

**Interview with Rep. Silvio Conte (R-MA)**

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“It’s a terrible thing to say, but he (Otto Passman [D-LA, chairman of Foreign Operations Subcommittee]) hates me with a passion. That’s because he’s a demagogue and he hates anybody who disagrees with him.”

What can he do? “I’ve been able to build up the State Department’s case much better this year. And to get my oar in—pretty good, too. But I’ve had to wait till some pretty unreasonable hours to do it. Once I’ve gotten the floor though, I’ve been able to make a good case. I’ve been given all the time I want. Sometimes I’ve been the only person there.... He’s all powerful. He’s got all the power. In the hearings, I have to wait sometimes nine or ten hours for a chance; and he hopes I’ll get tired and go home. He wouldn’t think of taking me on a trip with him when goes to hold hearings. Last year, when he went to the NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] countries, he wouldn’t give me a nudge there. And in the hearings when I’m questioning witnesses he’ll keep butting in so that my case won’t appear to be too rosy. Now that’s not the same in all hearings. On Treasury-Post Office the chairman [J. Vaughn Gary, D-VA] is a very fine man, and we get along very well.”

Re minority report on Mutual Security Bill—he, John Taber (R-NY), ranking Appropriations member, Gerald Ford (R-MI), John Rhodes (R-AZ): “It’s the first one I’ve seen since I’ve been here. Last year, I guess I told you, I tried to write one, but I got talked out of it. They said it was very unusual. I engineered this one and got the executive branch to put some pressure on. John Taber went along reluctantly and agreed to do it. I don’t say it was that easy. I didn’t go up to him and say, ‘Mr. Taber, let’s do it.’ He would have laughed me off as a freshman. It took weeks and a lot of pressure from the executive branch to do it. We’ve had a lot of comment on it, too. The debate has gone very well. I don’t know whether we’ll get the votes, but so far, it’s gone very well.”

“I tried to file additional views, too, but got caught with my pants down. I wanted to file additional views on the Indus River Project and the contingency fund, but I got knocked down by the Chairman on a technicality. That’s the way you get to be a good congressman—by getting your knuckles rapped. Next time, I’ll know. The technicality was that John Taber had got up and asked for till midnight to file a minority report. And this request was construed to mean a minority report en bloc without any additional views. You can’t argue with [Appropriations Chairman Clarence] Cannon [D-MO]—he wrote the book.”