

Oral History Interview
with
ARTHUR R. RINGWALT

United States Foreign Service officer. Chief, Division of Chinese Affairs, U.S. Dept. of State, 1946-48; State Dept. member of Naval War College, 1948-49; 1st Secretary of American Embassy, London, 1949-57.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina
June 5, 1974
by Richard D. McKinzie, Harry S. Truman Library

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MCKINZIE: Mr. Ringwalt, could you tell me how you happened to join the Foreign Service? I notice that you entered in 1928. Was it more by way of design, or was it a man who needed a job at the time?

RINGWALT: Basically, I needed a job. My father was an insurance man; he tried to make an insurance man out of me and it didn't work. So I professed to be very interested in music, which I was pretty good at, and managed to get his permission to go to Europe. I spent several years

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in Europe having a good time and, incidentally studying some music. And when I came back in 1925 the depression had hit the Middle West like a ton of bricks. So, the only job I could find, other than going back into the insurance business, was being a retail salesman in a department store, but a year and a half was enough to cure me of any further interest in retail salesmanship. Then I got restless and thought I would like to get back overseas again and went to Washington to see if I could get into foreign service. I tried the Standard Oil Company, the Department of Commerce, and the Department of State. The Department of State gave me a pretty good rating on my written examination, which is, incidentally, a very funny story because that particular year the examinations were all thrown out. Did you ever hear about that?

MCKINZIE: No.

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RINGWALT: In order to prepare for my examination I went to a coach in Washington named Angus Crawford, who placed 90 percent of the aspiring Foreign Service officers at the time. The day before our written examination he invited us all around to his residence and he said, "We're not going to have any class today," -- there were about 28 in the class -- "but I thought I would just give you a little hint. If the Foreign Service examination contains the question, 'What is the significance of the Battle of Santa Maria, something or other,' you should answer, 'this is the decisive battle in the Chilean Civil War in 1857.'" And he said, "Don't ask me why I'm giving you this answer, but just keep it in mind."

So, we all with nearly 400 others took our Foreign Service examinations in mathematics, in history, in law, and what not, and, to and behold, there was the question, "What was the significance of the Battle of Santa Maria something or other;"

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and so all 28 of us very brightly wrote down the proper answer. But one of the candidates who was not present at Mr. Crawford's residence at this last meeting heard us gossiping after the examination rushed to the State Department and complained: "There has been some cheating going on." Those of us who had put in several months of preparation didn't like this fellow very much, as the Department invalidated the examination; those of us who were still interested in the Foreign Service had no choice but to take a second examination the following year.

By way of explanation, it seems that a certain State Department employee who had access to the safe where the examination questions were kept, a few days before the exam was held he removed them from the safe and called on Crawford saying he wanted the correct answers to a list of questions among which was "what is the significance

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of the battle of Santa Maria something or other?" Crawford demurred, saying he would prefer that the young man enroll as a student in his next class. When this suggestion was rejected, Crawford became suspicious and so indirectly warned his class.

MCKINZIE: In the interim, though, were you employed?

RINGWALT: In the interim I was employed. I found a job singing which was part of my musical training and I thought I'd see if I liked being on the stage. I worked in the Fox Theater in Washington and continued to keep abreast of current events in order that I might take the examination the next time it was offered, and the next time I passed.

MCKINZIE: What kind of assignments did you get in the depression years?

RINGWALT: On May 21, 1928, I joined the Service and

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worked for a while in the Passport Division learning a little bit about passports, in the Treaty Division, and in the Division of European Affairs; and so I got a fairly broad picture of what was expected of me. Then along about October they began to say, "Well, it's high time you all go out to the field." I didn't want to go to Latin America for one reason or another; I had lived in Europe a long time, and I had never been to the Orient and there was great pressure put on people then to join the so-called China Service. I was not prepared to say I wanted to stay in China the rest of my career but would take an assignment out there and if I liked it then I would apply for the China Service. So they sent me to Shanghai. And that's the reason how I got out there in the first place.

MCKINZIE: When did you get to Shanghai?

RINGWALT: In November of '28 and stayed there until

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July '32, when I came home on leave and agreed to go to Peking to study the language, which I did in '32, October. I stayed there for two years and ruined my eyes studying Chinese characters. Then in '34 I went to Yunnan Fu, now called Kunming. In '36 I came home and stayed in Washington for two years, got assignments in Washington, got myself married, and went back to Peking in 1938 as Third Secretary.

MCKINZIE: You were in Peking when war in the Far East was actually underway?

RINGWALT: My wife and infant daughter were sent home in October '39, and I came home on leave in '41 just before our war with Japan broke out. A young Japanese language officer then stationed in Peking and I estimated that I could get home and he couldn't. My leave was due in October and his leave was due in January. Shows how closely we figured when the war was coming.

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And he lost; he was interned, and I got home.

MCKINZIE: What did you do then during the war years?

RINGWALT: In '41 I went to visit my wife's family in Richmond, I remember, until my leave expired on the date known as December 7, 1941. I went to Washington by train and got in a taxi

at the station with my wife; the driver turned the radio on, when we heard the announcement over the radio that the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor. So, I didn't go to the little flat we had reserved but went straight to the State Department and said, "What can I do to help?" There wasn't a damn thing Foreign Service Officers could do to help then, because it was out of the hands of the State Department and became a matter for the military to handle. So I diddled around various odd jobs in Foreign Service administration for a year and a half, and then pressure was exerted to send China language officers back

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to the field; and so I went to China via South America, Africa and India -- we couldn't go across the Pacific, of course -- and arrived in China in March of '43 and stayed until August of '45.

MCKINZIE: And you were there at the time a number of American missions went out to China then to try to...

RINGWALT: Oh, yes. Everybody came out to save China.

MCKINZIE: Could I get you to comment on any of those missions that came out to save China from itself?

RINGWALT: Well, I think the silliest mission was General [Patrick Jay] Hurley's mission, if anybody should ask me.

MCKINZIE: In what sense? General Hurley being silly or...

RINGWALT: Yes, General Hurley being silly, no question about it. We always had the impression, but we

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never had it confirmed, that he had been such a damn nuisance in Washington that Roosevelt decided to send him as far away as possible to get him out of his hair, and that was how he finally got to China. Apparently he arrived without any instructions whatever from Washington, and -- this is what he told us anyhow -- and he said, "If I haven't been given American policy, I shall make American policy."

So he himself sat down and made American policy for China and said, "This is what we should do." His idea of American policy and ours differed somewhat.

MCKINZIE: Well, that's one reason it's difficult for me to talk about China affairs during and immediately after the war: everyone has a different view of what American policy actually was. Roosevelt seemed to be a little slow in making up his mind exactly what he wanted,

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and then the situation changed and as Roosevelt faded out and Truman came in there was a period in there where I think it would have been difficult, don't you, to say exactly what U.S.-China policy was?

RINGWALT: I never did learn. I don't know yet. I think Mr. Roosevelt had the idea that when the war was over, Great Britain and France might get together and gang up on the United States; so, he decided it would be a hell of a good idea to have another country in partnership with the United States, stand up to Great Britain and France, and, of all countries, he chose China, and of all people he chose Chiang Kai-shek to head postwar China. That's my basic impression of what that was all about. And he couldn't bother -- he wasn't particularly interested -- to learn anything that went contrary to his idée fixe, if you like.

MCKINZIE: What about the idea that if American aid

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were to be given, whether it be wartime aid or postwar aid, it had to be given with certain guarantees that it would be used for "proved purposes?"

RINGWALT: Well, we tried that. It didn't work. You couldn't make him do this; he was a stubborn old son of a gun, I'm talking about Chiang Kai-shek.

MCKINZIE: Yes.

RINGWALT: General Stilwell used to call him "The Peanut."

MCKINZIE: Among other things.

RINGWALT: When he didn't call him a son of a bitch.

MCKINZIE: Back then, in the latter part of the war, what kind of duties did you have? Where were you stationed?

RINGWALT: I went to Kweilin, the idea being that,

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as I understood it, I would be the Consul General in Canton in exile, so to speak. The Japanese had taken over Hong Kong and Canton, and so Kweilin was the closest place we could get to Canton and Hong Kong without running the risk of capture. Refugees from Hong Kong and Canton and that area in Southeast China were constantly passing through, and it was of interest to find out from these people what the situation was in Hong Kong and in Canton, then Japanese occupied areas. I stayed in Kweilin until the Japanese captured it and then went to Chungking, in the summer of '44, if I remember correctly. In Chungking I was the senior political officer, and I used to pass on to Washington reports from other officers from various parts of China. It was chiefly a bookkeeping job, but I'd take them and read them and comment on them, if I wanted to, and then forward them to Washington.

MCKINZIE: Could I ask you to comment on the mind-set,

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to use a modern word, of the people who were in the China Service? Everyone talks about "old China hands," as if they had some special insight into the Oriental mind and into politics and into the whole thing.

RINGWALT: Some did and some didn't. I think the dumbest officer I ever saw was born in China; never heard him speak a word of Chinese. One of the brightest I ever saw was Jack Service, who was born in China. So, you have a wide spectrum.

MCKINZIE: But no particular unifying characteristic?

RINGWALT: John Davies was a very bright officer, also born in China.

MCKINZIE: How much speculation about the future of China was going on among the people in the China Service? Was it optimistic at the end of the war?

RINGWALT: It was generally agreed that sooner or later

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the Chinese Communists were going to win, and what was the use in opposing a movement which was almost unopposable.

MCKINZIE: Was this because of Chiang Kai-shek's...

RINGWALT: Chiang Kai-shek was dumb, and his methods were not very clever, and the assistance we sent to Chiang Kai-shek to use to fight the Japanese, mostly went to build up his army to protect himself against the Communists in a future war. In the event that was what happened. We used to send arms and money and equipment and advice, and he would ignore all of the advice. In lieu of that, he just built up his own little clique, so the Nationalists could hold, he hoped, when the war was over, against any Chinese Communist attempts to take over the country.

MCKINZIE: You mentioned that there was nothing that could be done about that, that you couldn't really force him to make changes.

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RINGWALT: We tried awfully hard.

MCKINZIE: I was going to comment, that a number of people did evidently try very hard and in fact everyone from Hull, Stettinius, and Byrnes put pressure on to make some changes; and President Truman indicated that he wanted some modification in Chinese practice if they were to continue to receive U.S. aid. How did it happen that you came back from China in July of 1945 just before the end of everything?

RINGWALT: First of August. Mr. Hurley was not very nice to us, and my tour of duty was up, and, so, [Fulton] Freeman -- one of our bright boys -- and I managed to get ourselves sent back to Washington.

MCKINZIE: What did you think Hurley had in mind for the China Service?

RINGWALT: He did his best to punish us, being as impossible as he could be to us hoping we would quit.

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MCKINZIE: Do you have any idea of what he wanted you to do that he didn't think the China Service was doing? Was he clear about that?

RINGWALT: He said that he was sent to China to support the Nationalist Government and that we should not report anything which reflected on the quality and caliber of the Chinese administration. We would write dispatches saying what we thought of the situation and he refused to send them in. He said, "After this I won't accept anything which is adversely critical of the Chinese Government."

I could tell you a story, if you like, which I think is interesting. My only hesitation is that I've mentioned this already to E.J. [Eli Jacques, Jr.] Kahn of the *New Yorker*. I once wrote a report, that I had checked with the authorities, the military and the political authorities and others, that much of the arms which we were sending to China were being clandestinely sold to the Communists or being taken from them in local conflicts, that

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this was a wasted effort and that we might as well curtail that kind of activity. I wrote it up, and I took it into General Hurley to see what he would say. He refused comment. He said, "Well, I'll consider the matter." After a week I went back to him and said, "How about my dispatch, Mr. Ambassador?" He still wouldn't comment.

So, after about two or three weeks -- I kept pestering him until he kind of lost his temper -- I was sitting at my desk when I got a call to go to his office; in his office was the Chinese Foreign Minister T.V. Soong. Hurley said, "T.V., this is Arthur. Here's a report he wrote; I wanted to show it to you."

So T.V. Soong read it and got red in the face, but didn't say anything, and then Mr. Hurley said, "Is this a correct story?"

"Not a word of truth in it, not a word of it."

T.V. Soong didn't speak much Chinese, you

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know; he spoke only English. So, the Ambassador said, "Arthur I told you, I told you there wasn't anything to it. T.V. says there's nothing to it."

So that's the last time I ever tried to write a dispatch for General Hurley. T.V. Soong turned to me and said, "I know you, you've been out here quite a while, but exactly how do you spell your name?"

So, I spelled it out for him.

"Oh yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, I know."

MCKINZIE: So you felt after that it was time...

RINGWALT: Well, there wasn't much use in my staying with the China Service.

Comical aftermath: I went back to Washington and ran into an old, old Chinese friend of mine whom I had known long before I went into Foreign Service. He had been brought over to this country by the Catholic church and sent to

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Creighton University, a Catholic school in my home town. My mother became interested in the young man; he didn't have any friends, and he couldn't speak fluent English, and so she invited him out to the house occasionally for a meal. Well, this man saw me in Washington on my return from China and he went up and put his arms around me and said, "Ha, ha, ha, ha, I know something about you. You're in T.V.'s black book."

MCKINZIE: So, it wouldn't have done any good to have gone back to China after that. How did you ever get assigned to be Chief of the Chinese Division?

RINGWALT: They were looking for somebody to take over.

MCKINZIE: But it was a touchy and disastrous time, really. It must have been a high pressure job?

RINGWALT: For a while I was very close to an officer in the State Department named John Carter Vincent, whom you probably know of by now. He and I were

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very close for many years; one of the nicest relationships I ever had. He got me into that job. But then he got into difficulties and was transferred, the man that took over from him and I didn't get along very well, and so I asked to get the hell out. Vincent's sister had married the then acting head of the Naval War College, and so I said that would be an interesting assignment. Could he wangle through his sister a request that I be appointed to the Naval War College. So that was one way to get me away from the China desk.

MCKINZIE: I take it, then, from the time you came back, the first of August 1945, until 1948 that you would have been pleased to have had another assignment at most any point?

RINGWALT: Oh yes, oh yes. It wasn't a good assignment (the China desk) either. There was too much feeling.

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MCKINZIE: Too much feeling on your part or everyone's part?

RINGWALT: Everybody's.

MCKINZIE: Is it a fair question to ask if in the aftermath, in the years after 1949, when there were all of the repercussions over the decline of the Nationalist Government, if you got any personal "flak" over that? A lot of people were burned rather badly at the hands of Congressmen.

RINGWALT: Oh, yes, quite a bit. Yes, the "China Lobby" was pretty active in those days.

MCKINZIE: Well, there were a couple of questions I wanted to ask about the China Lobby and also some ideas that were around but never got off the ground. One of them was that T.V. Soong, for example, wanted this huge amount of money for a development plan for China and the China

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Lobby talked about a Chinese equivalent of a Marshall plan for economic development and growth. Did that stuff get talked over pretty well in your shop?

RINGWALT: No, we didn't handle that; that was handled topside. I got into that very little indeed. And, oddly enough, the political and the economic men on top had a terrible squabble because each of them said "this is my job," and between the two they just cut each other's throats and nothing happened.

Well, I've said enough about General Hurley, I won't say anymore; but that should give you a clue as to the kind of atmosphere we had.

Then, of course, you remember the famous telegram we all sent from Chungking in February of '45. If you haven't seen the book on General Stilwell you might glance at that. It gives quite a story about it there. I told you we couldn't send any dispatch which he didn't approve

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of; so, he went to Washington for consultation and in his absence the political section got together and wrote a stinking telegram saying what we thought of the situation and sent it to Washington, which was February something in '45. If you haven't seen it, you should look it up.

MCKINZIE: How did the war college seem after having had this?

RINGWALT: Oh, very pleasant. I was pretty jittery by the time I went up there and I just attended the Naval War College years as if I were a naval officer. I had a lovely time.

MCKINZIE: And how in the world did you go from the China Service to the U.S. Embassy in London?

RINGWALT: It had been the practice for several years for a relatively senior China Service person to be stationed in London in order that he might consult with the Foreign Office about what its thoughts were on the Far East and perhaps in a

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minor degree impress a little of our own policy on Foreign Office thinking. That practice went on for quite a while, and I don't think it really paid off; but it was a good idea, and I kept pretty busy.

MCKINZIE: I take it this was a post that you really did want?

RINGWALT: Oh, yes, I asked for that one. I knew that the vacancy was coming up. The officer who had been assigned to that post didn't like it and wanted to get back to China. It was the kind of post I did want, because it got me as far away from China as I could possibly get. So, I for a while worked on the Far East alone. Then I got interested in India and Pakistan, tried to handle that whole Asian field. I did a little useful work.

MCKINZIE: The British at that time were trying to

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get back on their feet after having received a couple of American loans and there was pressure on the British to get into NATO. I take it then you handled the Commonwealth aspect?

RINGWALT: The Commonwealth aspect, yes.

MCKINZIE: Did you deal with the British at all when they asked for assistance for what they called "dependent overseas territories?"

RINGWALT: No, I didn't get into that at all.

MCKINZIE: You didn't have to deal with their financial request for development?

RINGWALT: No.

MCKINZIE: What about NATO?

RINGWALT: No, see this is the European field, and I stayed well out of that.

MCKINZIE: How did things change for you when the Korean war began?

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RINGWALT: I got quite busy.

MCKINZIE: I'm sure you did. Could you say something about how and what you considered to be the most important?

RINGWALT: I can remember one incident among others. I used to be very close friends with the Assistant Secretary of Far Eastern Affairs in the Foreign Office, Sir Robert Scott, a charming guy, whom I had previously known in China. I would call on him and get his views and his government's views about the Korean war, and would capsule them and send them back to Washington. Some of them were quite interesting, some of them perhaps weren't; maybe some of them were helpful. I remember drafting a telegram about information given to me by Scott. The Indian ambassador, [Sirdar Kavalam Madhava] Panikkar, was very close to the Chinese, informed the British that Chou En-lai, the Communist Chinese foreign Minister,

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had told him that if the United States advanced to the Yalu River the Chinese were going to come in on the side of the North Koreans. So I put that in a telegram and gave it to my boss. I never did know if he sent it to Washington. But that is typical of the sort of thing I was able to get out of the Foreign Office, which, perhaps, had the State Department been receptive, there might have been a difference in policy.

MCKINZIE: Did you have any instructions to put more pressure on the British to increase their contributions to all aspects of Korean war support? I know at various times there was a feeling in Washington that the British weren't doing all they possibly could do.

RINGWALT: Well, that's the sort of thing that would have been handled by the Ambassador.

MCKINZIE: Another question that comes up so far as U.S.-British policy during those years is the

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attempts to get Great Britain to integrate more, economically, and maybe somewhat politically, with the rest of Europe.

RINGWALT: No, I didn't go into European aspects at all.

MCKINZIE: None of the attempts to get Britain to sort of play team ball?

RINGWALT: One of the things that might be of mild interest is our efforts, largely through me, I guess, to hold off the British recognition of Communist China. The British were originally going to recognize Communist China much sooner. In fact, they went ahead -- an interesting tale -- the British Consul General in Peking on his own initiative recognized Communist China, perhaps without realizing what he was doing. And when the Chinese Communists declared themselves the government of China on the first of October 1949, Graham, the British Consul General, went around to the Communists and congratulated them and said his government was prepared to -- on his own initiative, mind you -- recognize the competency

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of the Chinese Communist government in areas under their control. This caused a great deal of stir back in London because the British were taken aback.

MCKINZIE: Yes.

RINGWALT: The problem went up to the British Foreign office legal adviser -- I don't remember his name -- and the legal adviser came out with the opinion, "Well, regardless of whether or not he meant to recognize Communist China, he's done it." It was a fait accompli.

So, thereafter, it was only a question of when a formal recognition would come from the Foreign Office. And we, at least Washington, got excited and said, "Hold off, hold off, hold off." But Nehru on the other hand, who held very strong views on the subject and had a great deal of influence with the then Labor Government, insisted, "You must, you must recognize quickly,

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quickly, quickly." And we said, "No, no, never, never, never." So the British ended up by delaying formal recognition for a matter of a few weeks only.

MCKINZIE: And you had to carry the ball in this?

RINGWALT: Much of this, yes.

MCKINZIE: What grounds could you use?

RINGWALT: Because Chiang Kai-shek was the Government of China. We didn't have a very good case.

MCKINZIE: In doing that sort of thing, did you find it difficult if you yourself weren't fully convinced of the policy, even though you were in fact an agent of the Department of State?

RINGWALT: I found it quite difficult quite often, and I confess privately to you that occasionally I would admit to people I talked to in the Foreign Office, "This is my Government's view, it isn't

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necessarily my view. My view is of no consequence What our Government thinks is what you're interested in, not what I think."

MCKINZIE: After the Chinese got into the Korean war and the British did recognize China, were there any U.S.-British negotiations that ultimately lead to conversations with China as they began to talk about peace terms and that kind of thing?

RINGWALT: Do you mean, Communist China or Nationalist China?

MCKINZIE: Communist China.

RINGWALT: We didn't talk about recognizing Communist China at all, didn't think about it. You see, we had Mr. John Foster Dulles, which kept us away from that -- any suggestion of recognizing any government other than Nationalist China.

MCKINZIE: Could you tell a very big difference when the Truman term ended and the Eisenhower term began, so far as your own work was concerned?

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RINGWALT: I shouldn't think so. In what respect?

MCKINZIE: In regard to general policies that you were expected to espouse and to implement.

RINGWALT: I shouldn't think so. No, I don't believe there was any considerable change. It didn't effect me, in any case.

MCKINZIE: Let me ask one general question about the Department of State. Has it changed between the end of the war and let's say the end of the Truman administration or the beginning of the Eisenhower years? There's a fellow at Yale, Gaddis Smith, who has written a biography of Dean Acheson in which he says that the Department of State underwent a huge transformation between the time of Cordell Hull and the end of Dean Acheson's secretaryship. That when Truman became President the State Department became in large part like the British Foreign Office, namely that policy was made and proposals were fairly well written

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out and then the President simply was informed of them and he gave a sort of "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" response to them, indicating that the State Department had at last come into its own. This is Gaddis Smith's position on it.

RINGWALT: Well, of course, this is Dean Acheson's personality and Harry Truman's total affection for him as far as I can tell. Whatever Dean Acheson said, "Harry Truman said, "This is dandy." I may be wrong on that but this is the impression I get.

MCKINZIE: Well, the reason I ask the question was that Gaddis Smith contends or implies, and a lot of other people have said, that it improved the morale of the State Department to know that at last that their studies and analyses were going to have some effect. That during the time Cordell Hull was Secretary you could grind out all these studies you wanted to, but Roosevelt was going

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to be his own Secretary of State in the end anyhow.

RINGWALT: That's true enough.

MCKINZIE: That it changed somehow in that postwar period and that morale got better. I think what I want to know from you is your experience.

RINGWALT: I think John Foster Dulles made it worse than ever. He was a bigoted and difficult person.

MCKINZIE: Well then, despite Byrnes in the China Service years...

RINGWALT: Byrnes was at least friendly toward the Foreign Service.

MCKINZIE: Was that your experience about the State Department at that time?

RINGWALT: Oh, I think that's probably true. James Byrnes, I don't believe, knew so awfully much about foreign affairs, but he was a pleasant man

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to deal with; and he was friendly to me, willing to chat with you, make you feel as though, well, he sort of liked you and was interested in you.

MCKINZIE: So then, compared to the Hull secretaryship and the Dulles secretaryship, there was an interim there?

RINGWALT: Oh, yes, and we always, in the State Department, had a great respect for Dean Acheson's ability, and were willing to take a lead upon him. I used to write an occasional speech for him, and I'd go to his office and consult with him. He was very pleasant to get along with and very businesslike, too.

MCKINZIE: You mentioned that you were involved with the Chinese aircraft while you were in London?

RINGWALT: Yes, in brief -- it's a very complicated legal case. In order to strengthen the hands of the Chinese Nationalist Government, we had turned over to them the title to a lot of American

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aircraft, some C-54's and some DC-3's, if you know the term, and the Chinese Government got General [Claire Lee] Chennault to head the operation. For a long time they did good work transporting troops and transporting food, and what not, around about the country. Then suddenly we were faced with the prospect that the Chinese Communist Government was going to be formally recognized by the British Government. What does that do to the ownership of these aircraft? Well, we all got wind of it and that was one of the reasons why we urged the British not to rush too quickly into formal recognition of the Chinese Communist Government. So, what we did, the Chinese National Government's ambassador was still in London and we had arranged for a transfer of these aircraft -- we tried to, anyhow -- back from the Chinese National Government to the United States. But, unfortunately, physically the aircraft were all in Hong Kong, which was British territory. You can see the complication.

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MCKINZIE: Yes.

RINGWALT: Well, to cut a long story short, we took all these documents transferring the title to these aircraft away from the Chinese National Government back to ourselves, and the Chinese ambassador in London did the paperwork on the part of the Chinese Government. Personally, I think it's a lousy legal case. Anyhow, the British Labor Government refused to accept these papers because they said, "We have now recognized the Chinese Communist Government, and the Chinese Government has inherited the Chinese Nationalist Government rights in China and in British territory." The CIA, of course, was back of all this, and General [William J.] Donovan and [Thomas G. Corcoran] "Tommy the Cork," and other big shots came to London and we did our very best to influence the British Government. We talked endless hours with the Foreign Office, I sat in these conferences and took notes on them.

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And so we hired a man named Harold Monckton -- I forget how to spell his name -- who had been the attorney general under the Conservative Government, to act for us, to try to persuade the British to accept the transfer of these aircraft out of the hands of the Chinese Communists. We weren't successful, but we were able to delay a definite decision until 1952 when the Labor Government was voted out and the Conservatives came back in, and then we got the former attorney general for the Labor Government to act for us, Hartley [Lord] Shawcross. Shawcross was a hell of a good lawyer, and he pounded the table and won the case for the United States. So, the aircraft never did get in the hands of the Chinese Communists. And, of course, this was quite important because the Korean war was on and a whole batch of aircraft might have done a hell of a lot of damage to the cause of the United States forces in Korea. And one of the funny things about it, which always made me laugh, was every

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time I'd go to the Foreign Office they would say, "Of course you know this has nothing to do with politics. This decision is a legal decision and a legal decision only. We would never, never be interested politically in a legal decision." And, of course, I was very much impressed. But to have these two famous lawyers handle the case, the Conservative lawyer handle it for us when the Labor Government was in power, and the Labor lawyer after the Conservatives replaced the Laborite. And I can remember one quote by Mrs. Kenneth Younger (the wife of the then number two in the Foreign Office), saying to Monckton as he left for Hong Kong to look after this case, "Don't you dare let these Fascist beasts (the Chinese Nationalists) get the aircraft." No politics involved:

MCKINZIE: I take it such a project as that would take a great deal of your time?

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RINGWALT: Oh, gosh yes. Almost daily going over to the Foreign Office, and then Donovan's lawyers from his office in New York would come to see me about once every other week trying to take more vigorous action, and pound more tables in the Foreign Office. Oh, it took half a day for weeks just handling this one case.

MCKINZIE: And you never saw the planes at all?

RINGWALT: I never saw the planes. Anyhow, the planes never got to the Chinese Communists either. Whatever happened to them I don't know. I think that Chennault took them over after the war.

MCKINZIE: Thank you.

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