determines that it isn't necessary. We have had Foreign Relations Committee members on the delegation. I think that was written into the law because it is an international organization and the Foreign Relations Committee and Foreign Affairs Committee normally take care of international things for the government, as far as the Congress is concerned. The United States group is required by law to make a report, which is a printed report on each meeting.

There is a staff member of the Foreign Relations and of Foreign Affairs Committees who attend all of these meetings and work on the substantive matters with members all the time. They are the ones who develop the report. The report really emanates from the two committees because of the operation of the IPU, as far as the United States

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group is concerned. The Senate handles the finances and all other arrangements and the report during odd numbered Congresses, and the House handles it during even numbered Congresses. It switches back and forth. So for two years the Senate staff member develops the reports with a review and editing by his House counterpart. Then when the House is handling things the House staff member develops the report and his counterpart on the Senate side helps him with reviewing and editing. So it is really coming out of those two committees.

RITCHIE: Well, what are your responsibilities?

RIDGELY: I'm the financial officer of the United States group. I'm handling the finances while the Senate has control of it, and making all the arrangements for the trips and getting everything set up. Right now I'm working on the trip that's coming up in April.

RITCHIE: You're going to Nigeria this time?

RIDGELY: Yes.

RITCHIE: Is it posing any particular problems?

RIDGELY: Not yet. But it's a place that you don't hear many good things about, really. Somebody said: "Boy, you're going to the pits of the earth!" Of course, when you stop to think about it: gee, Nigeria, we're buying ten percent of our oil from them. They're really an oil rich country with plenty of money. But I read an

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article in the paper, I don't know whether it was the *Wall Street Journal* or the *Washington Post*, about Nigeria, it said anybody can be bought over there, anybody. So, how much effect that's going to have on us, I don't know. That's their internal problem, not ours! But I'm near the point right now where I'm going to find out how things are going to start gelling for the group.

RITCHIE: Nineteen eighty-one was an unusually exciting year for the IPU. First you had the delegations come to Washington, and then you went to Cuba.

RIDGELY: Well, we had the spring meeting in April in Manila. Then there is the Committee of Ten Plus, which is, you might say, a Western Alliance Group. Maybe not quite so. It started out with the ten European Common Market countries, or nine of them at first, now it's ten. Then they added these other countries, the Baltic Countries, Denmark, Sweden, Iceland. It also includes Canada, the United States, New Zealand and Australia. What they do is get together for a one day meeting prior to the regular IPU meetings. Now the Committee of Ten Plus is unofficial as far as IPU is concerned. It's just a little coalition of representatives from these particular countries. There are twenty-two countries involved in this now. When they were in Manila they asked us to host that Committee of Ten Plus meeting. We did that, and the meeting was held on September 10th. We had the one day meeting and everything went

very nicely. Everybody had a good meeting, and then of course for the regular IPU fall meeting we went to Havana, Cuba.

RITCHIE: For these preliminary meetings, do they get together to plan some strategy for the IPU meeting?

RIDGELY: Oh, yes. I think this is really what it's about. They get together for a meeting of the minds, or to see how they all feel about the upcoming IPU agenda. Because the one thing they are always concerned with is the Communist bloc. They do the same thing. The Communist bloc countries have a meeting too. If you want to call it planning strategy, I guess that's a good terminology for it, and that's what they're doing.

RITCHIE: When they were here, you made all the arrangements for where they met, hotels.

RIDGELY: Yes.

RITCHIE: Was security a problem?

RIDGELY: No, we didn't have any problem. Of course, what we have to do to protect people like the guests who came to this country is far different than what happens when you go to other countries. For instance, in the United States group, some of our members have been threatened. Representative [Edward J.] Derwinski and Senator [Robert T.] Stafford both have been assigned personal bodyguards for

some of the IPU meetings. I remember the time we went to the meeting in Caracas. Gosh, we landed there at the airport and went into the terminal and my God that place just filled with soldiers and they were armed to the teeth. But of course, you have to bear in mind, this was just after an American businessman was freed who had been a prisoner of a terrorist group for about three and a half years--he was an officer in one of our big companies. It was right after that, and they reported having maybe four or five terrorist groups down there, so there were policemen and military all over the city

during the whole meeting. You had to have IPU identification to pass certain places. They really did protect us. But here we don't have that concern. We don't have any terrorist groups. Of course, you might have a few nuts around, which we do. But all the delegates for our meeting in Washington stayed at the Hyatt-Regency, which is nearby. We provided them with transportation, and everything worked out very nicely for us and them.

RITCHIE: How do they fund all those operations here in Washington? Do they have a separate IPU fund?

RIDGELY: You mean for the United States group or the Committee of Ten Plus? Well, first of all, there's an appropriation for the United States contribution to the Interparliamentary Union itself. That money is appropriated through the State Department, under the heading in the Appropriations bill for contributions to international

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organizations. The IPU is included in that. Then there is ninety thousand dollars a year provided, appropriated money, for the travel expenses of the United States group--travel and other expenses. So from that ninety thousand a year the group takes the two trips and does whatever else is required, in the event they host a meeting like they did here.

RITCHIE: Looking back through some of the newspaper accounts of that meeting, some of them said that the Reagan administration tried to dissuade the American delegation from going to Cuba.

RIDGELY: Oh, yes.

RITCHIE: Was that true?

RIDGELY: Well, whether the Reagan administration did or not, I do know that some members of Congress opposed it. They didn't think that we should go. I guess you can say the Reagan administration opposed it because they would not let us use a military aircraft to go down there. The understanding I had was that it went right up to the top man before the final answer came out of there. So we had to charter airplanes to go down there. The members of Congress said that it was a Congressional item and they felt, and Senator Stafford said it: "We have never shirked our responsibilities to the IPU because the meetings were held in a Communist country." They met in the spring of '79 in Prague, Czechoslovakia and in the fall of 1980

it was in East Berlin. Before I was involved, I know they had a meeting in Yugoslavia. So they've gone to these countries before.

The thing with Cuba though is a little bit different. They are right at our back door, and our relations with them are different. We have diplomatic relations with Czechoslovakia; we have a consular office in East Berlin; and I guess we have diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia. We were friendly towards Tito, maybe not towards some part of the government otherwise. But anyway, it's easier. In Cuba we have nothing but a United States interest section working out of the Swiss embassy. So it made it a little more difficult. However, by and large, except for the transportation we had no problems. Without charter aircraft flying direct from here to Havana, the only way you can go to Havana is by way of Canada and Mexico, a much longer trip and more costly. So we arranged for charter flights.

RITCHIE: Did you have to take care of all that?

RIDGELY: Yes. It was kind of a hair shirt at the very end. We were supposed to leave at ten o'clock Monday morning, the 13th of September. I got a call from the President of the company that I was chartering these aircraft from, Page Airways, and he said that Page Airways had just been bought out by a foreign firm. He said, "None of our airplanes can leave the country because we don't have any officers yet, now on this new thing." I said, "Holy smoke!" Well, this was Sunday afternoon, and I worked all the rest of the day

getting things lined up so that we would have airplanes, working with him. He found other companies that had comparable planes that could handle our requirements. It wasn't until 11:30 Sunday night that all of this was locked in. So we did have a lot of fun with that.

RITCHIE: You flew out of Florida?

RIDGELY: No, we flew out of Washington National. One of the planes was able to fly nonstop with proper customs clearance. The other two had to stop at Miami for refueling, and of course they went through customs there. But it was just a lot of backing and filling, and wondering at the same time

whether or not you were really going to make it. You know, we talk about people opposed to the United States group going to Cuba, but when we go down there, at the opening ceremonies there is always an address by the head of state. Castro gave one, and he stood there, his address was for more than two hours, but for one hour and fifty-four minutes he did nothing but lambaste the United States. I mean he came down hard on us.

One of the things we found out was that the other delegations were very happy that we had members there who did take issue with what he said. It is interesting to note, I found out, that Third World countries were particularly upset with him using the IPU meeting as a forum to jump all over us. So it was good that we had members there. The members of the British delegation were delighted that we were there. I got the feeling that with us there, with our

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members getting up and saying something, they felt they could get up and say something. I guess you could speculate as to whether or not they would have felt inclined or even wanted to do that if there was no representation from the United States. That part of it, for the reasons that those who opposed the United States group going down there, I guess that's fine and dandy, but on the other hand I think everybody was glad--those at least who were there and sat through that experience--that the United States did have representation.

RITCHIE: It was something of a breach of protocol.

RIDGELY: Oh, indeed, absolutely. As a matter of fact, I heard someone talking at a reception, some of the people were upset to the point that there was talk about even expelling Cuba from the IPU because of this. But I think the issue may come up. I don't know, it will be up to the Interparliamentary Union Council to lead the way on this--about that incident or what if it should happen again.

RITCHIE: During Castro's harangue the British ambassador and a representative from China got up and walked out. There was some controversy over whether or not the American delegation should have sat through it or departed. Was there any sense in the delegation about what they should have done?

RIDGELY: Well, our head of the United States interests section did get up and walk out. Senator Stafford was on the podium since he is a member of the IPU Council. I know that there was something written about a walkout but I sat there and listened to it. Others did too, and there was some mention of whether we should have left. I guess individually you wonder: do you get up and walk out and not hear

it, or do you sit there and listen to it so you'll know what was said? I guess this is part of it. The British and Canadian delegations were seated near us and after it was all over with, I went down to some of the folks who were here in Washington, and said: "Well, I guess you all won't want to speak to us anymore." They all laughed about it.

If the United States had gotten up as a group and walked out, I don't know whether any others would have followed or not. And yet I think there was a little bit of wonderment before the meeting whether Castro would take the opportunity to do this kind of thing. He sure as the devil did. Nobody liked the idea, I think particularly from the standpoint of what the IPU is. This is not a political international organization, although sometimes politics of sorts come into it, but it is not a viable political organization. These people get together and as I say this is what they believe in, what the IPU stands for, and that's why they're there. And some of those members have been in the IPU for twenty years or more, working together.

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RITCHIE: You mentioned that Senator Stafford is on the Council. Has he been associated with the IPU for some time now?

RIDGELY: Oh, yes, and so has Mr. Derwinski. I guess there are three of them that I've been working with: Senator Stafford, Representative Derwinski, and Representative [Robert] McClory. Those three I know have been involved in the IPU for ten, twelve, maybe fourteen years.

RITCHIE: I gather there are a lot of committee meetings and other duties when you get to the IPU.

RIDGELY: Yes, one of the things about the IPU is that neither the United States group nor any other national group is writing the ticket or directing traffic. The IPU headquarters sets up this meeting, the Council sets the agenda, the meeting schedules are all set, you know all this before you get there. So you know what's going to happen, at what times, and on what days and dates. And it's a busy schedule. They have for instance at the spring meetings, five working committees who meet regularly. They have their different areas of responsibility and jurisdiction. All of these things are submitted by the different countries and they go over it and then submit it to the Council. Then at the fall meeting, which is considered the plenary session, the whole IPU meets as a body to consider and act on the committee resolutions. If you want a similarity it would be like the Committee of the Whole in the House of Representatives. They

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have an item that the committees have worked on, then the whole House operates as a committee, then it resolves itself into the House of Representatives for the vote. Well, the IPU has its committees, they submit items for consideration at the plenary session in the fall, the Council decides on the agenda, and then at the fall meeting they sit as one group and have their debate and discussion and then act on the resolutions. The idea has been brought up to change this. The meeting in the spring usually lasts one week. The meeting in the fall lasts almost two weeks, ten days to two weeks. They've been talking in terms of possibly, because of the fact that the committees meet in the spring and there is four or five months intervening, and with the volatility of world affairs, things happen that maybe have to be cranked into these subject matters.

So they have been thinking in terms of leveling out both meetings, and making both meetings a week or ten days long. At the spring meeting, certain committees would meet at the front end of the session and then they'd have the plenary session on the committee recommendations right then and there. Then, at the fall meeting the other committees would meet the first few days followed by a plenary session, so that things are taken care of on a current basis. A lot of them seem to like that idea. I guess in today's world where things are changing so rapidly that it's not like thirty or forty years ago where you could decide something and three or four, five months later it would be pretty much the same. It will take a while

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for them to do this. They'll do it slowly like other things, make sure that all the right things are in the right place to do it this way.

RITCHIE: I know the press always likes to belittle congressional travel as junketeering, but it sounds to me as if the IPU really is a working session.

RIDGELY: It is.

RITCHIE: If someone goes to it they've got committee assignments and that sort of thing.

RIDGELY: Absolutely. And they are very diligent and dedicated to their committee work. Our members get upset at us if we don't make sure they know where they are supposed to be and they are

there when they're supposed to be. And the meetings go on and on. I remember when we were in the Philippines. Mr. [Antonio Borja] Won Pat from the House was covering a committee meeting. He didn't get back until 8:30 that night from it, and it started at 3 o'clock that afternoon. This is the way they do. They get on a hot subject and they will run those meetings. It's just one of the things.

I experience long days myself. I am also a member of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliament, a suborganization of IPU. Normally my day will begin at 6:30 and never end before midnight. I not only have to make sure that things are taken care of

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for the delegation, that the members get where they are going and other things are taken care of for them, and then I would have meetings of the Association which I participated in.

RITCHIE: What type of issues would be discussed at any given IPU meeting? What types of things do the various committees handle?

RIDGELY: Well, they have a committee on human rights, they have a committee on juridical problems. I could get the titles of those committees and insert them later.*

RITCHIE: So they are concerned with current events.

RIDGELY: Oh, yes, indeed. Apartheid is one of the things that they are concerned with. Terrorism. Air piracy. Kidnaping of government officials. Kidnaping of any high official, but particularly people in high government positions.

RITCHIE: What about the Association of Secretaries General?

RIDGELY: Well, this is the organization whose membership is composed of people in parliaments, or in our Congress, in positions similar to the Secretary of the Senate, the Assistant Secretary of the Senate, the Clerk of the House, and the Deputy Clerk. Each country that is a member may have two members from each house of its parliament--so the United States group can have four members in the

*see appendix

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Association, compared to Israel, which only has the Knesset and is entitled to only two members. You can see that the Association is composed of people who are at the highest administrative level of the parliaments. While our positions are Secretary of the Senate and Clerk of the House, in the European parliaments and other legislative bodies the positions are Secretary General.

RITCHIE: And what types of issues would they discuss?

RIDGELY: We discuss items that are, I think, common to all of us in terms of our duties, such as methods of voting, remuneration of members, treaty making powers of parliament, parliamentary procedure and many other topics. For instance, one of the latest topics concerns candidates and members who have been convicted of criminal acts, what happens, etc. This is very new.

RITCHIE: Very timely for the Senate with the Harrison Williams case.

RIDGELY: Yes, it really is. We had a topical debate on this topic at the Havana meeting, as a matter of fact. What will happen--let's take that one for instance since it's the newest subject matter--is that they will appoint a rapporteur. After the topical debate, which will decide whether there is enough interest and substance involved in it to be of value and interest to the whole organization. The rapporteur then will develop a draft questionnaire,

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which he will bring back to the Association. All of the members will go over it, question by question. They will do some deleting, they will do some editing, they will do some revision of the draft. Once that's finalized, then the rapporteur will develop the final questionnaire and send it out to every member of the Association and ask them to answer it. Once he gets the responses, he develops a draft report and presents that to the Association. The draft report is sent out to all members, in advance, for review and editing. The draft report will be brought up at one of the Association meetings and they will make their revisions. What they have done in the past too is to delay a final report to get more countries to respond to the questionnaire.

I know that Ken Bradshaw from Great Britain who was rapporteur of the topic, "Methods of Voting", and had not heard from certain countries and wanted to get them involved in it. I might add that he was particularly interested in the response of the United States and sent a special addendum questionnaire to further develop what happens in the United States. So they may delay, but once that is done then the

rapporteur will prepare another draft report. The Association will meet on that, approve it, and print it. The Association has a quarterly journal that they put out and the adopted reports are printed in the Journal. Then, maybe some years later, depending on

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the subject, they will review whether or not it would be appropriate to go back and update that subject matter again. Maybe ten, twelve, fifteen years later.

RITCHIE: Now, is the information provided to assist parliaments in making rules? For instance, how would their deliberations over expelling a member be of use to the Senate now when it is actually debating that issue?

RIDGELY: It wouldn't be of any direct use. I think what it is, the purpose of the Association is of course to assist the Interparliamentary Union and be a support part of it, from the standpoint of the top echelon of the administrative level. But to the Association itself, I think what is important is that once again you have an interaction of the people who are the highest level of employees of each parliament. They interact and find out the different rules and the different ways that things are going on. Not that it will really have an effect on any country. I think it just broadens your intellect on how other parliaments operate. It's very interesting, it really is.

Night sittings was a subject matter that they talked about. There's no such thing here. You know, a lot of the parliaments in Europe don't sit during the day time. They sit at what they call "night sittings." They convene in the evenings so people can be there, and for the convenience of people who are members of

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parliament. So I just told them when we got on that subject, I said there's nothing I can offer the Association on the subject because there is no such thing in the United States. The normal meeting hour for the Senate and the House is twelve noon. If it goes past the dinner hour, I said, it's just a continuation of the day session, except for special times, such as joint meetings of Congress when the President comes up to address a special session.

RITCHIE: But those are really just perfunctory meetings in the Senate Chamber before they proceed over to the House.

RIDGELY: Yes, that's what I told them. So I said, "I cannot help you all with this, I cannot give you anything except to say we don't have such a thing." But you do learn a lot. I talk to a lot of these people and we get to chatting about the different things that they do in their parliaments and what we do here. You really broaden your horizon.

RITCHIE: Are you more often struck by the differences between the American Congress and the other parliaments, or by the similarities?

RIDGELY: Well, on some of these things I will say that I keep thinking to myself: By God, I still think we've got the best system!" You really do get that feeling. For instance, in Norway they have such a thing as a substitute members of parliaments. A

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substitute doesn't serve until he is called to serve in place of a certain member. Let's say that we had substitutes for the Senators from Maryland. Well, if Senator [Charles] Mathias or [Paul] Sarbanes had a death in the family and were excused from the Senate and they were going to be gone for a week, and the Senate was in session. They'd tell the substitute--and the substitute cannot refuse--to serve. Very interesting, but I don't really know what's gained by that. Maybe you do, it must be important to them. It keeps a full representation there.

But you stop and think, for the Senate if a Senator dies in office usually they wait until the funeral and then within two or three or five days, you might miss a week or ten days at the most that you don't have a senator to represent the state. On the House side they call a special election. Well, except for those states that have one member at large, they won't be hurt. If you take a state like New York or California, the loss of one member for a period of thirty days, lets say because it might take that long to hold it, won't make much difference. Look how long Maryland did without its representative when Gladys Spellman was stricken by illness.

RITCHIE: The only difference is that if they die this issue can be settled right away, but if they are incapacitated then there's a problem.

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RIDGELY: Yes, that's so. Her's was a unique thing. But with a death in the House, a Governor can call an election within thirty days and for the Senate he can name some one as soon as he wants to.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RIDGELY: That's right.

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

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

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

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

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

RITCHIE: On what?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RITCHIE: Why would you say?

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

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

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

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

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

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

End of Interview #1

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