

mainly
Interview

William S. Mailliard, R., Calif.
June 7, 1965
11:05 - 12:50, 1 hour, 45 minutes

Very good interview. We talked about everything under the sun: Upper Volta, Yale, the U.N., his family, etc. He started out cold but we gradually hit it off and it ended up with us leaving the office arm in arm and me lobbying him for dinner with you. He's agreeable and I have to call next week. Very sharp and frank, as the quotes below show. He wanted to talk and everytime I made a move to go he started a new conversation.

On the Senate Committee: "It's because of Fulbright. Hell, Fulbright, Morse, these men are initiators of ideas. Doc likes peace and quiet, I don't think he has ever had an idea in his life, except maybe if it had to do with your tonsils. I think the world of him personally but he just likes the quiet, he doesn't like conflict, he likes harmony. And he has it by and large."

On conference committees: "The House always prevails. And the reason is that the Senate always has a lot of damn fool amendments added to the bill, some of which aren't germane, some of which are passed by unanimous consent and no one knows what they mean, some of which not even Fulbright supports. The last time there were forty points at issue between the conferees. Thirty five of them the Senate receded on, the other five we gave in. Fulbright is in a tough position. He has to have something to take back with him so we usually give him a few of the innocuous ones. That might not be the exact number but it's close. We are in a much better position to know the program. Senators have to be experts on everything and as a result don't know much about anything. We are not expected to be walking oracles, they are. As a result the opportunity exists for us to get to know a narrow area, there are more of us so we can divide it up." I asked if the essence of conference committees is who stands hardest the longest. He thought for a long time and then "Yes, I think it is. I remember one bill the Senate passed by unanimous consent, no one but the sponsor knew what it would do, that I violently opposed. As I called it at the time, it was a license to steal, and that's exactly what it was. I went to Doc, got his support, and we had one other Democrat. We stood firm. What I had to do was hold Doc steady, the Democrat would have gone if he did. The vote was three to two to uphold the House side and you know what happened: we broke up with no agreement and no bill at all." He said they usually do compromise. I asked who picks the conferees: "The ranking members. Mrs. Bolton does not usually like to attend conference meetin-s so it is usually myself, Adair, and Frelinghuysen." (I asked if having 2 of the 3 Republicans pro-foreign aid was an accident and he said no.) R said usually the conferees are picked on the basis of seniority and that this principle is not followed only in rare cases, e.g. when a man has special expertise in an area and you know he will be a strong voice in conference. R said he picks the conferees on Merchant Marine and he usually takes the members of the subcommittee that handled the bill with him. "I might skip over a senior man but seniority is so firmly entrenched around here that that's where I start. I'll call him up and ask if he doesn't mind I'd like to take so and

so. If he says 'it's my right you are violating' then I'll say I'm sorry, I was trying to be polite, but it's my responsibility to pick whatever conferees I want."

I asked him to compare conference committees: "Oh they are totally different. We never have a conference with the Senate on Merchant Marine. Here you see you are dealing with different jurisdictions. The Senate Commerce Committee has this vast area, and only a subcommittee on merchant marine. We have a whole committee devoted to it so they usually just pass the House bill. It's a technical area and they know we have the time to go into it. Maggie (Magnuson) can't keep his members there, it's a problem over there. As a result he doesn't call many meetings. You see you are only dealing with a subcommittee on merchant marine matters."

I asked R to compare FA and MM and he said "Very different. The subject matter of Foreign Affairs is so foggy. Merchant Marine it's all technical." I asked about partisanship and he said neither committee is partisan, he could recall only one party line vote ever on MM. "The chairman of Merchant Marine, Bonner, and I have a very close relationship. Nothing is ever done without consultation. I don't think Doc and Mrs. Bolton have that kind of arrangement and I don't know if they could, Mrs. Bolton is getting on in years." I asked if Republicans are treated fairly in both committees. MM they are but "Foreign Affairs is different just this year. Doc has all these new Democrats who follow him and vote as a bloc. It used to be that he needed me but now he doesn't. I complained to him about it this year. Now you see all the bargaining power I have is to threaten to take something to the floor. That's what I did this year and we worked it out in committee. The House knows that I have been one of those who has supported foreign aid in the past and when I say something, or if I offer an amendment, it carries more weight than if H.R. Gross does it." Later on R mentioned this again and I asked what it involved. He said his amendment was nothing major but something he felt strongly about. Bell wanted wide authority to use FSO's in Aid and R did not like this. R mentioned that Hays' subcommittee is dealing with the personnel problem. R talked it over with Bell (who R thinks is a good man, unlike Hays' opinion of Bell) and Doc. Doc was adamant but when R finally said he would have to take it to the floor Doc gave in--"capitulated."

Before Doc got all the votes this year the internal political situation of FA was quite different. R explained that he would call up Hays, Fascell, or Selden and talk ideas over with them and many times this coalition could carry amendments, with or without Doc. Now his contacts with these three are less because Doc has the votes and uses them. He said an amendment by him would usually pick up Fountain and Burleson in addition to the other three, and sometimes Mrs. Bolton and others. Now he can't maneuver as well as before. I asked if there was any pattern to the amendments on which he could forge this coalition and he said no, if he had an idea on part of the bill he would just call or talk to Hays, Selden et al. Now Doc has the trump hand.

I probed some more on the internal politics of FA and R talked about the split in Republican ranks. "Ross Adair leads the Mid-Western bloc.

Seniority, the motion to recommit naturally comes to him. He'll offer a cut, have it defeated consistently in the committee, then offer it on the floor. And sometimes it would pass. He told me one time that he offered some arbitrary figure which was so big he never expected it to carry, and it did. He doesn't care, he votes against the bill anyway." I asked if the Republicans ever caucus and he said occasionally, but they are so hopelessly split they never reached an agreement. He does not think there was a caucus this year. If there was he said he didn't attend. "Adair, Berry, Gross are rock-ribbed conservatives and you can't change it."

R went on to size up the Democratic side: "I don't know, you will have to talk to someone over there, but I don't think Doc has full confidence in his subcommittee chairmen. That's why whenever a major bill comes along it's discussed by the full committee." I perked up and asked him again why they mark up the bill in full committee. "Sure that's the reason. Doc can't trust some of the subcommittee chairman. We could do a much better job if the foreign aid bill was divided up among the regional subcommittees. Then each one could go into the program and really see what it's doing. As it is we don't know what the program is doing. We sit up there and cover the whole world! How are we going to know? I don't even think the executive people know sometimes. We have this array of witnesses and the five minute rule. The five minute rule means you can't ever develop a line of questioning. The witness will filibuster on one question, he won't really answer it, and then you are out of time."

I asked him to rank the committee and he tied it in with the Committee's impact on policy. "No, I don't think I'd say it is an important committee. The subject matter, foreign affairs, is important but the Committee..." I asked why FA is unimportant in policy-making and he gave the following reasons: *next page*

1. traditional executive preponderance in foreign affairs. "I've told Rusk that if the Committee is to share in making propaganda and public support for the program it ought to have more of a share in responsibility. Not the power, that would be too much, but a little more responsibility. You can't run foreign affairs by committee, it has to be a one man job. All we hear is the party line. I've talked to Rusk about this. We don't hear about the conflicts in the State Department. All we hear is what the winners have to say. If they would sit down with us and say here is what the problem was, here is how and why we chose this solution...All I can get is what comes to me informally. But he tells me, and I must admit he has a point on this one, 'if all the Committee was like you I wouldn't mind doing this.'" R went on to say that he finds Rusk very frank in personal conversation but less frank when testifying before the Committee. "It's not that he lies it's more what he fails to report." R said he can understand Rusk's reluctance to come clean with the Committee because although they never have a problem with a security leak it would be easy for someone on the campaign trail to say something damaging to U.S. foreign relations.

2. Doc Morgan. R's main complaint about Doc is that he likes harmony too much, he does not like conflict. As a result Doc runs a harmonious but fairly inactive committee. I asked if Senate Foreign Relations overshadows FA and R said yes, because of its constitutional prerogatives and the dynamism of Fulbright et al.

3. "A matter came up the other day. A member asked me about something and said 'you must know everything about it because you are on the Committee.' I said to him that the only one who would ever say that is someone who has never been on the Committee." This was his answer to my question about what the House thinks about the Committee. He said he just does not know.

4. FA just does not scrutinize the foreign aid program as well as it should and really does not know what is going on. "We are not a thorough committee."

(staff) "God, we seem to have an awful lot of them running around but I've never been able to figure out exactly what they do. There's a rather fuzzy relationship between Boyd and Doc that none of us has ever been able to get inside of. I don't know what they do. They are supposed to be professional but I've never been too satisfied with what they have done for me." (Fascell stresses this Boyd-Doc relationship too and I think it is very important.) (Boyd runs the staff under Doc's direction).

(constituents) I asked R if MM is his political committee: "Yes. Let's be very blunt about it. I don't know anyone who has ever gotten a campaign contribution because he is on the Foreign Affairs Committee. On Merchant Marine I get dozens of campaign contributions because I have been able to establish myself as somewhat of an expert in this field. I get money from those interested in shipping, shipping lines, builders, and even some labor support. I've had the unions endorse my opponent, because they go straight down the Democratic line, then turn around and contribute to my campaign. Why? Because I'm more valuable to them on Merchant Marine than a freshman would be. I come from a great seaport city."

(attracted to FA) "I don't know if I can give any novel answer to that. Just a general interest in the subject, that's all." Later he mentioned that his career in the Navy took him all over the world and generated interest in foreign affairs. He said he had no trouble getting on once the California man who was on left. "California is a big enough state so when we lose a man on an important committee we can usually fill it with another Californian." I asked if he had any trouble in the state delegation and he said "There was one man who wanted it but he was the type who would change committees every year if he could. Once I expressed an interest I had the inside track." R panned the Committee as having little influence but he said he likes it. He mentioned that as a member he has had many fascinating experiences: as a delegate to the U.N., he accompanied JFK on his trip to Costa Rica, the Geneva conference on the law of the sea, etc. He especially enjoyed the U.N. experience.

(subcommittees) R said he has so much seniority he obviously has the subcommittees he wants. More important he said he has gotten Bolton to accept some rules regarding subcommittees. "They are informal rules. One is that once a man is appointed to a subcommittee he stays as long as he wants. The second is that the senior members have first choice on filling vacancies. Another is that no Republican can be ranking member on more than one subcommittee, although when I looked at this list this time I saw they didn't follow it. This is absolute on Merchant Marine and I've sold it to the Republicans on Foreign Affairs. I won't let any Republican on Merchant Marine serve as the ranking member on two subcommittees. It's not fair."

R said the above right after he said "Of course, Foreign Affairs is such a disorganized committee."

He then discussed subcommittees on FA. He said the only one that has any power at all is Hays and this is because "Morgan is afraid of Hays." He didn't elaborate.

R said the Republicans try to get geographical balance on the subcommittees, to distribute the seats evenly between the regional and, as he called them, "functional" subcommittees.

The subcommittees don't do much because there isn't much legislation. "Even when they go on trips it's merely for information and no legislation comes out." He said that he and Selden have a very good working relationship, they get along fine. His relations with Hays and Zablocki are good too, although less close because he is not the ranking member. He pointed out that Selden's problems in Alabama (winning at large etc.) have decreased the activity of Inter-American Affairs.

(mark up) R said the 5 minute rule is in effect in executive mark up. They read the bill line by line, anyone who has any amendment offers it. He said Hays and Selden do not adhere closely to the 5 minute rule. Regarding Hays: "He knows it's there if he needs it but he believes, quite rightly, that by allowing a member to pursue a line of questioning you are more likely to develop some information." R pictured himself as one of the reasonable Republicans who, when he offers an amendment, has enough respect on the other side so they listen to it.

Compared with MM, FA does not do a good job.

(leadership) I asked how the Republican members of FA, as split as they are, worked with the party leaders, if at all--do the party leaders seem to be inclined in his direction or to the conservative side. "There's no way that can be answered. We never take a policy position on it. The whole party is split right down the middle so they just leave it alone."

(pressure groups) R said he has very little contact with pressure groups on FA matters. He gets some pressure on other matters but he says he just ignores it. Lobbyists are not very salient to R.

(executive) In addition to what he said above, R is sometimes contacted by Rusk or Bell but not often. "If they have a provision they know I oppose we'll discuss it. Bell will come up on a personal basis and we usually compromise. He'll say 'I can live with this.' That's what we did on the amendment that I threatened to take to the floor. Usually my contacts are at a lower level. You can't always get to Rusk." I asked if he usually has to work hard himself to find out about conflicts within the Department or if dissident bureaucrats come often to him. "Sometimes they come to you but mostly I do it by digging." He thinks the State Department is horribly screwed up and he talked about the futile efforts of people he knows to straighten it out. One of Robert Kennedy's aides in Justice tried (Auer, I think) and failed. Herbert Hoover, Jr. tried and failed. R said the Department is tradition-bound and that the professionals who man the desks are hard to change--they have great staying power.

I asked if the House Appropriations Committee cutting Foreign Affairs' authorization bothered him at all and he said "No. They have their job to do." He said FA always relied on the Senate Appropriations Committee to raise the amount.

I suspect a good deal of the "essence" of FA centers around the Committee's subject matter and the Committee's rather secondary role in foreign policy-making. Part of the problem with getting at the heart of this committee is that it is a different kind of committee from those on which the questions are based. Doc runs it in such a way that he creates a good deal of dissension but, not enough to generate a coup a la Post Office.

We also discussed the "reformist" political scientists and the Young Turks, Upper Volta which R did not know existed until he sat down in the U.N. next to Upper Volta's delegation, Adlai Stevenson who R respects, and R's classmates at Yale: the Bundy brothers (R was in the Gilbert and Sullivan club with Mac Bundy), Cy Vance, et al.

Misc.: R said Clare Hoffman used to play H.R. Gross' role on the floor. He likes Gross but it's no use trying to reason with him. R likes Adair and Thomson too who he says are conservative but practical men. He also praised Frelinghuysen and Morse.

R finds most of the FA work "boring." R said he is by no means an unqualified supporter of the program. He thinks there are many problems with it but the Committee does not get into it deeply enough to know very much about it.

"Foreign Affairs is a broad brush committee." R said this when comparing it to MM which is technical.