

Oral History Interview

with

JOHN WESLEY JONES

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Flat Rock, North Carolina
June 8, 1974

by Richard D. McKinzie, Harry S. Truman Library

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MCKINZIE: Mr. Ambassador, I think many historians, present and future, are very interested in why people go into the Foreign Service. I understand you went in in 1930, and I'd be interested to know why.

JONES: Well, I was born and grew up in a midwestern town, Sioux City, Iowa, where very little was known about the Foreign Service. But there happened to be two people in my youth who in-

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fluenced me in making a decision for the Foreign Service. One was the Registrar of Central High School, Sioux City, Iowa; she had been a clerk in our Embassy in Paris during the First World War. She took a fancy to me, thought I would be good in the Foreign Service and talked to me about it when I was a junior or senior in high school. Then there was a neighbor and friend of my aunt's, Fred Knepper, who had been a vice-consul in Beirut and came back to Sioux City. This too inspired me. I would go to call on him from time to time and talk to him about the Service and his experiences.

So, in this relatively remote area from foreign affairs, there were two people in my youth who gave me the idea, and when I left high school and went to college I already knew that I wanted to pursue a Foreign Service

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academic course. I went to a small Methodist college in Sioux City for two years, and then I persuaded my father to send me to George Washington University in Washington, D.C., for my last two years, where I was sure they knew something about the Foreign Service--because in Sioux City, Iowa, very few did. And I graduated in 1930 from G.W., took the examinations the same summer, and, by the grace of God, passed them. So, I went directly from the University into the Foreign Service and fortunately (or unfortunately) have had no other experience other than that in the Foreign Service.

MCKINZIE: Did you think that as a result of your first assignments, those assignments you had through the 1930s, the depression years, that you had made a good decision? Did you like it as much as you thought you would? Sometimes

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people have a view of things before they get into it that's rather different than that they experience afterwards.

JONES: Yes, I think from the beginning I was happy and satisfied with the choice. I must say that Calcutta was a cultural shock, and when I look back on it, it was probably one of the most difficult periods of adjustment; I think probably I grew up and became an adult during the years that I was in Calcutta. I was very homesick at the beginning, and one must remember that in the early Thirties there was no airplane travel on a regular commercial basis, so that all mail went by ship. And it took 30 days for a letter to come from my family to Calcutta and then, of course, another 30 days for my reply to get back to the Middle West. So, there was indeed an isolation from everything that I had known, and I

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was still in my early twenties. I think I had my 25th birthday in Calcutta. India, then and now, is so very different culturally and climatically that it was, for me, a difficult adjustment, but I made it. And I think, once I got through Calcutta, including living there for three years with no illnesses whatsoever, that I was sure that I had made the right choice in a career.

MCKINZIE: By the time the Second World War began, had you developed any particular interest in any place in the world? Did you consider yourself, at that point, any kind of an area specialist, or did you keep a kind of broader Foreign Service outlook on things? Did you have a desire, for example, to spend some time in Europe, since you did in fact spend a great deal of time in Europe?

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JONES: When I first got into the Foreign Service we were all generalists, and specialization was very rare indeed. A few people like "Chip" [Charles E.] Bohlen and Eddie [Edward, Jr.] Page decided at an early date that they wanted to specialize in Russian affairs. A few people decided they wanted to be China language officers, and so they went to Peking to the language school. But specialization was something that no one ever talked to me about, and it was not something that was generally considered to be part of a Foreign Service officer's career unless there were special reasons that he wanted to do so. So I, like most of my colleagues, was completely at the mercy of the Director of Personnel and Board of the Foreign Service in Washington. And since they too had a generalist philosophy, we were available for service anyplace in the

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world. I never asked for anything except French-speaking posts, because I had studied French four years in high school and four years in college. While I always asked for a French-speaking post, I never got one. That's the only thing I ever did ask for.

MCKINZIE: Could you speak briefly about your assignments during World War II?

JONES: Well, I was in Rome at the time of the declaration of war by England on Germany, 1939, and then I was still there when Italy declared war on France and England in June of 1940. I was transferred out in the spring of 1941, back to Washington to be an assistant on the Italian Desk in the State Department. And I was in Washington at the time that Pearl Harbor occurred and at the time the Italian Government and the German Government declared

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war on the United States, on the 11th of December. So, the war years, as far as I was concerned, were spent in Washington. I had the Italian Desk and also the Vatican Desk. Myron Taylor was the President's special representative, and he left an assistant, Harold Tittman, in the Vatican during those years that we were at war with Italy. And the Vatican very kindly made their telegraphic and diplomatic pouch services available to the members of the diplomatic corps that were inside Vatican City, including the British Ambassador and the American Charge d' Affaires. So, we did get messages from the U.S. representative at the Vatican all during those years that we were at war with Italy.

And then I went, just after the war in Europe was over and just before the war in the Far East was won, back to Italy. So I was

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in Italy at the time of V.J. Day.

MCKINZIE: When you talk about postwar Italy and postwar Italian-American relations, it seems to me that really it's appropriate to start not in 1945 but sometime a little earlier, because there was a great deal of postwar planning going on in the State Department. Did you have anything to do with the future of American-Italian relations? The victory over Italy was anticipated (not talked a lot about I'm sure, but anticipated) at a fairly early date, and there were plans being made for the postwar world. I wonder if you recall any of those discussions or if your work involved any of that postwar planning?

JONES: As I remember [Benito] Mussolini was arrested and [Pietro] Badoglio formed a new government in the autumn of 1943. The King

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went to Brindisi, and the Italian Government became a cobelligerent with us against Germany. From that point on, our planning took the form of considering Italy "on the side of the angels" and thinking about what we could do, once the war was ended, to make Italy a constructive and positive and democratic force within Europe. So, almost within days or weeks, we stopped considering Italy as an enemy and began considering her as a friend, a potential Ally, and a future constructive force in Europe. And that meant planning plebiscites for the form of government that Italy would have, consideration of what we could do economically to help Italy in the future, and finally what would be done about the Italian colonies. And this planning went on certainly in 1944 and continued on up until V.E. Day, the 8th of May in 1945. Then, of course, it was continued on until the time

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of the Paris Conference in 1946, when there finally was a peace treaty signed with all of the former belligerents except Germany and Japan.

MCKINZIE: There was in the State Department a remarkable group of men at that time. Will Clayton seemed to have been inspirational to a lot of them, and they, at least those concerned about things economic, seemed to have kind of a vision of a better world after the war. It wouldn't be like the world before; the vision was one of greater integration of economies, if not of political units. The postwar world would be one of interdependence, and Clayton argued a lot that prosperity, stability, peace, and the rest of it was all tied up in that kind of engineered interdependence at the end of the war. Do you recall that as being a prevalent guiding principle? Did you share

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it, and were you concerned about things economic at all as you did your work?

JONES: Well, that's a good question. We had an economic officer in the Western European Office-- or Southern European it was in those days--Jack [Jacques] Reinstein who worked very closely with Mr. Clayton. Jack was in constant communication and touch with me, but he really did the economic work for all of us. It was only later on, that the question of aid programs for Italy became a possibility (I must say, going back to the middle of the war, that no one had ever thought about large aid programs for Italy; all we were thinking about was winning the war and getting it over with.) But Reinstein did do most of the economic work and economic planning. Later on when the aid programs came into being, then, as a political officer back in Rome, I was certainly very

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much involved, as this was terribly important, politically, to help Italy get back on its feet. But in terms of "one Europe," the sort of thing that eventually evolved out of the Coal and Steel Community, that was more of a Western Europe or Northern Europe concept. I don't remember any planning during the war years in Washington that would have involved Italy, particularly, in an overall European economic plan; other than the general hope that Italy would come back into the concert of European nations as a constructive and helpful and democratic force. But I should also say, going back and thinking about those years, that we were more forgiving, more forthcoming, and more positive in our efforts to help the Italians get back on the "side of the angels" than our principal ally, Great Britain. The British were always reluctant to be generous or helpful

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to the Italians in the early days. They were always a few steps behind. And this was particularly true of their military, who felt very strongly about the position of the Italians and their contribution to the war against the British, their contribution to the Germans, their assistance to the Germans, their stab in the back of France at the time the British were still trying to help the French. So, while we had, really from the very beginning, once the Italians switched sides, what I consider a very positive and proper policy toward Italy, trying to help her back to a respectable position in Europe, the British were not so forthcoming. So, we always had constant negotiations with the British before we could ever do anything through the Allied Commission, which was set up in Italy as the military forces progressed north, to be of real help and assistance to the

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Italian Government.

MCKINZIE: Did you have anything to do with the other angle, the Soviet Union, and its desire to have more to do with the Allied Commission and with the nature of a postwar Italy? Was that handled at another level or were you aware of the problem of the Soviet Union?

JONES: Oh, very much, very much. I remember when [Palmiro] Togliatti was allowed to come back into Italy from Moscow. He had a pseudonym something like "Ercole," which meant "Hercules" in Italian. That was the very first I ever heard of him, but one of the political experts in our Western European office, Ray Murphy, said, "That's bad news; that fellow is a giant. He's one of the most astute Italian Communists, and when he gets back on the political scene we're going to have some

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problems."

And, of course, "Ercole" came back, took his original Italian name of Togliatti, and with Nenni, the Socialist, and De Gasperi, the Christian Democrat, formed the original provisional government; the Prime Minister was Bonomi, I think. The Lieutenant General, Prince Umberto, the King's son, was still the nominal sovereign. And so these three representatives of the three parties, the Socialists, the Communists, and the Christian Democrats, ran the government until sometime in '46 or '47, when De Gasperi decided to form a minority government of his own and exclude the Communists and the Socialists. And then eventually there were the elections, I think, in 1948, general elections, which De Gasperi won in an overwhelming majority. He was able to form a majority government. So, I was very

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much aware of the Soviet problem. This was, I suppose, the beginning (although we didn't call it that until Mr. [Winston] Churchill's famous speech at Fulton) of the cold war. I'm not sure that we were obviously aware of it in that sense or what it meant, but we were indeed concerned about full scale participation of the Communists in a government in Italy. Of course, there was no way to deny it. It was part of our war policy and part of our postwar policy, at the beginning, to include the Soviet Union, to work with them, to give them every opportunity to be a constructive force. So, we had a Russian [Andrei] Vishinsky, on the Allied Commission in Italy. And he was, of course, very careful to assure that the Communist party in Italy was able to participate politically on a free and open basis; and we all agreed with this. This

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was part of our policy, that any political force in Italy should have an opportunity to participate. But it was indeed a concern from the time that Togliatti came back in 1944 to the time there was a formation of a provisional government.

MCKINZIE: Did you have anything to do with the problem of refugees, which was considerable as soon as the liberation of Italy took place? A lot of people began to race behind allied lines as the troops moved forward, and it became a diplomatic as well as a military problem.

JONES: There was an agency called UNRRA [United Nations Relief and Recovery Agency]. My recollection is that it had our principal support for handling of the refugee problem. We had some Americans on it; I think that's

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where Harlan Cleveland started out. That's where I first met him, I think, when he was with UNRRA, yes.

MCKINZIE: But, so far as you recall, it was not a major concern of your desk?

JONES: Not of my job, either at the Italian Desk, or, later, when I became political adviser to Admiral Stone on the Allied Commission, in Rome.

MCKINZIE: Was there concern in your office about the immediate problems of the Italian people upon the fall of the Mussolini government? There was a terrible problem of food, for example, and the problem of the disruption of services as the Allied armies moved up the peninsula, which can create political problems.

JONES: Of course.

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MCKINZIE: Did you recall dealing with any of those?

JONES: Yes. There was a very efficient soldier, General John Hilldring, who, in the Defense Department, was head of the Civil Affairs Division of Military Government. And this was my introduction to civil affairs and military government. I was a regular participant in the meetings, mostly, I think, in the Defense Department (if that is what it was called in those days) or in the State Department with General Hilldring presiding. Very often, James Clement Dunn (Political Adviser to the Secretary of State) would go when it required some high level decisions. But when it wasn't necessary for Jimmy [Dunn] to go, I would always go to represent the State Department when the discussion was about Italy. And, of course, it was terribly important, because

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we hadn't yet gotten into Germany, so that Italy was sort of the guinea pig (in military government) as they moved up. And more and more people both soldiers and civilians, joined the Civil Affairs Division and went abroad. As a matter of fact, just the other day I had a visit here from an old friend, Mason Hammond, who is now a classics professor at Harvard University and who had joined the Civil Affairs group and moved up the Italian peninsula in uniform. I think his primary interest was the preservation of the art objects that were found as we went up, to preserve them, to identify them to assure, to the extent it was possible that they be preserved for Italy and for the civilized world. We were very much involved in this. This was a constant concern, after the Allied troops started moving up and liberating Italy from south to north.

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MCKINZIE: Well, in the case of Germany, there was a very large concern over what someone called the four Ds, democratization, de-Nazification, de-industrialization, de-militarization. They held that very strongly for a long time in Germany, but obviously not for long in Italy, particularly the political aspect of it. They were trying to make very sure that Germany was somehow going to be Democratic in the future. Do you have any speculative thought about why that didn't seem to be such a problem with the Italians?

JONES: Well, for one thing, I think the external political position of the government of Italy was different than that of Germany. The Italians had already officially come over to our side; they had been accepted by co-belligerents. The King and Badoglio were already in the south of Italy, so that as the

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Allies moved up the new government of Italy was ostensibly there in representation. The Italians who came forward were almost all the Italians who were still loyal to the King and who could accept Badoglio as the Prime Minister and, later, the provisional government in Rome. Those who had been the supporters of Mussolini and who were known Fascists had either gone underground, had been killed, or were refugees in Germany or Austria. So, I think the Italians had a government of their own to be loyal to, once the Allies passed over. The Germans didn't have; if they were loyal to anything, they were still loyal to Hitler's government in Berlin.

MCKINZIE: To what extent did your division of the State Department anticipate the dictation of Italian forms, Italian institutions? Was, so far as you could tell, the State Department

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willing to let the King's government work out its own devices? I know that there was some push on various subjects, but how strong was it felt, so far as you were concerned, that the reconstitution of Italy should be reconstituted along prescribed lines?

JONES: We had made various pledges, through overt statements, I think, by the President and certainly by the Secretaries of State, that the Italian people would be given the opportunity to choose in a democratic way their form of government. We insisted on this, and we insisted on waiting until Italy was not only completely liberated but also had had an opportunity to settle down from the immediate shock of the postwar to a point where it could make this decision in an intelligent way. And so, a constituent assembly was formed to draw up a new constitution. While this was in

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progress, we felt it desirable and necessary that the government which we had recognized--headed by the Lieutenant General (which we would call a regent) acting on behalf of the old King and the provisional government which he appointed, representing the major political forces there--should continue to act as the Italian Government until the new constitution was drawn up and there could be a plebiscite for the Italians to vote on what was called the "institutional question." The "institutional question" meant the institutions of government, meaning, a monarchy or a republic? I think that vote finally came in 1946, and the vote was something like 12 million to 10 million in favor of a republic. Umberto, then King, abdicated almost immediately, and De Gasperi became the provisional president until they could elect the first president under the new Republic, who, I think, was Enrico de Nicola.

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MCKINZIE: Now, in the case of Japan, General MacArthur's influence was huge: Japanese land reform, educational reform. Was there an analogous influence in Italy?

JONES: No, I don't think so. There was pressure to have the plebiscite held earlier, under the auspices of the commanding victorious armies. And we resisted that until the provisional government had settled down, until Italy was completely tranquil, and until the constituent assembly had already met and begun its work. I think we were very, very careful. By that time I was back in Italy, and while I'm sure we all had different views whether Italy would be better off as a new Republic or better off under an old Monarchy, we were very, very careful to use no influence whatsoever on the institutional question or on how it would come out. It was close, relatively,

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12 to 10 million. I remember I was as surprised as I think most other people in the Embassy; we didn't really know how it was going to come out. And I think it was a completely free vote left to the Italians at that time. So, I don't think there was anything analogous, any overwhelming U.S. influence or power that was moving the Italians in one way or another. Except, obviously, it was understood by the Italians, who are very astute, that they were not going to return to a Fascist, totalitarian form of government. But then, of course, they didn't want to anyway, so that wasn't ever really a question.

MCKINZIE: When the fighting stopped in Europe, you were still in Washington. What occasioned your transfer from a desk job in Washington to the Embassy in Rome? Was that something you requested or were you simply assigned that?

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JONES: Well, we had a general rule in those days that a Foreign Service officer could not or would not spend more than four years, give or take a few months, in the Department. Since he was a Foreign Service officer, it was necessary for him to spend more time abroad than in Washington. So, my four years were up, and there were various assignments suggested for me. One of them, one time, was that I go to Brussels, where there was going to be an opening. The other one was Rome, and I was obviously a natural. I'd been there before, I'd been doing the work on Italy right straight through, and the State Department seemed to think that I would bring a certain amount of strength to Ambassador [Alexander] Kirk's staff if I went back. Red [Walter C.] Dowling, who later became Ambassador to Germany, was working for Kirk in

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Rome in those days and was the U.S. political advisor to Admiral Stone, the chairman of the Allied Commission in Italy. And what they did was just make a switch. It was time for Red to come home and time for me to go abroad. So, Red Dowling came back from Rome to take over the job in Southern European Affairs, and I went to Rome to take his place as head of the political section (first secretary) and American political adviser to Admiral Stone (chairman of the Allied Commission).

MCKINZIE: This occurred in late June of 1945?

JONES: 1945, that's right. I'd gotten there (Washington) in the spring or summer of 1941, so it was four years.

MCKINZIE: At that time, when the war in Europe was over and it hadn't ended in Japan, you were still really operating under wartime conditions--

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except that there was some talk about bringing the troops home and all that kind of thing. I understand you went on a troop ship, took your family. Obviously, families hadn't been going with Foreign Service officers to Europe very long by that point. You must have been among the first to arrive with your family.

JONES: Yes, I was among the first to arrive. As a matter of fact, the then Ambassador, Alexander Kirk, was not very happy at the prospect of an officer coming over with a wife with two children and expecting a third very shortly after arrival. So, he wrote and suggested that I leave my wife and children at home. Wartime America was not a very easy place for a woman with two small children, and expecting a third, to make out by herself. My wife, who had been in the Foreign Service ever since we were first married, knew exactly what she was facing,

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and was also a very strong-minded woman, said, "No, indeed," she was not going to be left behind; she was going with me. So I wrote back and told the Ambassador that I appreciated his good advice but that I thought that my wife would really be better served, better off, and better taken care of if she went with me than if she was left behind in the United States.

We were assigned a place on a troop transport ship which was sailing from Norfolk, Virginia, to Naples, and we made the move to a base camp at Norfolk from Alexandria in the middle or late part of June. As we were going aboard the transport I was, I must confess, very uneasy indeed, because my wife's pregnancy was obvious, and we had been told that there were certain regulations against women who were more than five months pregnant traveling on a troop transport. So, until we got to the

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gangplank, I didn't know what the decision was going to be. But we walked up the gangplank, no one made any reference to my wife's condition, and we were shown to our cabin with great relief. And as soon as they saw that we had a 22 month old child with us, the ship's carpenter went to work and before we sailed had constructed a baby bed in our cabin for her.

It turned out later that there were two Army doctors on board who were, in private life, obstetricians, and they were delighted to have an active, live case on their hands and really, secretly hoped, I think, that my wife would produce on the ship so that they could get back to their old practice. So, we were really very well treated and arrived in Naples without any difficulty. I think the ship's carpenter also made a highchair for our 22 month old daughter. And when we arrived in

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Italy we were met and driven by Embassy car up to Rome, put in the Grand Hotel, which was requisitioned by the Allied military authorities, and remained there, in two rooms, until we were finally able to find a private dwelling.

MCKINZIE: What was Rome like in 1945 in July?

JONES: Well, all of the beautiful things that we'd remembered about it, the parks, the flowers, were gone. On the Via Veneto, which was such a beautiful street, all the flower beds, of course, were turned into parking lots, and I have a kind of recollection of Army jeeps and Army trucks parked almost every place where we had remembered flowers, shrubbery, and grass. It was grim, it was an occupied city, with all the Italians really looking very seedy, very un-chic, and very un-Italian.

MCKINZIE: What were the kinds of problems that you

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encountered when you took over your duties in the Embassy? What did the first secretary have to worry about, do you recall? One thing I know that Italy was concerned with was its dollar reserves, which were practically nonexistent in those days.

JONES: Well, as I remember, one of the early things was our effort to have the Italian armistice surrender terms turned into a kind of a provisional peace agreement. We felt, because the Italians had collaborated with us during the last part of the European war and since there was a provisional Italian Government which we recognized and dealt with, that we should permit, through the terms of a new instrument, this government to have the authority and the power rather than the Allied Commission, with the French, Russians, British, and Americans on it, continuing to run the country from a military

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government standpoint. The British, at first, were reluctant to go along with this and did not feel that any new step forward needed to be taken. And the Russians also opposed it. I must confess that I'm rather vague on this point. I don't remember whether we ever did get a provisional peace before the final peace treaty was worked out in Paris in 1946. I think we didn't; I think we weren't successful in this. But this was one of the things that Ambassador Kirk felt very strongly about, that we should move away from the terms of surrender to something that would give the Italians greater authority within their own country and get us out of the day to day business of Italian domestic affairs.

MCKINZIE: One thing I did want to ask your perceptions of in that early period, was whether or not there was any change in the thinking about Italian

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colonies. President Roosevelt was famous or notorious, for his anti-colonial beliefs, and some historians have taken the position that President Truman was not quite so committed to "loosing" colonies from their former mother country. Did you note any change in thinking about the place of the Italian colonies in the future, between the time Roosevelt died and the time of the peace conference in 1946? Was it a hot issue, as far as you were concerned?

JONES: Well, as I remember, the issue of whether the colonies would continue to be colonies (Italian colonies or colonies of some other power) or whether they would be given their freedom and independence, was, as far as we were concerned in Washington, never in discussion. It seems to me that we all agreed that they would not continue as Italian colonies. This just seemed to be a perfectly normal thing, that

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a country which had lost a war was not going to be permitted to keep colonies. Now, what would happen to them after they left Italian hands was indeed a question that was raised by various friends and Allies.

As I remember, the Russians wanted to have a mandate over Libya, and I believe Ethiopia claimed Somalia. So, the question of the future of these colonies was a sort of thing that was indeed debated. But as I remember, the trend normally was--and also the side that I always came down on in the Italian Desk and in the Western European Division--that the colonies should be given an opportunity to become independent countries.

MCKINZIE: What percent of your time while you were in Rome before the peace conference, was consumed with the Italian border question?

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JONES: Oh, well, before I left Washington there was the problem of Yugoslav military advancement really changing the frontiers of that part of Europe, moving forward and moving on Trieste. Because we (in the Southern European Division) had the Italian interests, our position was that this was part of Italy and that the frontier should be decided at the peace table and not decided by force. And, of course, the Yugoslavs moved in with their forces, stayed, took over parts of Venezia Giulia and the Istrian peninsula, and moved up to the borders of Trieste itself, which was still occupied by Allied military. A great deal of time was taken on this particular issue, and this went on eventually to a final treaty between Yugoslavia and Italy, in which Trieste was made a free city and the Yugoslavs kept a great deal. And this was also discussed

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at great length at the Paris Conference.

MCKINZIE: In fact, there was a special commission sent out.

JONES: Yes.

MCKINZIE: But it was an issue, I take it, that the Italians felt very emotionally about.

JONES: Yes, and I must say that some of us who were dealing in Italian affairs also began to feel rather emotionally about it. We were outraged at the Yugoslavs, walking in and changing European frontier lines by force, which in fact is what they did. They moved in just as quickly as they could, occupied these places, and then claimed that this really belonged to Yugoslavia; and they used to talk about the return of these lands to Yugoslavia. Well, of course, they never belonged to Yugoslavia;

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they never were part of Yugoslavia. If they belonged to anybody before, they belonged to the Austro-Hungarian empire, which the Italians got after the First World War.

I always felt that the Yugoslavs' position was, well, neo-imperialistic. They took over by force something that I didn't feel belonged to them. Now, they might eventually have gotten it, in an ultimate peace treaty, but I think the fact that they were there on the ground with their forces gave them, obviously, a much better position when the final lines were drawn.

MCKINZIE: I mentioned earlier what some historians are now writing about as a kind of division of the postwar world in which Will Clayton played an important part, among other people. The view, at least during the war, was that it would take about two years for reconstruction

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to occur, after which, if integration should accompany reconstruction, there would be a kind of upward spiral of living standards and security. That didn't occur, and, in fact, some reports have it that things got, for a lot of Italians, worse, at least certainly not much better, between mid-1945 and 1947. Did you note in your dealings any kind of growing desperation or frustration? What about your perception of the Italian spirit and the Italian faith in the future in 1945 and 1946? The point I'm trying to get at is, Will Clayton went to Geneva, I think, in March of 1947, and came back aghast, thinking that the whole of Europe was about to collapse. Did you perceive a growing crisis?

JONES: Oh yes, very much. It was one of the considerable concerns of the new Ambassador, James Clement Dunn, when he came, and it was a

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constant concern of De Gasperi. De Gasperi did come to the United States in 1946, I think, fairly early, as sort of a gesture on the part of the President and Secretary of State to the new Italian Government, a democratic Italian Government. And from that time on (I remember it back in Rome, too), he was constantly worried about the economic problems, the lack of reserves, the lack of stability of the lira, the desperate need for assistance in loans and capital to get Italy started again. And, of course, part of this preoccupation was that if he (De Gasperi) failed, Nenni and Togliatti were waiting in the wings, one Socialist and the other Communist.

And so knowing the reluctance of Washington to see Italy become a Soviet satellite and to be taken over by Togliatti and his Socialist friends under Nenni's leadership, De Gasperi

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always referred to this problem: how he, as a Christian Democrat and as a non-Marxist, could keep Italy going with the terrible lack of reserves and the terrible problem they were having with their currency and with their finances. And one of the things that eventually happened was, that the lira really did go through the wringer and there was a devaluation; I can't remember what the value of the old lira was, but it went to about 600 to the dollar, which is more or less where it has stayed ever since. It was stabilized at that point. Of course, the Italian problem was just one of a mosaic of problems in Western Europe, which is what brought the Secretary of State, General [George C.] Marshall, to make his famous speech at Harvard and which is what brought the [Christian A.] Herter committee (congressional) to Europe in the summer of '47.

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From it was formed a subcommittee which spent three weeks in Italy, going from one end of the country to the other to see whether or not Italy really needed vast financial assistance, and if it got it, whether it could appropriately use it. I was assigned by the Ambassador (James C. Dunn) to accompany this Herter subcommittee throughout Italy for three weeks, and one of the members that I got to know very well was Richard Nixon, who was a junior Congressman from California and the most junior member of that subcommittee. I was nearer Nixon's age than that of the other men on the committee, so we became good friends at that time and it's lasted through all these years.

But this was the outgrowth of the desperate financial situation, not just of Italy, but of all of Europe. And, of course, the Italians eventually benefited from the Marshall Plan,

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too, but before that the situation was desperate.

MCKINZIE: What were you in the position to say to the Italians with whom you had to deal in 1945 and 1946 when they mentioned their plight to you? The State Department had not yet formed a policy of massive relief; there was some UNRRA aid, I think, and some specialized thing. But what can you do, when you simply hear tales of woe like that over and over again, except receive them?

JONES: Well, I don't remember that we gave our Italian friends much encouragement, but I'm sure that the Ambassador told De Gasperi that he was constantly reporting to Washington and keeping Washington informed, not only of De Gasperi's requests, but also of the really serious plight of the Italian economy and the Italian lira.

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MCKINZIE: The State Department, according to some reports I've seen produced in the State Department, really did feel--or at least some people at the Assistant Secretary level felt--that if something didn't happen in 1947, De Gaspari was in fact going to lose. Did you believe that?

JONES: Yes, I think so, I think so. Actually, the policy toward Italy of giving it some assistance started back, really, before the the end of the war in Europe. I think Alexander Kirk (first postwar Ambassador to Italy) should be given a lot of credit for what I consider a positive policy toward Italy, one which I, as the Italian Desk Officer in those days, entirely shared. If the Italians were going to become a constructive force in Europe, a democratic force, they needed some help to get back on their own feet. One of

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Kirk's phrases was that we had to stop treating Italy "as a kept woman;" and give her enough assistance to become honest, honorable, and respectable again and able to go forward on her own. This, of course, would mean massive injections of capital and loans. So, even back in 1945 before the war was over, and then all during the time that Kirk was Ambassador, and later when Jimmy Dunn (who had been the Political Adviser to the Secretary and very much informed on Italian affairs back in Washington) came to Rome, this continued to be the U.S. policy, even though funds were certainly not available and perhaps not even visible.

MCKINZIE: I wonder if you recall any more about the Herter committee in the summer of 1947, because that was critical to the passage really of the Marshall plan legislation. I have the distinct

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impression that the Herter committee was one committee which couldn't be charged with junketing, that they really did work, and they came back and produced a massive report. What kinds of people did they want to see?

JONES: Oh, I'm afraid I'm not prepared to answer that question this morning. I would have to go back and do a little research and a little reading to refresh my memory. The subcommittee for Italy was headed by a Congressman named Morgan from Ohio as I remember. And it had on it Congressman [George] Mahon, Congressman [Olin] Teague, also from Texas, then one or two other members of Congress who are now no longer active and whose names I don't recall; and, of course, Richard Nixon, as the most junior member of the committee, from California. And I traveled with them. We went to Naples; of course, we spent a lot of

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time in and around Rome; we went to Milano; we went to Trieste, primarily, I think, because of the political problems that were involved in the future of Trieste. I must confess that I do not remember enough about the schedule and the program to be able to tell you whom they saw, whom they talked to, what the schedule of their calls was, other than it was quite a complete coverage of important areas of Italy.

MCKINZIE: Well, once in a while, when a congressional committee undertakes some sort of an investigation, they don't get to maybe the people they should get to. Did you have the feeling, when they left, that they had as good a feeling that they could get via that kind of tour of the country? Do you think those people had an appreciation of the situation?

JONES: Yes, I think so. I think I was satisfied and

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I think the Ambassador was satisfied that they had gotten full exposure. As I remember, at the end Christian Herter came to Rome and spent the last two or three days with the subcommittee there in Italy, so he himself got a feeling for the place; that was the first time I ever met him.

MCKINZIE: Well, of course, they went back, and by early 1948 they had passed the Economic Assistance Act and the Marshall Plan was under way. Did you have any dealings with the Italians as they began to create what we would call "country needs," as they began to form the OEEC? Were you at all involved in those kinds of things where they had to draw up a list of their future requirements and how those requirements would fit with those of the rest of Europe?

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JONES: No, I remember that before I left Italy in mid-1948 we already had (whatever he was called in those days) a kind of aid administrator on a temporary basis. I think it was probably in anticipation of the Marshall Plan, but before any of the funds and appropriations had actually begun to flow. In terms of Italian participation and what they put forward, I would see and talk to them, but, as I remember, that subject was handled primarily by the economic section of the Embassy; Newbold Walmsley was the Economic Counselor of the Embassy in those days.

MCKINZIE: And it wasn't a matter that was of prime importance to the political section?

JONES: Well, I think we were always kept informed and advised and would be able to comment but, as I remember, the economic section of the

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Embassy handled the prospective aid program and the Italian requirements.

MCKINZIE: One thing I'd like to go back to just a minute, because so many historians now are quibbling over this, is whether the nature of the Communist threat was as real as some people perceived it to be. Marshall Schulman of Harvard and a number of other historians have said simply that when a lot of Americans looked at Italian communism, they saw it as Soviet Marxist communism when in fact it was a kind of home grown variety. An Italian who called himself a Communist wasn't always the ally of Moscow, and some Americans misread it. Now, is that unfair "Monday morning quarterbacking" on the part of those people? Dean Acheson even addressed himself to this in his book, Present at the Creation, and sort of wrote it off very quickly, but he acknowledges

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that it is a live question, whether or not the Communist threat was over-played in Italy and France. Do you have any reaction to that? Obviously, you think it was real.

JONES: Yes, indeed, I do think it was real and I do have a reaction to it. My political experience as a young officer in the Foreign Service was very much formulated during the early part of the cold war, and so I do feel, from my own personal experience, that the threat of the Italian Communist Party was a real one and a serious one, and that it was, indeed, an extension of Moscow. Togliatti had spent all of his period of exile in Russia, in Moscow, and he came from Moscow back to Rome. He was the giant, the leader and the complete dictator of the Italian Communist Party, and all of the people that he had as his lieutenants, such as Luige Longo and others, were entirely subservient

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to the Moscow line. And of course, in the early days, Vishinsky was still sitting on the Allied Commission and had an equal voice and an equal vote along with the British, the French, and the Americans. So, they (Togliatti et al.) not only had the support of the new Communist groups and cells that had formed in Italy after the liberation, but they also had, and knew that they had, the constant support on anything that they suggested or wanted of the Soviet delegation on the Allied Commission. They did not really want to see De Gasperi, Bonomi, and the party governments succeed in getting Italy back on its feet and getting the country started back again on what they considered a capitalistic, imperialistic, free enterprise kind of a system which would have been more responsive to Washington, to London, and to Paris than it would have been to Moscow.

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So, I think that during the time that the Communists were in the government in Italy, not only was everything that went on known immediately to the Soviet delegation and to Moscow, if they were interested, but also there was a lot of foot dragging on their part in cooperating and collaborating with whoever was the Prime Minister and in getting the country and its motors started again, back on the road to economic recovery as a Western European state.

MCKINZIE: One other thing that has come under some dispute, after the fact, is the assessment of the situation by President Truman in the spring of 1947, in his Truman Doctrine speech requesting aid for Greece and Turkey. He said that poverty created the soil in which the seeds of totalitarian government grew and that the answer to totalitarian government threat was the end of poverty, but you

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really didn't end the communism in Italy as a result of that. The dispute is more complex, in the sense that there are people who argue that even if there had been no Communist threat, the Marshall Plan and the reconstruction programs, would have been necessary because of American economic imperatives, markets in raw materials and the rest of it. Did you perceive that a raise in the standard of living was the answer to Italy's problems-- that is, not its economic problems but its political problem, its Communist problem-- or was there another way to have dealt with that? Was the Marshall Plan required primarily for anti-Communist purposes, was the Marshall Plan required primarily for Italy's economic stability, or are these inseparable?

JONES: Your question is a good one, and I'm trying to think how to answer it. I think that

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we had as a primary objective a stable world, but primarily a stable Europe. I think that we felt that we, with our form of government and our form of economics and our system, could not thrive at our best or thrive well in a world that was in constant chaos and flux and instability. So, we were primarily interested in reestablishing a stable Europe, and obviously the way we knew how to do it was to reestablish the economy within the framework of a free enterprise system.

Now, I'm sure that you can get an argument from people who believe that a Socialist form of government is a better society for people than the Capitalist system, the free enterprise system. I happen to believe in the latter, and so therefore, that seemed to be the normal and logical way to reestablish the stability of Europe, by pouring in great quantities of capital so that its industrial

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wheels, it's overall economy could recuperate and come to the point that it would, as Kirk used to say, "no longer be a kept woman." It would be something so successful that we could terminate our Marshall Plan and Europe would eventually stand on its own. And now we complain about the overwhelming competitiveness of Western Europe. I take a great deal of satisfaction in that, because I think it merely proves that our postwar policy was correct and that our policy succeeded perhaps better than we would have liked it to. So, I think it was done for stability, and certainly part of this was the belief that, with a stable Europe, no nation would ever voluntarily and willingly vote in a Communist government; also that Western Europe would be strong enough not to be a temptation to the countries in Eastern Europe to move in, by force, and

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try to take it over.

MCKINZIE: You weren't in Italy then at the time that that mechanism was in operation, the ECA. How in the world does one get transferred from Rome to Nanking?

JONES: Well, that's a good question. I think I know what was happening and what was in the minds of the authorities in the Department that made the move. One reason was that there was a move among my friends, half joking--half serious, "to get Johnny Jones the hell out of Italy." I had been in Italy off and on since 1935, either physically there or as the Italian Desk officer back in Washington. And, in a sense, that is really too long. This was a kind of a specialization, which you asked me about earlier, that just happened without any planning, but it's the kind of thing that, in any specialization,

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you need to have a little change and a little relief from. I think that was one reason.

The other reason was the increasing Communist threat in China from the forces of Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai in the north and the apparent blind-spot on the part of many old China hands who these new Communists really were. Were they really Marxist-Leninists, or were they just, to use the old cliché, "agrarian reformers?" And so it was decided that it would be useful to have somebody who didn't know anything about China, but who did know something about the Communist threat in Europe, move into the political section (of the U.S. Embassy at Nanking) and bring a fresh look and a fresh viewpoint to the Chinese situation. And so, I think that would be the official reason given, that they brought a European specialist who had lived through the war and the beginning of the cold war in Italy and had seen successful

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elections held there--successful from the standpoint of the West--to bring his knowledge and experience to bear on the China scene. And so I was sent out there and put in charge of the political section, with a lot of very astute and capable "old China hands" on my staff and in other parts of the Nanking Embassy.

MCKINZIE: Were you able to take, in 1948, a four year old and a six year old child with you to Nanking?

JONES: Yes. As a matter of fact, my wife and I were really terribly innocent about China. I don't think I really had any idea how imminent the fall of Peking was, or subsequently the fall of Nanking. We took everything with us; all of our furniture, all of our silverware, all of our china, all of my wife's wedding

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presents, and, of course, the three children. And I can remember, we lived in an Embassy compound, in one of the houses, and some American neighbors, who had been in China quite a long while, came by, soon after our arrival, to call on us. They asked, "What are you doing?"

We said, "Oh, we're putting up our curtains and pictures."

And they said, "Putting them up! We're taking ours down!"

I think this was the first chill, the first hint that my family life in China was rather insecure. In fact, within three months the Ambassador (Leighton Stuart) made the decision to order all wives and children of officers of the Embassy out into safe haven, or refuge, in the Philippines. So, my wife and children were in Nanking less than three

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months and were evacuated with the other wives and children in December 1948. I stayed on with the other officers and the Ambassador until the following September when a great portion of us were evacuated. By that time, of course, Nanking had been taken by the Communists, Shanghai had been taken and the Communists were pressing down on Canton.

MCKINZIE: What kind of assessment of the situation did you have when you first arrived, and what could you do with your assessment? I'm trying to get at the whole messy business of the China service at that time, in which there was a great deal of division among the old China hands.

JONES: Well, I like to think that I brought some kind of a balance to the assessment there. I was not a Chinese language officer, obviously, and so I could not read Chinese directly, but

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we did have a very good press service in which I got regular translations of the daily press and of major speeches. And very shortly, within the first two or three weeks, I realized that what was coming out of the mouths of people like Liu Shao-Chi, who was then an important Chinese Communist leader and a spokesman for Mao, could very well have been said by Togliatti in Italy the month before or during the period that I was stationed in Italy. I saw a great similarity in the kind of doctrinaire statements, the kind of Marxist philosophy, the kind of rhetoric that was so familiar from the European Communists coming out of the mouths of the Chinese Communists-- of course, in Chinese. And so my own assessment of them was that they were indeed Marxist-Leninists, that they were indeed closely related and tied to Moscow, and that this would merely be an extension of Communist power and authority

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if these people came on down the mainland. So, therefore, I was one of those who continued to hope for--insist on--aid to the Nationalist Government of Chiang Kai-shek.

Now, on the other side, I think all of the members of the Embassy staff who were old China hands--and I exclude the Ambassador in this; the younger officers, my colleagues and my peers, who were old China hands--were all disillusioned with Chiang Kai-shek; disillusioned with the Nationalist Government; and, in fact, constantly critical and rather bitter about him and his government. And I found this rather shocking, because if you are accredited to a government, my sort of traditional upbringing had been that you give them the benefit of the doubt. If they are your allies in the war, you do what you can to help them and you don't constantly criticize them and perhaps undercut them in your reports to Washington.

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However, I think I was one of only two or three other voices that tried to take a more dispassionate view of this thing and who kept warning about the danger of the Chinese Communists in the north, what their philosophy and what their conquest could mean to the United States if indeed they did take over the entire mainland.

MCKINZIE: Then, is it fair to say that the corollary to that assessment would be the recommendation for increased support of Chiang Kai-shek and less insistence upon liberalization of his own government and all of those kinds of strings that were apparently attached to support talks or aid talks with him? Quite frankly, in this recent book written by Merle Miller, in which he alleges to have talked to President Truman in 1961 or '62, President Truman called Chiang Kai-shek and his family and Madame Chiang and her family crooks. Apparently, he was convinced

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at some point that that was the case and that money which went to the China effort really didn't get into the China effort but into the hands of those two families, that they siphoned off a great deal of it. I'm sure you must have heard that kind of talk in 1948 and 1949. How did you respond?

JONES: Well, how much of the funds actually went into the Soong family or went into the Chiang Kai-shek family, I don't really know. I do not think that this was a serious problem in terms of winning or losing the war. I think the serious problem was an inability, militarily, to make the right decisions and to make the proper defense of the country, plus an apathy and a loss of confidence on the part of the Chinese people themselves, as the Nationalist forces started withdrawing and moving south. I don't think that the Chinese really cared

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very much whether the Communists came in and took over or whether Chiang Kai-shek stayed on. I don't think there was any emotional or ideological fervor on the part of the Chinese people. They just wanted to be left alone, and their loyalty to one government or another was not obvious or apparent. So, therefore, there wasn't a popular base really that the Nationalist Government could hold on to, could count on and could depend on.

MCKINZIE: Is this something for which Chiang Kai-shek can legitimately be faulted, that is, for not developing that popular base, or is that simply the imposition of an American idea upon the Chinese situation?

JONES: I think a little bit of both. I think our conception of a democratic and popular base is probably one that the Chinese had never

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had. I also think that Chiang Kai-shek can indeed be faulted for not having broadened the base of his government and of his party and making a more popular kind of a democratic regime out of it while he had a chance. I'm not a China expert, as you can see from my record, but there are so many extenuating circumstances for Chiang Kai-shek. He first had the Japanese in occupation; then he had the war against Japan; as soon as that was over he had the Russians moving into Manchuria; and he had the rebel Communists in the North. So, he really was never, for a period of years and years, able to settle down in any kind of a peaceful situation; to run a government in the sense of stable, normal conditions. China was never stable and never normal during all of those years. So, while he obviously was unsuccessful (and the fact that he's in Formosa

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is evidence of it), I think there were many, many extenuating circumstances. And I think the policy of the United States Government to try and help him, as an ally that had stood by us during the war, to settle down and establish some kind of stability in the country was a correct one. However, as history has proven, the Communists were better organized, had a better military apparatus, and were able to capture the immediate support and the loyalty of the people as they moved down and took over the Mainland.

MCKINZIE: Would you care to comment on the nature of the diplomatic service in China? It was different, somehow, from the diplomatic service in other places, because you had a lot of people who were born in China and who came into the State Department, and you had these old China hands (nobody talks about an old

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Italian hand very much). You already alluded to the position very many of them took on this deterioration in the situation. As you well know, a lot of people were terribly badly burned in the middle 1950s with the [Joseph] McCarthy era as a result of their positions that they took in Chinese affairs. When you look back on all that, do you have any thoughts about how it could have or should have been straightened out?

JONES: Well, given our own experience during the war and in the immediate postwar period and given the strong ideological position of the Chinese Communists, I'm not sure that any different course could have been followed and that there would have been a very different outcome.

We were very much aware and very much concerned about the countries in Eastern Europe

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under the hegemony of the Soviet Union, very much aware that the various agreements, promises, and prospects for Europe had not been fulfilled by the Soviet Union with respect to the countries in Eastern Europe. We were determined to try to keep those nations which were free, free and this, of course, was reflected in the original [George] Kennan philosophy: the policy of "containment," in its simplest terms. And so, when we saw what might be happening to China, that this same kind of totalitarian, closed, anti-Capitalist, anti-Western philosophy and policy might be extended by force, little by little, down through the entire Mainland--with all the repercussions that this would have on Japan, on the Philippines, on Indo-China, and on Indonesia--it became a major policy concern and objective to prevent this from happening. Now, whether it could have been prevented

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in a way that we didn't try, I don't know; I doubt it. One of the ways that it could have been prevented, perhaps, ~~was~~ to have had our Vietnam War much earlier; poured our troops into Southern China, defended China on the banks of the Yangtze River, and maybe have ended up with two Chinas, North and South-- as we have in Korea, as we have in Germany, as we have in Vietnam. However, I think that would have been unrealistic, because we had just gotten the boys home from World War II and the American public was in no mood or temper to send troops abroad again at that particular time in our history. The other way would have been to have taken over control of the Government of Nationalist China ourselves, put in people that we thought were more effective, and sent Chiang off into comfortable exile in Southern California, perhaps. I don't think

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that was practical either. Obviously, he (our choice) would have been a puppet and couldn't have done any more and probably much less than Chiang Kai-shek did.

The other possibility would have been to try to make some kind of an accommodation with the new Communist force, accept it, help it, and let it take over, without assistance, the entire Mainland (which is what happened anyway). I think, given the philosophy and policy of our Government at a time when there was general American concern over the expansion of the Soviet Communist system around the world, that this was politically, completely impossible in the United States. Also, I think that it would have been counter and contrary to our own best interest to have helped or even only acquiesced in the Communists taking over the Mainland, rather than leaving it to them to do.

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Finally, I'd just like to make one more point. If you go back to the origins of this government, October 1949 was when Mao Tse-tung announced the establishment of the People's Republic of China. As I remember, we did not receive the usual normal note from this new government saying that it was prepared to assume all previous international obligations undertaken by previous governments. As I remember in his speech in Peking at that time, Mao attacked the United States and gave full credit for winning of the war in the Pacific to the Soviet Union. Now, this was the nature of our relations in those days. They were 180° apart, and I don't really think that very much could have been done by us in any different way, even if we had been willing, as the British did, in what I consider was a very undignified way, to recognize the new Government

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in Peking and try to establish a Mission in Peking. I don't think that Chinese relations with us would have been very much better during those years, than they have been.

And as a final footnote, I think the reason that we now have some kind of an understanding with Peking and with the Chinese People's Republic is because, after almost twenty years, they decided they wanted improved relations with us, and when they wanted them we were ready. And they wanted them for reasons which didn't have anything to do with loving us, but for reasons that had to do with their relations with their neighbor to the west, the Soviet Union. It suddenly became in the best interest of the People's Republic of China to have at least a tolerant power across the Pacific and not a hostile one. So, they made the first move and we responded.

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Well, this is a very simplistic view, but this is a view, I think, that perhaps ought to be reflected in all this.

So, I think that it could not have been avoided--those twenty years of Chinese isolation. And actually, we lost nothing by it. I don't think that the United States as a world power, or even our economy, was particularly adversely affected by our stalemated relations with the Soviet Union or our non-existent relations with the People's Republic of China during all those years. And when they were ready for it, we established some kind of relationship.

MCKINZIE: One proposal that you didn't address yourself directly to was the proposal of some members of the so-called China lobby that things could have been different had there been an equivalent to the Marshall Plan for China. At the time the

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Marshall Plan was passed in Europe there was a great howl on the part of some people that there was no equivalent program passed for the Far East, and especially for Chiang Kai-shek's China. By the time you got there in 1948 was that kind of a laughable thing, to talk about a massive economical development program as a way to save the situation? Did you hear people talking about it by 1948 when you got there, or had that period already passed?

JONES: During the time that I was there we had a visit from someone in the aid program, ECA, from Washington and one of the things that was discussed was the possibility of extending our aid program to the Chinese Communists in the North. There were certain members of the Embassy, mostly the old China hands, who thought that this was an appropriate way to proceed, and there were others of us, mostly

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of European extraction, who were very much opposed to it. General Marshall, the Secretary of State, offered his plan to Eastern Europe and to the Soviet Union, and it was turned down, rejected. So, I suppose that this had something to do with the conditioning of our own views. But also, for anyone who was a product of the cold war in Europe, as I was when I went to China, to even consider pouring out the U.S. taxpayers' money to assist Communists, who were bent on taking over the whole country and establishing a Communist authoritarian regime, was beyond the pale. It was discussed. Two or three of us were opposed to it, and there were others who were in favor of it. In the final analysis, the decision was made in Washington that there would be no aid to Peking.

MCKINZIE: To what extent do you think the field was

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influential in determining the course of diplomacy in 1948 and 1949? There were divisions in Washington as well as there were in the field. I'm sure it's not unique just being in China in 1948-49; I suppose you always wonder how much influence you have when you are in the field. But did you think that, because of the divisions among the Foreign Service people, there was less field influence in Nanking than there had been when you were in Rome? Is that irrelevant?

JONES: No, no. I think that's a good question. I must confess that I never thought of it before, and this is just an off-the-top-of-my-head reaction. I would think that, because of the divisions within the Embassy, which were certainly known in Washington, the recommendations, policy-wise, of the Embassy in Nanking were probably less effective and less influential

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than the recommendations of the Embassy in Rome were. I think everybody in the Rome Embassy was in agreement that the democratic forces in the government, as long as they were there, should be helped, and that Italy should be helped on its way toward a normal economic development in the democratic sense which we understood democracy in the West. So, my guess is that while the Nanking Embassy's telegrams were read and given very close consideration, decisions on China were based more on the thinking in the Department--and, of course, many of them, I'm sure, with a very heavy input of domestic policy considerations.

MCKINZIE: You were there until September of 1949.

That was just a month before the end, in a sense. How did life change for you? You mentioned your family had been sent back to the Philippines. Was there any perceptable change

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in the way things happened? Were you able to get out of the Embassy compound at all?

JONES: I believe it was in January '49 that the Nationalist Government decided that it would move to Canton. The Ambassador recommended to the Department, and it was accepted, that he send his Minister Counselor, Lewis Clark, to Canton with half the Embassy, and that he would stay in Nanking with the other half of the Embassy to see what happened and be there if the Communists did cross the Yangtze, occupy Nanking, and move on down south. I was instructed to stay with the Ambassador in Nanking. Livingston Merchant, who was the other Counselor, was told not to get caught in Nanking but, before the Communists moved in, to go to Taipei, to Taiwan. I must confess in retrospect that this was a very intelligent scheme of the Department. They had the Ambassador and one

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Counselor at Nanking; they had the Minister Counselor and half the Embassy staff in Canton, near the Government of Chiang Kai-shek; and another Counselor, the economic Counselor, in Taiwan, at Taipei. And this is actually how things were in April of 1949, when the Communists crossed the Yangtze and moved into Nanking.

There was a very uncomfortable period of about twenty-four hours after the final Nationalist authorities--the mayor and the police and everybody else in authority--withdrew and went south. The Communists were still on the other side of the Yangtze, or just crossing it, and had not yet occupied Nanking. So, there was a period when we were all on our own in the Embassy compound, with no authority of law and order representing the host government. And I never thought that I would live to see the day, but I must confess that I was rather

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relieved and happy to see Communist troops marching into Nanking and taking over. They put an end to the looting. They put an end to the burning. Many of the houses of the Nationalist officials who had fled during the night were, all the next day, looted by the local populace, and then some of the public buildings were set fire and burned. So, there was a kind of a ghastly twenty-four hours when nobody was in charge, until the Communists finally moved in. Of course, they did very promptly restore law and order. We were confined to our residential compounds for the first few weeks, and then I was allowed to go to the Embassy chancery, which was a mile or so away from my residence. And as long as I stayed in my car and didn't try to walk, I was allowed to go back and forth to work.

We were also allowed to continue to use our cipher and our telegraphic communications with

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Washington. We, of course, had no pouch privileges. We were unable to get diplomatic correspondence out, so that all of our contact with Washington was through wireless, through radio operation.

MCKINZIE: What could you do, except report the situation as best you could?

JONES: Not very much. We did report what we could observe. There was a period when (and I think this is being published just now in United States Foreign Relations for 1949, which haven't yet been released but which I believe are in the process of being published) the Ambassador did have some contact with the new political commissar for Nanking whose name was Huang Hua who, by coincidence, happens to be the current Peking representative at the United Nations. He was the political representative of the Chinese

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Communists in Nanking when it was first taken. He had been a student of the American Ambassador, Dr. [John] Leighton Stuart, when Dr. Stuart was president of Yen Ch'ing University in Peking. When Dr. Stuart expressed, through contacts, an interest in seeing him and talking to him, he said he would not go to the Embassy to talk to the American Ambassador, but that he would go to see his old teacher, Dr. Leighton Stuart. And so, they had a series of informal conversations, I think at the Ambassador's Residence, not at the chancery. So, there was contact between us and the Communists and there was a discussion back and forth of political matters. I ran the Embassy, went to the chancery every day and did whatever was necessary to keep a group of American officials and Chinese employees carrying on the normal day-to-day activities. Dr. Stuart remained in the

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Ambassador's Residence, and that's where he carried on these conversations with Huang Hua. I was not present at these conversations; since I was not a China language officer, my presence would have been useless. Dr. Stuart was born in China of missionary parents, so that he spoke Chinese as well as English. He was accompanied by his Chinese secretary, Philip Fugh, who was always present at these conversations. And, of course, these conversations were reported by the Ambassador to the Department. But it was a period actually of marking time, to see whether or not it would be possible to do business with, establish any kind of a relationship with, the new government at Peking on a normal basis. And, in the final analysis, it was decided that it wasn't feasible, that it wasn't practical. Also, a great deal of our time in the chancery was involved in trying to protect and eventually evacuate American Consuls

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who were caught in areas of the fighting between Communist and Nationalist forces including for example, Mukden; I think Angus Ward was the U.S. consul in Mukden. I'm a little bit vague about my Chinese cities now, but in almost all of the important cities we had a consul with a staff, and there was a problem of getting them out safely. And very often, when these areas were occupied by the Communists, they considered our people sort of political prisoners. They were confined to their houses, and it was very difficult to get into communication with them and very difficult to get them safe conduct passes out of the country. So, a lot of our time was taken up with normal protection work of American officials and American citizens who were caught behind the lines, or who, in the area ahead, were trying to make arrangements to get out before the

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Communists arrived and have what was left behind of U.S. property protected in some way by a neutral power.

Then there were regular meetings of the diplomatic corps in Nanking to discuss problems of mutual interest: the French Ambassador, the British Ambassador, the Italian Ambassador, and all the diplomats who were instructed by their governments to stay behind in Nanking while the Communists took over and pushed on down south. I've forgotten who the dean of the diplomatic corps was; I think it was the French Ambassador. On a regular basis, every week, there would be a meeting of all the Ambassadors (or, if the Ambassadors couldn't go, representatives of each Embassy) to discuss problems of mutual interest. Mostly, this group was composed of representatives of countries with which we were allied or had close friendly relations such as

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the Italians, the Canadians, the British, and the French.

MCKINZIE: By that time, were you anxious to get out?

JONES: Well, our governments had wanted us to stay. But by September most of the governments decided that there was no point in keeping competent and highly salaried Ambassadors and Minister Counselors in Nanking, where they had no relations with the government in occupation of the city and when there were no immediate plans to establish such relations. If they were going to establish relations, as the British did, then, of course, the staff would go to Peking and not stay in Nanking, since Nanking, by that time, was not the capital of anything.

So, the French Ambassador, the Canadian Ambassador, the British Charge d'Affaires,

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the Italian Ambassador and I (by that time the American Ambassador had left China so I was in charge of the Embassy in Nanking) in September of 1949 all went out on an evacuation ship sent to Shanghai by the United States Government with the concurrence of the other governments and the Communist authorities. I think it was called the S.S. General Gordon; we were given safe conduct by train from Nanking, boarded the ship in Shanghai, and sailed for Hong Kong.

MCKINZIE: . Did you leave a detachment to close things down?

JONES: Yes. The Embassy had been cut in half in January of '49. What was left of it in September of '49 was again cut in half. So, I suppose there were five officers or so left behind with the terrible problem of having to terminate the services, eventually, of the Chinese

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employees who had been loyal and who had worked for us all during this time, giving them appropriate severance pay.

MCKINZIE: Did you get home leave after that terrible experience or did you go immediately to Madrid?

JONES: I went immediately to Madrid. By this time my wife and children had moved back to Rome, where, by extraordinary circumstance, my father-in-law happened to be living at that time, as a representative of IT&T. So, she went back there and stayed with her parents until I got out of China.

I came home for some consultations; she went from Rome with the children directly to Madrid; and I went from Washington to Madrid. My plane got into Madrid about an hour before hers did, so I just stayed at the airport and

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waited for her and the children to arrive from Rome. And then we started a new life together again.

MCKINZIE: Well, Spain must have seemed a remarkably peaceful life after what you had been through in the first part of the postwar years.

JONES: After China, it seemed like paradise. And I don't mean this in an uncomplimentary way to China, but for an officer in China--separated from his family, behind the lines of a force which was hostile to the government to which he was accredited; with no real status, diplomatic or official, as far as the local authorities were concerned--it was an exciting and dramatic time, but not a very happy or pleasant time. It was one full of uncertainties and doubts, both personal and professional.

So, Spain was a paradise. When I got there

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we had a Charge d'Affaires in Madrid, because there was a general ban, among the victorious powers, on the [Francisco] Franco Government and on establishing full diplomatic relations with him or permitting his government to enter the United Nations. So, I was sent as number two to the Charge d'Affaires in Madrid and head of the political section, again. But within a year President Truman, along with the chiefs of state of other Western powers, decided to establish full diplomatic relations with Madrid, and our first Ambassador, since before the war, arrived. Stanton Griffis came as that Ambassador and I moved up to be the Deputy Chief of Mission (Counselor of Embassy). Stanton Griffis left within a year and was replaced by Lincoln MacVeagh, who had been our Ambassador in Portugal. When General Eisenhower was elected and President Truman's term came to

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an end, Mr. MacVeagh resigned from the Foreign Service and a new Ambassador (James C. Dunn) was appointed by the new President.

I think the most interesting thing about my Spanish experience was that it occurred during the period, almost from the beginning (1950) to the end (1953) of my tour, in which we were involved in negotiating the agreements with Spain for U.S. military facilities, both air and naval. The negotiations were long and drawn out, complicated by Spain's position in relationship to the rest of Europe; complicated by Spain's long period of isolation, not only from Europe but also from the United States, and complicated, I think, by a certain political reluctance in the United States to have any dealings with the Spanish Government, particularly anything which would enhance or strengthen the prestige and financial position of the Govern-

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ment of Franco. The negotiations were indeed long and drawn out. They started in 1950 with the visit of Admiral [Forrest] Sherman, continued on through the Embassies of Stanton Griffis and Lincoln MacVeagh, and finally concluded with that of Ambassador Dunn. And by coincidence, the day that I sailed from Gibraltar, at the end of my Spanish tour to go back to the Department of State for another job, in September 1953, that was the day the Base Agreements were signed in Madrid between the Spanish and the American Governments. So, I can best say that, in the period of my service in Spain, the most important thing that we did was negotiate with the Spaniards the Base Agreements.

MCKINZIE: Could I ask if the Spanish showed any particular pique at some of those points you just mentioned, particularly the reluctance of

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the United States to do very much that was going to enhance the final situation of Spain vis-a-vis the rest of Europe, the insistence on treating Spain as a kind of outsider in European affairs. Did you sense any Spanish hurt, or a feeling that they ought not to be treated that way? Were they in a position to do that?

JONES: Well, no. I think the Spaniards were, indeed, very sensitive about their isolation and their treatment after the war by the victorious Allies. But I think they also felt that, of all the victorious Allies, the United States was the one nation with which they had the best possibility to reestablish a normal relationship and, through us, perhaps with the rest of the Western World. And so they saw this as a political as well as an economic advantage, because, of course, to grant base facilities

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meant economic assistance, which they desperately needed and which has indeed been very helpful to them. From the political standpoint, of course, it also meant that they were accepted and brought back into the Western World on the basis of equality. So, it was important to them, but they were tough negotiators. I didn't do the negotiating; the Ambassador did the negotiating. During the interims between Stanton Griffis and Lincoln MacVeagh and, particularly, between Lincoln MacVeagh and Jimmy Dunn (who was the new Ambassador appointed under the Eisenhower administration), there was very little activity in the negotiating field. The Spaniards quite rightly knew that there was no point in wasting their time negotiating with the Charge d'Affaires, who would be unable to commit himself or his government until the new Ambassador came, particularly with the new administration in

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Washington which was taking over in 1953. So, the serious negotiations were almost all carried on by the Ambassador, whoever he might have been at the time. And looking back on it, I think that probably I underestimated the ability, strength, stubbornness, and pride of the Spaniards in negotiating with us, because they did indeed stick to many of their points. And I think they got quite a good agreement in terms of economic assistance and recognition when the thing was finally signed in September of 1953.

MCKINZIE: Quite often, when Congressmen talked about Spain, they tended to put Spain on one side and Yugoslavia on the other. Whenever there would be a proposal to include Yugoslavia, someone would insist that would be possible only if Spain were included. And Spain came close as you know, a number of times to being invited

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to take part in wider European affairs than they did. No one said at one point, you know, I think that it even came up that Spain should be a proponent of NATO. How did the Spanish react to such talk as that in the United States?

JONES: Oh, I think the Spaniards would have liked it. I think they would like to have been included in NATO, and I think they would like to have been invited to the United States, for example; a State visit by General Franco. And whenever a suggestion was made, by those interested in our policy with Eastern Europe, that [Marshal Josip Broz] Tito should be invited to come on an official visit to the United States, the Western European Bureau of the State Department would always say, "only in the same year that General Franco is invited to come to Washington." And that almost always effectively terminated any

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further discussion of an official visit by Tito. In later years, since I have been uninvolved in European affairs, there has been a State visit to Washington of President Tito, but there also has been a "Presidential Visit" of the pretender to the Spanish throne, Prince Juan Carlos. So, I suppose that was a continuation of the balancing act.

Perhaps this is only a footnote on the question of the Spanish succession, but when I was in Spain, in addition to the negotiations on the Base Agreement (which was very serious indeed), among other political reporting that we did was the constant question of what might happen to Spain when General Franco died. When I think of how preoccupied we were in the Madrid Embassy and how many dispatches we wrote in 1950, '51, '52, and '53 on that subject, and here I am, talking to you in 1974, and General

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Franco is still going strong! Obviously we wasted an awful lot of time and effort and ink in those days on what would happen to Spain when Franco died.

MCKINZIE: Thank you very much, Mr. Ambassador.

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