

nuclear officers liked him, or did they fear him and wanted to get ahead and saw that was where the future of submarines was going to go or...

Z. There was no doubt in my mind that it was the ladder. For example, I put down the other day on a little piece of paper that when Admiral Holliway was a Captain going through the Rickover thing, getting ready to be Skipper of the Enterprise and his prospective Exec., now Rear Admiral Forest Peterson was with him, Rickover was in to see Paul Nitze one day and he began to talk to him about how superior his system was and how he encouraged the adversary relationship and didn't stomp out ideas and that sort of thing, and he said "I'll send a couple of guys over to talk to you and give you a feel for the way I run this and I won't even be with them." So, a couple of days later Admiral Holliway called me and said (then Captain Holliway) he would like to come over and pay his respects on the Secretary - Admiral Rickover wanted him and Forest Peterson to do so - they went in and I sat down with them as they gave this party line to Paul Nitze. Then Jimmy Holliway, who was my classmate at the Naval Academy and at the National War College said to me, "Be sure the Secretary knows we were told what to say," and I did. But Rickover said when they got back, "Did you tell them what I told you to tell them," and if they had "no" they would have been out of the program. So they lived by the code that it took to survive and also to get the truth across to the Secretary indirectly.

? Where do you suppose that leaves Holliday with Rickover right now?

Z. I think Rickover will win.

S. The trouble is....

? Do you think Holliday going to

Z. No.

S. No. I mean I'm going to leave shortly so I don't feel that I'm speaking...

I just don't think Admiral Holliday is ready for Rickover. He's a very, very nice man and I respect him and I think he's a good officer...

Z. He's a man of integrity and he's bright and he's got a very real appreciation of what's possible. I took Rickover on hammer and tong and Rickover won. We got some things done, he didn't as much as he wanted, but basically he won more than he lost.

S. You just can't fight him because he's been there longer, you can never underestimate that. It takes you, what would you say, a year to figure out where it all flows and you just don't have time.

Z. And in taking him on, you see, you make a significant contribution to boiling the waters because Rickover is in there feeding it, not only with publisher Kolb, but also with the Congress.

S. You have to figure your cost - your gain versus what...for instance, Burke's

description was he finally gave up because he was told in essence, "Either you go along with your submarine thing or we're not going to give you anything."

? Congress told him.

S. Yeah.

Z. Now they're saying that with regard to anything that goes with the Carrier, you see. This whole Carrier It 's just disastrous what he's done to the Navy under the name of nuclear propulsion. He's a typical fanatic, you know, he's Mohammed slaying...

S. Practically is, it's whole new war....

Z. to convert them to Mohammedism.

S. That's the point. When you begin to look at this thing, that's why I say the key lies in his childhood, you are engaged in a Holy war in which the symbolic pawns of the game happen to be the Navy and various kinds of ships and ship programs, but has nothing to do with that. It has to do with what drives this man. He just settled on the Navy, more to the Navy's woe, as his battleground but had he settled on insurance it would have been the same thing. It's not that again, I've been told by nuclear physicists that he's not the great - he's not even a great engineer and certainly his academic background doesn't demonstrate that he was particularly so/outstanding, although that's no criteria.

Z. He's a P. T. Barnum, a great showman.

- S. But he, you cannot believe no matter how obsequious you think a man can become in Congressional testimony, Rickover is more obsequious. I give you one example: this, I think, is the classic of all times. He was testifying before Mahave and he begins his testimony by saying, "I want to say before I begin that it has been a pleasure all these years to testify before this Committee and especially to speak with gentlemen who used the language so well. I know, Mr. Chairman, that you must have been an English Professor at some point." He knows damn well, he's got the whole man's biography, you know, he's worked it all out, and he knows he knows - you know what I'm driving at..
- Z. Does he really speak like an English Professor?
- S. Of course not. So he then says, "No, Admiral, you must be mistaken, my only exposure to English literature came as a poor farm boy on the farm when I was milking the cows my mother would read to me from the Everyman's library, and Rickover responds, "I cannot believe it. I find that impossible to believe. You must at some time have been a Professor of English. No man could speak with the articulateness and the fluent and cogent thoughts that you express." It's incredible and they all know the game is going on, you see, but it looks so marvelous for a Congressman that they just laugh it up. I can't tell whether they believe it or whether they don't believe it but he has...

Tape 33 - Part 6

- ? They believe it's a good thing to do....
- S. Right. I mean he practically grovels.
- Z. It's great reading to send to their constituents.
- R. Right. He just grovels and yet...
- ? How does this sort of a semi-redneck them
- Z. He used to be intelligent, he getting senile.
- S. I think he's getting senile. I've talked with him several times in the not too distant past, and I think he's getting senile. I don't think he's getting senile as much as I think he's becoming even more obsessional than he was in the past, to a point where heit clouds
- Z. You're talking about Rickover, we were talking about Mahon
- S. Oh, Oh, well I think he's a little senile too, but I really think that Rickover has gotten to a point now where he is obsessed with his empire and he is willing to sacrifice the Navy in order to advance. I really think in the beginning it was a mute point but now, even tho it is a debatable point, it is pretty clear that the building of evermore and more expensive nuclear ships at the expense of everything else, just as you pointed out, creating serious problems and yet that doesn't slow him down one width.
- ? That's the moral that you shouldn't let anybody stay in their job that long!

Z. Yes. Whether he's a leader of a nation or the leader of an institution.

? Of course the other variance might be the let everybody else to stay on the job that long, too.

Z. Of course, not everybody who stays that long is that bad.

? Or that effective.

S. Oh, here was the point that , for instance, was a classic. This was a meeting that was held and the impression that the staffer who told this was that Nitze felt moved to meet with Chairman Seberg, indicating his awareness of Rickover's line of power through the Atomic Energy Commission and the bizzarred fence of Rickover that Seberg was willing to adopt (I have to find that on another thing where that was) here's another indication of Rickover's power with men who were obstinantly his superiors. He manipulates Congress the same way. It is also worth noting that Seberg apparently thought Rickover so powerful that Nitze had to come to negotiate as a subordinate and that Nitze had to openly dissuade him (Seberg) from this point of view. Even the Congress assumes that the Secretary of the Navy comes as a form of subordinate and you have to dissuade them from thinking that.

? What does Dixie Lee Ray think about Rickover?

S. I don't know. I haven't talked with her. Oh, that's another thing

Rickover has done. In an attempt to block what I'm doing, and I'm sure that now that he's with it he going to do the same thing with you, he had great masses of files transferred over from the Navy to the Navy , because they come under the Atomic Energy Secret's Act and I can't get at those. You have to have incredible clearances and needs to know and all kinds of things and Rickover is one of the people who passes on whether you need to know. So that all of the records, for instance the NR-1, he had transferred over to his other hat so nobody can at them without the expressed - you probably could, I guess, but I certainly can't - permission of the AEC because they come under....the whole nuclear power field because the way the original legislation was written is a life of its own and all the standard clearances and all that sort of thing just don't mean anything. You just can't get at them.

Z. Yes, I remember Paul Nitze having to get Seberg aboard and it was with great reluctance that he finally agreed to, he's a rather passive, milk-toastish man. And, of course, his forecast was right, there couldn't be

? I wonder what was going on with a tiger like Willaims
Was that a Rickover man?

Z. Wasn't he pretty well out of it. Rickover really began to grow in about '53.

?

Z. It's probably a great shame that he didn't come a little later.

? That William might have some reflections tho, it would be worth-
while Steve's time.

S. Yes, I would be interested in looking that up. I'm talking about meetings
which took place sometime in July 1966.

Z. That's interesting, because that was the month I left. We were selected in
May and I believe I was detached on the 1st of July and reported in August '66, so
that would be the second time around.

S. Even when Senator Russell, who came up and agreed that Rickover was arrogant
and difficult and impossible, when they had a meeting which Russell, Jackson and
Rush, they had all agreed that Rickover needed to be censured some way and when the
meeting came and Nitze went over...

? For doing what?

S. Oh, this is all involved with the authorization thing and Rickover giving
the Congress information relative to questions they should ask specifically in-
volving the DLGN's at that time....

Z. They wouldn't have^{been}/turned off by that because Congress their questions
from executive witnesses right and left, you know; they kind of consider this their
prerogative but the point that Nitze made was that it was impossible to govern this
guy and he put it on the basis of civilian versus military authority, and there

the congress has great difficulty shooting down the civilian authority, 'cause that's another one of their platforms. And so when Nitze after great (Nitze was not popular with these fellows, he's not a meeter and greeter, he's intellectual and they're not) and so after great effort Nitze got some support on the Hill for this and, on my watch when I was there - never had this meeting that you describe so it must have been the second time around - learning from Seborg that AEC would stand so for it, and the key men of Congress that they would stand still for it and getting McNamara to go to LBJ, he was ready to fire Rickover when LBJ got the calls that called him off.

? Right. Dirksen, huh?

Z. Dirksen, as I recall, was one.

S. The meeting I was specifically referring to was supposed to have been held with Senator Jackson, Anderson, Pastore, Congressmen Haulifield and Price in Jackson's office, and when they got there the meeting had been transferred and when Nitze walked in to the meeting there was Rickover and John Conway, Executive Director of the Committee, and they were not even supposed to have been present to discuss Rickover's censure and there was Rickover telling them why they couldn't possibly do this and why Nitze had no business holding the meeting.

Z. You couldn't have gotten that my Nitze.

S. No, I didn't get it from Nitze, but I'd be willing to stand on it. It's pretty good stuff.

Z. Because it's hard for me to believe that that gang, with the possible exception of Jackson, who was very close to Nitze, could ever have been brought in the first place to consider a censure...of Rickover. Conway was a strong supporter, Hollifield, Cosmer, Pastore, have always been very pro-Rickover, so I can't believe that they are..

? Anderson was, too, wasn't he?

Z. Anderson was, too, yes.

S. It's absolutely strict stuff. I want to ask Mr. Nitze about it but I don't have anything in here. This is I took this file out of a safe deposit box before I came over here and that's where it'll go when I leave.

Z. If that right? Are you that scared?

S. I'm not afraid. It is not beyond the grounds of probability - that's why I keep nothing in the office. It is not beyond the bounds of probability that Rickover would call up the Security Department and say "I have reason to believe there is a security violation," and there isn't. And I think all the material would be confiscated and I'd never see it again.

? If Rickover tries to break into my house, the dogs will bite him.

S. He wouldn't break into your house, but

? It's getting a little harder to do that sort of thing since they set in the

S. I've talked with a number of people on his staff but I would be very interested in getting his perceptions of specifically of what was going on.

Z. I'll have to see if I can't tie him down to a date here; we both have time to do it now. We never could take that much time on a subject of the past before but he's out and I'm out so we can do it. I think he would be willing to talk if he considers Rickover a dreadful thing for the country.

S. I suspect that. Just as an example, I've talked with staff members - one of whom is the Vice President of a large corporation now - who told me, and over a very pleasant lunch, the reason he took me to lunch was to tell me at the end of the lunch that he was frankly afraid to talk to me. This man is one of the senior Vice Presidents of a major corporation because he knew his job would be in jeopardy.

Z. Is this Jim Dunford?

S. This is a man named Beard.

Z. Chuck Beard. Charles Beard, former under Secretary of the Navy.

S. He told me, now don't, he told me that frankly he would not talk with me because his job would be in jeopardy.

Z. I think that's right that Rickover would try to get him fired.

S. I mean, you know, that how pervasive this thing is. Rickover is like a

malignant force..... things in a Greek tragedy and sometimes I think he's kind of a malignant force.

? What somebody ought to do some scouring research on is what are the defects in the walls of the system that allow this kind of thing to happen. Presumably, there are any number of officials at all levels, in and out of the government, who understand what Rickover is up to and against him. I feel strongly about it and it's not confined to three people in this room or to Paul Nitze and two other fellows...

Z. What they lack is the bureaucratic memory to deal with. It begins, as I dictated in my write-up on Bill Clements, with an approach by others from Rickover to Clements that as soon as the word is out that he's going to be Deputy Secretary, before he's ever announced, Rickover's information comes from all over - Tower was sponsoring Clements, Tower would have been approached, and the odds are very high that someone, not Rickover himself, saying "You'd better talk to Clements about Rickover and have Clements give him a call, Rickover can help him get started," and Clements does and Rickover goes to see him and urges him to select a nuclear propulsion Naval officer to be his Executive Assistant because they're the best management training people in the world. "He'll have nothing to do with me, Mr. Secretary, but/^{he'll give}you the kind of management support you need,"

and that happens. The next step as soon as Clements is aboard is suggesting it is about time for Rickover's extension, it's a year before Rickover's two-year extension is up, but they go to work on that and get it done. By now, this time a year later, Bill Clements has had a belly-full of Rickover but Rickover has two more years to go. It's a whole series of anticipatory, bureaucratic action carried down to a level of detail that make it impossible to grapple with at the policy level. If you could get....

? It's all the same buck. What I'm trying to say is that once you bring it out into the daylight or proclaim all of this loudly enough and often enough as you can, then it begins to owest behind the scenes machinating begins to be very much more difficult and less productive, as indeed with Watergate.. as indeed finally Robert Moses got caught up with because people started after him.

Z. It is, Bob, beginning to be harder and harder for him to operate and more and more members on Capital Hill are turned off by him. But he has some of his old timers who are still mesmerized by him, and some who are afraid to take him on. And, you know, once a guy has praised Rickover every year for twenty years it is pretty hard to turn around and say gee, he's wrong.

S. That's right, and he knows that.

? Even Nelson Rockefeller finally dumped Robert Moses

Z. Yes. Well you see, I think that my chapter in Steve's book will part of that process.

? What you're really saying that/its important to make a big stink about it. I think

Z. That's right.

S. Part of the problem is that, this is one of the areas I'm going to write about it at considerable length, Rickover like Hershey (who I liked, as he did me a great turn when I was a young man) and like Hoover are creations of the first generation. You'd have to have the development of an entirely new science to have another Rickover. You see, when something is starting if you can move in and lock yourself in and put out hooks in every direction, you've got it made. And each of these men did this; I mean, Hershey with the Selective Service, Hoover with the beginning of the FBI, and Rickover with.....nobody knows, you see, what's going to happen and so these guys get in and nobody wants to do it anyway, and they just long wait there and if they're lucky, and either they push their system into being the best or if it turns out to be a viable proposition, then they've got it made, because they get to a place where nobody can replace them because nobody else knows. For instance, Rickover has made a very conscious effort to see that no one ...that he can never be taken out. In fact, that is one of the things that Nitze got involved with, I suspect; studies of how

Rickover could be removed and what they discovered was is that nobody knew without hurting the whole system how to remove him because he had, first of all he had to be succeeded by another Naval officer, he never let another Naval officer be No. 2. What he would do would be to take Commanders or Lieutenant Commanders and make them GS-18's. Now, they would be his creatures but they could never take over from him. So if you removed him, who would you replace him with? ..without having a major defense gap for a long time while someone moved in and took over the reins and all that. I mean you'd have a period of months or longer before anybody really had

? No other Naval officer qualified for .. to sit in that chair?

1. Oh, no, there's lots of others who are qualified but none who would be permitted. The Navy would be delighted; I could give you 5 names right now of people who could go in there and do a better job for the Navy of running Rickover's program, because there would be more reasonable men willing to make the compromises that we've got to have. But you'd have everybody on Capitol Hill shooting at him and the AEC, because of Capitol Hill pressures, saying this guy isn't qualified.

? Supposed Rickover dropped dead tomorrow, which he could do?

2. Then the pressure would go away

S. As long as he's alive, there'll always be.. plus you know he's created this press legend. Rickover knows what makes good copy and he makes a special effort to make good copy; I think the man is brilliant, in fact he's really kind of a mad genius in a very peculiar kind of way. He is not a military man, as I started out to say. He understands better than anybody I've ever met how you manipulate bureaucratic power. Now, other people manipulate it well to other ends but you see he has such a very narrow gauge focus of what he's trying to do that he never makes .

? That makes it easy.

Z. Well, he has another advantage and that like Kissinger he's willing to be amoral. To really use power you've got to be amoral.

? John Hoover, one of the great things he did was set himself limits beyond which he wouldn't go, areas into which he would not meddle, you know. He said, "this is my turf and I'm going to keep this turf but the rest of it is other peoples' turf and I'm not going to mess with it.

S. That's why I say that Rickover is without peer in his manipulation of power. Kissinger, I don't know enough about Kissinger, I just don't have access to any... I would say he is somewhat similar type. Hoover was really kind of like a second string Rickover, because he did limit it and he did have certain moralities. Rickover he just spreads out although first he got involved with the engineering,

then he got involved with personnel, now he's involved by virtue of that he got involved in the economic sector of the United States, education...

Z. Education

S. that was largely driven by his wife. She had things she wanted to say and that's how those 2 books were written. I mean, for instance, plus as Admiral _____ said, you have to have immorality and you also have to have contempt. In fact, even more than immorality...

Z. Sadism might be a better word.

S. Well, sadism, but I think that springs from contempt. For instance, when Rickover was able to maneuver his way to go with Nixon to go to the Soviet Union and then he threatened to create a diplomatic incident if they wouldn't let him below decks on the Leningrad. When he came back, you probably know this story, they asked him if he would brief the Washington Flag officers, so he go into the briefing - and all these first senior types and he was fairly junior in their officer senior types there - and he launched off on disquisition on the flaws in the American educational system and would not allow interrupting until the very end he made a passing reference - did you know sir - just a passing reference to the nuclear program of the Soviet Union and would not answer and got up and walked out. knowing - just to demonstrate contempt - that's a form of sadism