

Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR ELLIOT RICHARDSON

Interviewed by: Alan James
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INTERVIEW

[Note: This interview, edited by Ambassador Richardson, is incomplete due to the death of Ambassador Richardson]

Q: Today is May 30, 1996, and this is an interview with Elliot Richardson. My name is Alan James. The focus of the interview will be your experiences in the field of foreign policy as Under Secretary of State, Ambassador to the United Kingdom, and Special Representative of the President to the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea. By way of introduction, would you say a little bit about your background to set the scene for our interview. Talk about your family, education, and that sort of thing. We ask you to do this because these interviews are supposed to be read years from now by people who really need some orientation as to the people who are giving the interviews.

RICHARDSON: I understand the need for that! Indeed, I have become increasingly conscious of the futility of efforts to stave off oblivion. So let me begin by saying that I was born in Boston in 1920, grew up there, and went to school at independent schools in greater Boston. Then I went to Harvard College at a time when it was very easy to get in. I had one year of law school before Pearl Harbor or rather in the year of Pearl Harbor. I

came back to law school after three years in the army. Having decided, even in College, that I wanted to go into politics, I started early on at the local level in Brookline, Massachusetts. Then I worked for the Republican State Committee in 1952, which was the year in which Eisenhower was a candidate. Following that I spent two years as the legislative assistant to Massachusetts senior Senator Leverett Saltonstall. After some time, I became an associate in a Boston law firm, came back into the government as Assistant Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare in the Eisenhower Administration, then U.S. Attorney in Massachusetts. I ran and lost the Republican nomination for Attorney General of Massachusetts in 1962. I was serving in the second year of my four-year term as Attorney General when I got a call from John Mitchell in December of 1968 asking if I might be interested in the number two job at the State Department. I had previously turned down the number two job at the Department of HEW thinking that that would be more of what I had done before and because I was then heavily immersed in what I thought was an important effort to develop a more coherent approach to the problems of the criminal justice system in Massachusetts. At any rate, I agreed to come to Washington to meet with the Secretary of State-designate, William P. Rogers in his office at the State Department. At the outset of that meeting I tried to persuade him that he really ought to seek someone with a broader and deeper background in foreign policy than I had. I pointed out to him, I hope politely, that I had really no more background in foreign policy than he did and that he might want to be able, therefore, to call upon the experience and knowledge of someone who had been engaged in it for much of his career. But I didn't dissuade him, and to me the job had always seemed like a wonderfully challenging and attractive one. I remembered William Bedell Smith and, I can't remember his name, but he owned the house which is now the Cosmos Club.

Q: Sumner Wells.

RICHARDSON: Yes. And another Under Secretary was my father's college classmate, Joseph C. Grew. I always thought that was a great job. So when Rogers seemed absolutely serious about the invitation for me to come, I agreed that I would do so.

The first work I did actually began before the change of Administration. I was asked to work with Henry Kissinger at the Hotel Pierre in New York on the charter governing the role of the National Security Council. After a couple of meetings with Kissinger the remaining contacts I had were with General Andy Goodpaster. The upshot of that was a document that in important ways spelled out the roles of the Security Council and the Department of State.

Q: Back to the NSC in a moment, but might we begin by your stating what your brief was as Mr. Rogers' Deputy. Were you his alter ego, or did you have special areas you were going to concentrate on while he tended to others?

RICHARDSON: Well, I think the phrase alter-ego was used, but whether it was used directly in conversation with Will Rogers, I am not sure. My general understanding was that I would take on anything specific that he wanted me to do. I thought of myself as an executive officer in the military. But I also had some functions that arose out of my role

as the Chairman of the Under Secretary's Committee of the NSC which included the number two people in Defense, Treasury, Justice, Commerce, Labor, and I am not sure who else. I somehow, probably because of the earlier contact at the Pierre and my role in the Under Secretary's Committee, became almost from the outset the principal point of contact between the Department and the NSC process in general and Henry Kissinger in particular. We had lunch once a week and met regularly in other connections. It was understood from the beginning that although not an ex official member of the NSC, I would attend all NSC meetings whether or not the Secretary was also there. That developed a connection that proved to be extremely important during the term in which I served for State. But knowing that I was deficient in substantive background, I began from day one to try to make up for that. I was living at the Cosmos Club, and my wife and children stayed back in Boston until the end of the school year. I read cables and other material, night after night, in the library of the Cosmos Club, and I gradually accumulated considerable information. In the same period, I got a lot out of the substantive meetings held with the relevant Assistant Secretaries and their Deputies who were literally all Foreign Service officers. I also served as the Chairman of the Committee on Presidential Appointments, that is appointments to the positions of assistant secretaries, agency heads, and ambassadors. So there wasn't much that I didn't have some contact with.

Q: How did you organize your own office? Was it in any particular effective way? Was it organized for you? How did you work with the staff secretary at SS?

RICHARDSON: I didn't try to do any reorganizing of the office of the Under Secretary. There were three key career people in the office when I arrived. One was Arthur Hartman who was in effect the Executive Secretary, I am not sure what the title was, of the Under Secretaries Committee. He had working with him, I think he must have been a civil servant and not a Foreign Service officer but I am not sure of that, named Claus Ruser. My staff assistant was Mort Abramowitz. I brought with me two people, one of whom was Jonathan Moore, who had served with Bill Bundy when he was Assistant Secretary of Defense for ISA and had been in the USIA in Africa and had also been on the foreign policy staff of Governor Romney. I also brought with me Wilmot Hastings, a lawyer who had been my first assistant when I was Attorney General of Massachusetts. I also brought with me my secretary, Cetta Leonardi, who had been with me in my Massachusetts jobs and stayed with me for quite a long time after that. It was a great office.

As to the executive Secretariat, there wasn't a lot of occasion to work directly with the people in that office except during the time of some emergency, but I looked at a lot of the material that came through them and I admired very much the efficiency of the process whereby information was funneled in from all over the world and passed on and distilled, or left in the same form, to people who could use it or needed it. As I indicated, a lot of my education in those months came from reading a very large portion of that material.

Q: You mentioned that you got to know the Assistant Secretaries quite well and their Deputies. Is this a good organization of the Department? Is it a good way for the

Department to be organized? Did the Assistant Secretary system function satisfactorily as you look back on it?

RICHARDSON: I thought it did in general. I thought the people who had those jobs were highly capable. It's significant, by the way, that Richard Nixon, had, by the time he took office as President, visited something like 64 countries around the world. In those countries he had been briefed by, and in some cases, traveled with Foreign Service officers. He knew a great many of them, and he had a great respect for many of them. He had, before I came on board, already chosen the Assistant Secretaries for some of the Bureaus including Marty Hillenbrand for Europe, Joe Sisco for NEA, and Marshall Green. Actually, Marshall Green did not come on right away; he kept Bill Bundy in EA.

At any rate, within the areas subject to the jurisdiction of the geographical bureaus, the quality of the analysis and recommendation was of very high order. I came to believe, in due course, that the problem with the conduct of foreign policy was and remained, always I was close to it, one of excessive absorption in short-term operations at the expense of longer-term strategic planning and in the coordination of the planning process, as between geographic bureaus. I used to make a speech over and over again in those days to the effect that you guys have to understand that this is the first time in the history of the United States when we have had to have a foreign policy. Before World War I, we were only beginning to see ourselves as a player on the world scene. Between World War I and World War II we opted out, and for quite a long time after World War II, really until now, we have had such a surplus of military and economic muscle, we could flounder our way out of almost any trouble we got into. I would add, "You ought to have on your desk a little sign like the IMB sign, the one which says 'Think.' Your sign should say 'Scheme'."

Let me back up. The established process largely consisted of the observations and insights of hugely capable and well-trained people in the field who recorded the significant political-economic developments in their country and region. These reports would come back to the Department, then be distributed by the Executive Secretariat. The reports would elicit instructions which would go back to the field. The instructions would be carried out and the results would be reported back. The high-prestige functions of the Foreign Service officer or the diplomat were centered on the day by day, week by week, year by year execution of this process. It did not allow for stepping back and looking at U.S. interests and global developments from the point of view of how the United States should most effectively deploy limited resources and influence on behalf of the things that seemed most important. That led me to recommend to the Secretary, who acted on the recommendation, changing the name of the Policy Planning Staff to Planning and Coordination Staff. I thought it ought to be an instrument of the Secretary that would perform for him a role similar to that performed by the National Security Council for the President. I also believed that each of the geographic bureau heads should also have a similar capability attached to them, and that each of these should be linked to each other via the Planning and Coordination Staff. This would, I hoped, enable them to have direct input into the NSC process. I became convinced that we should try to strengthen the strategic planning capabilities of our overseas missions, and this led to the

selection of Graham, then DCM in Tokyo, to head a project with this aim. This was the kind of thing that primarily interested me, and I would have liked to have stayed with longer.

Q: I recall that the Secretary appointed you Chairman of the Committee on Presidential Appointments fairly early on, and you promised that you would have a major and comprehensive review of foreign policy mechanisms and try to make better use of what you called unique human resources. Did the Board make progress as far as you could see?

RICHARDSON: I thought of the unique human resources as many times made the point that I learned early on when I was in a meeting with a lot of Foreign Service officers sitting around the table, to watch their expression and their small reactions. I found that if I saw somebody raise an eyebrow or suppress a smile and catch the eye of a career colleague, that was my cue to ask a question. I found that I would invariably get a straight, informed, intelligent answer. Why was it that these answers were seldom volunteered? I had to conclude that it was because many career people had had difficult encounters with political appointees who, suspecting that the professionals were pursuing an agenda of their own, failed to take adequate advantage of the latter's experience and advice. But I developed early on and have a great deal of respect for the Foreign Service.

I might add parenthetically, because I think it is important, a footnote to history. I have heard so often that I would like to believe there must be something in it that I was regarded by the Foreign Service as an effective and articulate champion of its professional role and capability. It was also obvious that I was the Department's most continuous and closest collaborator with Henry Kissinger. How was it possible for me to be both? Surprisingly, that question has never been asked by anyone to my face. If anyone did ask me, I would tell them that the answer is very simple. The State Department chaired all the Inter-Departmental Groups of the NSC. I was the Chairman of the Under Secretaries Committee. Most papers, the National Security Studies Memoranda, for example, that went into the NSC process came out of these groups. Most of the work was done by State Department people. I would therefore say to my State Department colleagues, "Look, our influence depends on the quality of these papers. You should think of them as being like a well designed, hydro-dynamic, projectile fired into a viscous fluid. The better designed it is, the more deeply it will penetrate." Then I had another less pleasant image. I would say, "Surely, you must have been to the dentist and had him run that little pick around your teeth. You know that everything is fine as long as the point of the pick moves smoothly. But if it catches, he'll dig away at that little spot, and maybe make a mark on the chart of your teeth, and that's a cavity that will have to be dealt with at another appointment. You come back for the next appointment, and the drill is going zzz...zzz...zzz and then suddenly goes chunk into a hollowed-out place where the tooth is rotted away. You should think of Henry Kissinger's mind as being that pick going over the paper: you don't want it to catch, and of course you don't want any rotten places." The better the paper is, the more influence we have. So I never allowed to appear that there was any possible conflict of interest, rivalry, or competition between the NSC process and the Department. The only issues were issues on the merits.

I served on the so-called Verification Panel which developed the SALT I negotiating strategy. I had a lot more to do with the Middle East than Kissinger did until May or at least the Spring of 1970. I met regularly with Yitzhak Rabin, then the ambassador of Israel, and Abdul Hamid Sharaf, the ambassador of Jordan, who was spokesman for the front-line Arab states. I tried to pursue some sort of dialogue directed toward the realities of the Arab/Israeli situation. I had a lot to do with the development of an approach toward a more realistic relationship with China. In fact, Win Brown and Mort Abramowitz brought to me in March, I believe, of 1969 the suggestion that if the United States wished to show a serious interest in moving toward a more realistic relationship with China, there were steps we could take to communicate that signal. Those were the days in which Walter Stoessel was in Warsaw conducting a large and unprofitable dialogue with the Chinese. So Win and Mort drafted for me a memorandum from me to the President listing five or six things that could be done if we wished to communicate this message. I got the memorandum back from Nixon a few days later with his own hand-writing on it telling us to go ahead on I think three of these initiatives, to modify one, and drop one. It had his initials on the bottom. I gave a speech at the War College in September of 1969 arguing for a triangular relationship in which, having moved toward a closer relationship with China, there would have been created a equilateral triangle in the East with the Soviet Union on one side, China one side, and the U.S. and Japan on the third side.

All of that kind of thing, including the NSSM we did on what should be the U.S. reaction toward Soviet aggression toward China, was done in a climate in which cooperation between the Department and the White House was a given. Rogers was not actively involved in that process because he really did not want to be.

Q: ...which led to the perception on the part of the press that he was being by-passed or overshadowed by Kissinger. This is what I recall, vaguely, from the time.

RICHARDSON: Of course, he was overshadowed by Kissinger. I have kidded Kissinger about this. I've told him he's gotten far too much credit for his Machiavellian skills when, in fact, in that situation all he had to do was fill a vacuum.

We all have the defects of our qualities, and Rogers' principal defect grew out of his qualities as a lawyer. Lawyers who have had a lot of exposure to litigation come to think in terms of cases. Cases involve critical outbreaks of some form of conflict between two or more sides. Rogers told me that he thought speculation about the dynamics of interacting geostrategic forces and the balance of power and so on was a waste of time. He really made no effort to get into those issues. Nixon, conversely, had developed enormous interest in them, going back to the early days of the outbreak of the Cold War, when he had taken his first trip to Europe in connection with the development and implementation of Secretary Marshall's proposal for an American initiative to rebuild Europe. He went with Christian Herter, among others, and came back with a much larger perspective on the U.S. role.

One of the things that, despite the trauma of my resignation back in 1973, I have never

failed to underscore, whenever the question arose, is the proposition that the architect of the Nixon foreign policy was Nixon. He came into office with a highly developed strategic sense. One example that seemed to me at the time to be particularly striking was his decision to go to Bucharest on his first trip abroad as the President of the United States. There in President Ceausescu he found an individual who was slavishly conformist to Soviet domestic policies in the conduct of domestic policies in Romania. But Ceausescu took advantage of his conformity on that side in order to be highly independent with respect both to the convening of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe as a means of undermining the Brezhnev doctrine while at the same time being the only Eastern bloc leader who maintained diplomatic relations with China. Thus Nixon, in one stop, simultaneously conveyed the interest of the U.S. in normalizing relations both within the Eastern bloc and with China as long term objectives. I got my cue from that right away. Without even being asked I got my staff to compile for me an inventory of all the problems we had with each of the countries in Eastern Europe from the Hungarian crown jewels and the Mindszenty detention to the Romanian gold.

Nixon's Guam Doctrine was a product of the same strategic perspective. He was looking toward the question of how the U.S. could sustain the Western free-world position against Soviet pressure at lower cost, over the long haul. The way to do that was to eliminate the prospect of clashes or friction peripheral to the central contest. What he was trying to do seemed clear to me, and I thought it made a lot of sense. I began on my own to explore the potential of a two-China policy, for example. But Rogers just wasn't interested in that kind of thinking. When, on the other hand, an American plane was shot down off of North Korea, he sprang into action and handled the situation extremely well.

I take it that this is a record that will not be published at any time?

Q: It will not be published. It is supposed to be unclassified, but it is not available to the general public.

RICHARDSON: One of the ironies of the situation I concluded, was that Rogers somewhat looked down on Nixon. I think he found it very difficult to be his subordinate. I think his connection with Nixon went back to the time when Rogers had a leading role in shaping the strategy with which Nixon dealt with the slush fund situation in the 1952 campaign and that gave rise to the Checker's speech. I couldn't help feeling that he didn't engage with Nixon much because he was uncomfortable somehow in doing so. The result was that he left a door open, and all Kissinger had to do was walk through it.

Q: That puts it really well. I gather from what you have been saying is that you think the state of coordination among the agencies on foreign policy matters was pretty good.

RICHARDSON: It was pretty good. I do not think there was a lack of coordination. When you asked me this earlier, I went into a longish explanation of why I thought the process needed a longer-range, more comprehensive and integrated strategic orientation or approach. But that would have been in addition to, and not a substitute for, what was

already being done. By the way, this is not entirely a digression. It bears on what I said earlier about Nixon's travels and his role in the appointment of career people. Another FSO, by the way, who belongs on that list is U. Alexis Johnson, whom he brought back from Japan as the Under Secretary for Political Affairs.

This is a story that has to be written. I still think there are a lot of things that ought to be said about Nixon that only compound one's awareness of what a paradoxical and even contradictory character he was. But he not only made the kind of appointments that I just spoke of, but with respect to political appointees, from the time I came in, I never saw a new name beyond the 18 individuals whom he had decided at the outset he wanted to give ambassadorial appointments. I got in the discussion with Tom Flanagan who was on his White House staff on where these people would go. The White House never told me where they should go. They never put on any pressure. I would meet with them and we would discuss it. I remember one nice man with whom I discussed several intermediate level posts for which he might be qualified. He said he didn't feel up to those, adding, "I have served on some of these promotion boards that they have for Foreign Service officers, and I know what those guys can do. I don't feel that those posts are appropriate for someone like me." I said, "Well, what about Iceland?" He said, "That would be dandy! I think I would be good in Iceland."

There was one man, on the other hand, who wanted Paris, and when that went to somebody else, he wasn't named for any other appointment. Parenthetically, we did not push anybody out until we had a replacement. We left the Shriver in Paris until September. We left Sol Linowitz in the Organization for American States. We left Schaezel in Brussels, and so on around the world. I mentioned Bundy already. There was no movement in the White House to get him out.

Q: ...well that was very long-sighted...

RICHARDSON: The upshot of that was that by the end of Nixon's first year in office, the portion of Foreign Service officers who held ambassadorial appointments was higher than when he came in. I would bet you that that has not happened with any other president.

Q: I imagine not. I don't want to impose any more on your time. What I wanted to do was to ask you to elaborate on the development of LOS policy during your time as Under Secretary because I think you had a significant role in that, and maybe we can pick that up at the next time.

RICHARDSON: It isn't a long story, but I think it is relevant.

Q: I think it's relevant particularly given your later appointment as Special Representative of the President. But after we do that I would like to spend some time on your ambassadorship in the UK and then a little more time on LOS. So I will work this out with Marguerite when this will be convenient for you.

RICHARDSON: You can see it is tempting to unload a lot of things that I have never had the occasion to put on paper elsewhere. I did put that bit about Kissinger and Rogers in my new book. I am not sure that Rogers is going to like it very much, but then I think that maybe Kissinger won't either.

Q: This is a continuation of an oral history interview with the Honorable Elliot L. Richardson in the offices of Millbank, Tweed, Hadley, and McCloy. Today is November 7, 1996. In the last interview, we talked about your tenure as deputy to Secretary of State William P. Rogers from 1969 to 1970. Today I'd like to pick up where we left off by asking you to talk about the Nixon administration's Law of the Sea policy. I might just note that my research has reminded me that in February 1970, President Nixon in an address to Congress called for an international agreement on the width of the territorial sea. A few months later, his administration endorsed the concept that the resources of the deep sea bed is the common heritage of mankind. What was the impetus for President Nixon's initiatives? Having talked about that, I'd like to know what your own role was. As I recall, you were pretty central to the development of policy on the Law of the Sea.

RICHARDSON: That is true. The impetus for President Nixon's initiative was the phenomenon, called "creeping jurisdiction." In response partly to President Truman's assertion of U.S. control of the minerals in the continental shelf out to the 400 meter isobath, the West Coast Latin American countries, which had steeply shelving coastlines descending to depths greater than 400 meters, very close to shore, had asserted territorial sea claims out to 200 miles from shore. That had created a lot of problems with the access of American tuna boats to those waters. Coincidentally, I had been the principal staffer on Capitol Hill in 1954 who handled on the Senate side the adoption of the Fisherman's Protective Act of 1954, which undertook to bail out American tuna boats, pay the fines, and procure the release of the fishermen seized by those countries. The theory was that if the U.S. wished to maintain its position that these were high seas areas and American boats acting on that premise got seized, then the U.S. government should stand in back of its position.

When I came to State in 1969, I found that the problem of tuna boat seizures had recently become very acute. Various sanctions were under consideration, including the dispatch of destroyers to the area. Consideration was being given to involving the so-called "Hickenlooper Amendment." I became involved very early on with that problem. The question now of passage through straits (at that time, the concept of "transit passage" had not yet originated) became important because we and many other countries were contemplating an extension of the territorial sea to 12 miles. That would have eliminated any high-seas corridor through all of the world's most important straits since all of them are less than 24 miles wide. In the meantime, the archipelagic countries like Indonesia were agitating the issue of converting archipelagic waters into the equivalent of internal waters, which would have impeded the transit of our ships and submarines through the Indonesian archipelago as well as any other archipelago.

For all of these reasons, my counterpart at Defense, David Packard, and I got together early on in the Nixon administration to discuss what initiatives might be taken. Our thrust was primarily toward the convening of a conference dealing with maritime issues. It's a very long story, but the upshot of that in due course was the realization that if the maritime countries alone convened a conference, it would be like holding a party to which nobody else came. The resulting agreement would be of no value against the coastal states asserting broader jurisdiction. It was that which led to the conclusion that there would have to be a conference that addressed coastal-state and landlocked-state interests, as well as maritime-state interests. Hence, the so-called "package deal" that was understood from the outset would be the objective of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea. But Packard and I agreed that we should stimulate some sort of initiative to contact the Soviet Union with the idea that each of us had a national interest in maintaining maximum freedom of maneuver for our own naval forces against the other's. I can't now recall exactly how that was followed up.

In 1970 the Under Secretaries Committee of the NSC, which I chaired, developed a proposal to extend coastal-state jurisdiction over mineral resources in the continental margin, but provided that some fraction of the proceeds like 2.5% of gross sales would be shared among developing countries. This proposal was put forward by our then Legal Adviser, Jack Stevenson, at a conference in Geneva, I believe, in the summer of 1970. Ironically, it was shot down by the developing countries themselves. Francis X. Njenga of Kenya was the mastermind of that oddly self-destructive move. I can't resist adding parenthetically that when I came on board in 1977, as head of the Law of the Sea delegation, the then Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, Dick Cooper, and the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for International Affairs, Fred Bergsten, both urged me to see if we could revive this proposal because it could generate very substantial economic assistance to developing countries. I was obliged to tell them that, as a result of U.S. support in the meantime for the 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone and of our own proposal for coastal-state jurisdiction over the continental shelf, that it was too late to go back to that proposal.

This was roughly all that I had to do with the Law of the Sea in that period.

Q: I find it interesting that the Nixon administration, a Republican administration, endorsed Pardo's concept that the minerals of the deep sea bed are the common heritage of mankind. Was this looked on as necessary in order to advance our strategic and other interests in the Law of the Sea?

RICHARDSON: I think it was not so much that as that it was a common sense proposition. If you were not prepared to carve up the deep seabed the way Africa was carved up in the 19th century, it followed that it was a global commons and had to be so administered. There is no workable way around that proposition. It had already been affirmed by LBJ before we took office.

Q: That's the interesting thing about Law of the Sea. I was talking in another interview about how historically, it has been a bipartisan effort. Both parties are looking on it as

something very much in the interests of the United States. It's kind of ironic that 12 years later, another Republican administration in effect turned its back on the idea of the common heritage of mankind for a number of reasons.

RICHARDSON: Not quite. Let me go back for one moment first. The proposal that we put forward in Geneva on the distribution of proceeds from exploitation of the continental shelf was by far more significant in terms of actual potential benefit to developing countries than anything that could ever have been generated by the deep seabed. It was a tragedy, in a way a tragic-comedy, that the exploitation of the nickel, copper, cobalt, and manganese continued in manganese nodules was ever viewed as potentially yielding a "bonanza," which, as you remember, they were widely advertised as potentially doing. But the truth, as I soon learned, was that the maximum worldwide annual sales of nickel came to only \$2 billion a year. Even if all nickel production had been from the seabed, the fraction of the profits that would have gone to developing countries and so on wouldn't have amounted to more than \$50 or \$100 million a year. And, of course, the seabed market share would in fact never have been more than a fraction of the total market. Adding royalties from the sale of the other seabed minerals would still have been far short of a "bonanza." When you consider that the Continental Shelf Convention only went out to 400 meters, and that our 1970 proposal called for dividing the proceeds of oil and gas production from depths greater than 400 meters, it's apparent that we were talking really big money. It was ironical as hell that Njenga and the developing countries shot it down--one of the most shortsighted things they ever did. The proposal was not inconsistent, on the other hand, with the Nixon administration's basic approach. It was distinctly to the left of the Clinton administration in many things. The Reagan administration in its turn didn't so much repudiate the concept of the common heritage as choke on various provisions whereby access to it would be subject to restrictions on free-market principles, including a condition on the transfer of technology and a production ceiling of some sort designed to protect the producers of the same minerals from land-based sources, and a few other things like that, which they enumerated and which, as you know, have since been addressed by amendments to the charter.

Q: One other question. I infer from your remarks that the development of policy went along really fairly smoothly. It's always important for some people who would think it was a good idea and push it to work pretty hard at it. But you didn't run into serious resistance within the administration?

RICHARDSON: No. I didn't run into any serious resistance within the administration on any significant issue involving State Department interests and policy. I remarked earlier on the answer to a question which nobody in the press ever asked, of how it happened that Richardson was in constant contact with and working cooperatively with Henry Kissinger, while also being viewed by his colleagues in the State Department, including most especially the career services, as the State Department's champion in the foreign policy development process? The answer, I believe, says quite a lot about what I think was the rationality of Nixon's strategic direction of foreign policy, the clarity of his objectives, and the potential therefore of supplying input.

By the way, if you would like to do an interesting piece of research, I have a suggestion for you. One of Henry Kissinger's books, I'm not sure which, identifies a statement I made about the Soviet Union and China as reflecting the most important foreign policy initiative taken by the Nixon administration. Bill Bundy, who has been working for 10 years or so on a book about the Nixon foreign policy, has independently arrived at the same conclusion. The statement was to the effect that the United States would take very seriously (the words are very important, but I don't remember them precisely, and regard as a significant threat to U.S. national security interests any aggressive action taken by the Soviet Union against China. Bill Bundy asked me what I could remember about how that statement got made and why, of all people in the administration from the President through the Secretary of State and on down, I got to be the person who made it publicly. I had no memory of it. I talked to my then chief assistant, Jonathan Moore, Art Hartman, who was the chief staff person for the Under Secretaries Committee, and Morton Abramowitz, who was my staff assistant. None of them had any recollection of it. I know that there was an interdepartmental group on U.S.-Chinese security related issues, including the question of how the U.S. would react to Soviet aggression. I remember that Miriam Camps, then director of Policy Planning, took a leading, if not the leading, role in the development of that so-called NSSM, and this might have led to the statement in question. If it was that important, it's worth checking out. As to whether it was that important, I don't have an independent view at this moment. But I would sure like to know. One person that might have some recollection of it is, I think, Bob Barnett. There are two Barnett brothers, right?

Q: Doak Barnett and someone.

RICHARDSON: I think it was Bob. There must be something in the record on that.

Q: It's worth checking into.

RICHARDSON: Yes.

Q: I just have one other question to ask you about your time as Under Secretary of State. You must have met a number of interesting and important people in your travels during that time. Are there any that struck you as worth commenting about? Perhaps your relationships with some of them were useful and significant when you were Special Representative to the President to the Law of the Sea Conference.

RICHARDSON: That is an interesting question. I'd have to reflect on the latter part of it. One of the most understandably interesting contacts was that with Jean Sainteny. Jean Sainteny had been the last French governor of Indochina. Something about the manner in which the turnover of power had been handled had created great trust and regard for him on the part of the government of North Vietnam. As I think I probably mentioned before, it had been understood that as Under Secretary of State I would sit in on all NSC meetings. One of my details became the development of the political proposals that were to be presented to North Vietnam as integral to the proposed peace settlement. My staff and I developed a plan under which, to put it simply, there would be elections at the local

level, the provincial level, and nationally within the whole of South Vietnam. The distribution of power at each level would be allocated in proportion to the number of votes received by the South Vietnamese pro-U.S. candidates and pro-North Vietnam, the Viet Cong candidates. Kissinger thought that there was some question as to whether or not the generosity and fairness of this proposal had been adequately communicated to the top levels of the North Vietnamese government. De Sainteny's wife was a very bright and attractive woman who had been a student of Henry's at Harvard. She was the author, among other things, of a well-known book called "Love in the Western World," which traced the literary and artistic conventions from the classic through the medieval and romantic periods, and so on. I never read the book, but it was along those lines. Anyway, it was through her that Henry came to know her husband, Jean de Sainteny. It was his thought that I should brief de Sainteny and ask him to make sure that a clear understanding of this proposal got directly to the top levels of the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese government.

I want to add a piece which I don't remember talking about but which was one of the most important of my initiatives in that period. I stopped in Paris to see de Sainteny on the way to Brussels in December, 1969. My purpose in going to Brussels was to sell our NATO allies on a mutual and balanced force reductions initiative. In those days, there was pressure within the United States particularly, but also in other Western countries for cutting the level of U.S. forces committed to Europe. The biggest threat came from the so-called "Mansfield Amendment" that would have forced a reduction of 50,000 U.S. troops in Europe. It occurred to me that the most effective counter to the Mansfield Amendment would be agreement among the NATO allies and proposal for mutual and balanced force reductions, thus making inexpedient a unilateral reduction. So, I went to Brussels in December to sell that idea, did sell it, and NATO did propose it early in 1970. I forget when. The irony of it was, the Soviets delayed and delayed in their response to it. This is another interesting subject to research. I was no longer in the State Department when, in May of 1973, I think, the Mansfield Resolution was finally brought up and was being debated on the floor of the U.S. Senate. While the debate was still underway the Soviet Union suddenly announced its acceptance of negotiations on mutual and balanced force reductions. This announcement knocked the Mansfield Resolution on the head then and there. It worked like a charm. Stan Resorl was named to represent the U.S., and these negotiations went on for years in Vienna.

Q: Oh, yes, I do remember.

RICHARDSON: Well, naturally enough, the question arose, was the Soviet timing inadvertent or advertent? For several years after that whenever I ran into a highly placed Soviet foreign policy type, I would ask him, "Did you do this deliberately because you did not want to see the destabilization consequent upon a U.S. reduction, which might force an increase in German forces to offset ours, and thus be considerably quite disturbing from your point of view, or was it just by chance?" I got both answers. The guy (I can't now remember his name) who seemed to be closest to the decision was a senior staffer for the Soviets, equivalent of the National Security Council, said it was deliberate, but others told me it wasn't. Now, that would be an interesting question to

check out. That's why I was going to Europe. I suppose that, speaking of contacts in NATO, Tetsinyani, who was then Under Secretary of NATO for something like Political Affairs and later became ambassador to the U.S. One of the most interesting characters I met in those days was Joseph Luns, who has succeeded Brolio as Secretary General of NATO. He was one of the most entertaining characters I ever met, a nonstop raconteur. One of the most amusing experiences I ever had was on a flight from Washington to Norfolk to celebrate the 20th anniversary of NATO. I sat on the plane across from Dennis Heale and Luns. They vied with each other the whole way down on swapping funny anecdotes. I wish I'd had a tape recorder.

Q: When you see the transcript, of course, you can add to it. We encourage you to do so.

RICHARDSON: I'm throwing in some things here that may not be in your script. They are among the most interesting. By the way, I am being interviewed this afternoon, coincidentally, on another initiative that I think was of significant long-term importance. I remember discovering with shock and surprise that the U.S. had badly neglected its mandate over the Strategic Trust Territory of the Western Pacific, which was being administered by the Department of the Interior. The economic conditions in the territory were miserable. We were not doing much of anything for its people. We were going to have to give up Cameroon Bay. We might also lose our bases in the Philippines. The least we ought to do is be sure of access to bases in the Trust Territory. It was inevitable that we were eventually going to have to yield the mandate that entrusted the United States with this territory under the Trusteeship Council of the UN. There would be a referendum offering various choices. In the meantime, therefore, we'd better get on the stick and improve our relations with these people. So I promptly got in touch with the Department of the Interior. Fortunately, they had a very good guy in charge of this kind of thing. He was Edgar Kaiser, Jr., Assistant Secretary of the Interior. What we did then must all be in the records: what step-ups then began on education support, agricultural assistance, and other things. But I consider that one of my more important initiatives.

I haven't told you about Israel and the Arabs--I should. That was probably the most important thing I was involved with.

Q: Please do. I think that...

RICHARDSON: When I came in, Joe Sisco was Assistant Secretary for the Middle East. Henry Kissinger until the very end of my tour stayed away from the Middle East. I think he was insecure about his German-Jewish background and, of course, whether he would be viewed as detached enough to address it. In any case, he didn't. The upshot was that I became the point of contact for Yitzhak Rabin, then ambassador to the U.S., and the representative of the front-line Arab states. Ambassador Sharaf of Jordan. He was a Harvard College graduate, a very intelligent, thoughtful, decent, and fair-minded man. I met alternately with Rabin and Sharaf almost from the beginning of my period at State then. The paramount objective of our discussions was promoting direct face-to-face negotiations between the Arabs and the Israelis. Rabin believed that if the Arabs could be committed to respect the right of Israel to exist, its territorial integrity, and so on in

exchange for peace in accordance with the Security Council Resolution 345, that this would not only be in the interest of Israel but also that Arab honor would undergird their support for the promises they had made once they had sat down face-to-face and reached an agreement. But the problem was bringing that about. I suggested to Rabin one day that Israel ought to hire the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles so that each side could sit at the table back to back but look at the other side in the mirror in front of them. The upshot of all that was a very important memorandum that I left behind when I left State in May. I had an assistant then named Rein, whom I later convinced Phil Trezise, Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs, to take on as his Deputy for aviation negotiations. A very bright young guy, Burt Rein was one of the very few people at that point ever to graduate from the Harvard Law School with a summa degree. He worked with me at the end on a memorandum which said, in effect, that there would never be a peace settlement on the Arab-Israeli front until and unless the grievances of the people aggrieved were squarely addressed. The people aggrieved were clearly the Palestinians. For 20 years the Palestinians had been brushed aside as "the refugee problem" because they were stateless. They had no UN representation, no ambassadors. My recent book discusses this as an example I won't now explain of what I call the "Mount Washington Fallacy."

I made some efforts to find responsible people among the Palestinian community on the West Bank who might become its representatives in such a discussion. I don't remember how I found him, but I located one highly regarded old man who had (not that old, perhaps, from my present perspective) who had recently retired as a secondary school principal. He broke down and wept in my office because, he said, "for 20 years I have been trying to get somebody to focus on the fact that we are the people whose territory was occupied. We represent a very large fraction of the populations of Jordan, Syria, and Iraq. As long as we feel that we have a just claim that is not being redressed, there will be no real peace." I think that memorandum was among the most important things I had to do with, next perhaps to the memorandum I sent to the President about China. I must have told you about that.

Q: I think we did talk about that last time.

RICHARDSON: You asked me about personalities. I'd have to stop and think about that. If I get any good thoughts on it, I could fill them in later.

Q: That would be fine. There is plenty of opportunity to do that. We've been at this for 45 minutes. I don't want to impose on your time. You've got other things on your mind.

RICHARDSON: I have five more minutes.

Q: Let's just jump in a little bit to your tour as ambassador to the Court of St. James's.

RICHARDSON: You probably know more about that than I do.

Q: Yes, but people want to hear what you have to say and not what I want to say. I've said it once in an interview I did.

RICHARDSON: I might as well level with you and anybody who later realizes this. The job you had, the job the DCM had, the jobs the economic counselor and the information officer had in London were all important jobs. The job the ambassador had was not. I think there are two reasons for that. One is that Presidents and Secretaries of State like dealing directly with their British counterparts. The other reason, at least in that period, was that there were few large issues that needed to be taken up by the American ambassador with the British foreign secretary, Chancellor of the Exchequer or, indeed, the Prime Minister. On the economic front, in almost all the difficult issues, the party seeking some action or some benefit was on the British side--landing rights for the Concorde or Pilkington Plate Glass, for instance. There were a lot of things that properly fell within the role of the DCM, a highly capable guy. All the Embassy's junior people were highly capable and experienced. But the things they dealt with were not appropriately things that I was called upon to deal with.

The result was, therefore, that my role and my wife's was largely one of trying to maintain and sustain cordial relations with a variety of people. We deliberately sought to broaden the range of people who were invited to Winfield House. I was perhaps the only ambassador who ever met with the Executive Committee of the Trade Union Congress, whom I invited for dinner one evening at the chancery. We had people from a variety of other roles and backgrounds. I found it very valuable that having been both a politician and a bureaucrat, I could empathize with and imagine what was going on politically, where Callahan and Heale and Jenkins were involved, and also...I can't come up with the name.

Q: Harold Wilson?

RICHARDSON: Not Wilson. I didn't see him a lot. That reminds me, though, of a conversational gambit I sometimes employed when I found myself sitting next to a corporate CEO or a prominent leader. I would lean over to him and say, "You know, it's so interesting to have the opportunity to meet someone like yourself. I can't resist asking a question that has long fascinated me." I used this on Wilson at a luncheon he gave for me at Number 10 Downing Street. I said, "Has intrigue ever played a significant part in your career?" He had a row of pipes in front of him, including a colored pipe that had been given to him by Gerry Ford.

Q: And Nelson Rockefeller, too. I remember, we went to call on him and Rockefeller pulled out three colored pipes.

RICHARDSON: Oh, he did? Puffing on one of his pipes, Wilson said, "Well, in my career, I can't say that I've ever practiced intrigue on my own account, but I have been called upon from time to time to deal in the requirements of counter-intrigue." Well, damned if sometime later I heard Wilson give the principal speech at the annual dinner at the British Academy. He spent a lot of time building on the uniqueness of his own prime ministerial career and then turned to some of the insights derived from that experience. "In the course of my career," he said, "I have never found it necessary to engage in

intrigue. There have been times, however, when I have been obliged to practice counter-intrigue."

End of interview