

Dean Rusk Oral History Collection
Rusk 7A: Part 1 of 2
Dean Rusk interviewed by Uri Ra'anan and Richard Rusk
circa 1985

The complete interview also includes Rusk 7B: Part 2.

RA'ANAN: We will have about a two hour session today and we hope a bit more than three hours tomorrow and we will try to cover a number of topics and also a general topic, and perhaps that is something with which we can start. The oral history project is primarily aimed at decision-making, policy-making, policy implementation and so on--not just the structure, not just the alphabet soup, but also the style. And we have done that with a number of former leaders in U.S. [United States] foreign and defense policy. We have also done it with a number of former Soviet officials: defectors. And this has been very useful for us. So, I would really like to start, if we could, with a comparison of the decision-making style of the various administrations with which you have worked and included in that, really, the question: how do major issues reach the decision-making level? How much is done by way of monitoring implementation? We found, for instance, in many of our simulation exercises--and I am afraid they are realistic--everybody is busy writing manifestos. Nobody is really busy following up. Nobody really wants to see what happened thereafter. And we have a feeling that may be real life replicated.

DEAN RUSK: Well, I am delighted to react to questions by the Fletcher School for which I have the highest possible regard. I have two preliminary comments: one is to say that when I left the office of Secretary of State in January 1969, I did not bring away with me official files, papers, documents, materials of that sort. I felt very strongly that official papers belong to the government. The only things I brought away were my appointment books, which are available in the JFK [John Fitzgerald Kennedy] and LBJ [Lyndon Baines Johnson] libraries for anyone who wishes to see them, and the retained copies of my income tax returns. Everything else I left in the Department. Now, the Department did give me upon my departure certain bound files of public materials such as the State Department Bulletin, The Diplomatic Blue Book, and copies of my public speeches and that sort of thing. So I do not have materials with which to refresh my memory. It's been a little more than twenty-five years since I first became Secretary of State and so I have to warn people that the research scholar may have to dig out the sources, the details, the specifics, about some of my recollections. The other comment has to do with a little word of warning to the historian: that when he is using official documents, he is looking only at a part of the story, because these documents are surrounded by a great deal of discussion among the principals and that discussion does not appear in the formal record. And so there is always a certain amount of hazard in deducing from official documents exactly what was in the minds of those who made the decisions. But having made these two remarks, I am at your disposal and will try to respond to your questions as best I can.

RA'ANAN: We have in fact found that in simulation exercises that if you look only at the product which is left at the end, all you have is the finished product. You don't get the way in which it was arrived--

DEAN RUSK: Well, there's another problem too and that is the blizzard of paperwork that is falling in upon the world. I'm told by the historian of the Department of State that the volumes in the series, "The Foreign Relations of the United States," covering my eight years as Secretary of State would run from eighty to a hundred volumes. 2,100,100 cables went out of that department with my name signed on them. So the sheer mass of material presents a problem for the scholar or the historian, those who are trying to do deep analysis.

RA'ANAN: I was struck in your earliest years at the Department by the extraordinary degree of bipartisanship that you were able to bring about in the [Harry S] Truman years particularly by working with Mr. [John Foster] Dulles, and it seemed to me that that was the kind of collaboration--a very intimate exchange which is almost unique. I don't notice that anything of that kind ever happened thereafter.

DEAN RUSK: Well, bipartisanship is very important in the conduct of our foreign relations, because we need to strive for a national policy which will have broad support. Beyond that the Republican and Democratic parties do not really have all that much to say different about foreign policy even though they try to reflect some differences in their party platforms every four years.

But when one thinks about the working relationship between President Truman and Republican Senator Arthur [Hendrick] Vandenberg in the Eightieth Congress or between President [Dwight David] Eisenhower and then Senate Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson during the fifties or between Presidents Kennedy and Johnson and Senator Everett [McKinley] Dirksen of Illinois, the Republican leader of the Senate, it greatly strengthens our relations with other governments to have our foreign policy on as broad a bipartisan basis as possible. To that end, I spent a great deal of time with the Congress. When Henry [Alfred] Kissinger was Secretary of State, he telephoned me one day to say that he had looked at the amount of time that Secretaries of State had spent with the Congress and that I turned out to be the champion. That did not surprise me because I visited with committees and sub-committees of the Congress on hundreds of occasions. Beyond that, I went to their breakfast clubs and I went to any group of senators or congressmen who were willing to invite me, to give me some time.

The problem is that the pressures of time upon senators and congressmen is so great that it isn't easy to get their time, to sit down and talk at some length about foreign policy issues. But I, myself, believe that in the executive branch they should take advantage of any opportunity to discuss these matters with the Congress. The separation of powers doctrine is a very important concept in our Constitution, but the late Chief Justice Earl Warren visited our law school shortly before his death and on that occasion pointed out that if each branch of the Federal government were to pursue its own powers to the end of the trail, our system simply would not function. It would freeze up like an engine without oil. Comity, cooperation among the branches of the Federal government is utterly essential if we are to avoid the impasses which are the principal threat to our constitutional system. So, bipartisanship is an object to be sought. It cannot always be obtained.

For example, during the Truman period, even with the help of Mr. John Foster Dulles, we could not really get bipartisanship on the China question because the Republicans felt they had a strong

issue there and they would not yield that issue to a bipartisan approach. But, broadly speaking, in this post-war period our foreign policy has been bipartisan. Even with Mr. [Ronald Wilson] Reagan if you contrast what he does with what he says, his actions have been pretty close to the mainstream of American foreign policy in this post-war period. So, bipartisanship tends to lose a little of its impact every four years during elections, but that soon passes and tends to be rebuilt. It's something that, given our constitutional system, we ought always to work for.

RA'ANAN: It struck me that what made it a little easier was neither the White House in that period, nor the Congress went into micro-management of affairs. In the (James Earl] Carter (Jr.) Administration we got micro-management from the White House. Even earlier than that, but certainly by now we get micro-management from the Congress, particularly from the House of Representatives where it might be a little bit more easy to understand from the Senate. Does that not take the professionalism, the expertise of the Department of State and of to some degree even of the Department of Defense, and make it much harder to do the purely professional job because so much time is spent warding off this micro-management on both sides? Both from the White House and the White House staff and from the Congress.

DEAN RUSK: There is a growing problem in that respect, but bear in mind that a great deal of American foreign policy is determined by law, statutory law. Now, the first sentence of Article II of the Constitution, which many people ignore, states that the executive power shall be vested in a president of the United States of America. Period. It is the president and only the president who is elected by the people to give direction to the executive branch of the government within the laws of the Constitution. But a Secretary of State will have a five foot shelf of statutory law organizing his department and setting forth many of the policies which he is expected to pursue. And that itself tends toward bipartisanship because it is law.

Now, in recent years the oversight function of the Congress has almost run wild. There has been a great multiplication of Congressional staffs and when these staff people try to learn how they can make their brownie points for their superiors, the way they like to do that is to tinker with something. So they are constantly intruding into activities in the executive branch under the cover of the oversight functions of the Congress and sometimes that can get to be troublesome and annoying and wasteful of time and energy.

There's another factor that comes into it. During my time as Secretary of State, the General Accounting Office [GAO] was a bunch of accountants. Their job was to find out where the money spent was spent in accordance with appropriations, but in recent years the General Accounting Office has grown into an organization which tries to evaluate all sorts of policies at the request of any member of Congress and in their evaluations they delve into matters that are really not their responsibility. I heard that a GAO team went out to the Strategic Air Command (SAC] headquarters in the Mid-west and asked for a copy of our bombing programs, our atomic bombing programs. Fortunately, the general commanding SAC turned them down. They are getting to be a fourth branch of government without real responsibility to anybody, because the Congress as a whole does not really provide for supervision of the General Accounting Office. Any member of the Congress can ask them to do a study and if they don't have staff to cover it they'll go outside and hire outside staff to make the study for them. So, that I think is a negative development in our system.

Every senator and congressman tends to think of himself as his own Secretary of State and the powers of Congress are so broad and so powerful in the foreign policy field that they usually can find ways to give expression to their own individual interests. Sometimes you get senators like Senator Richard [Brevard] Russell [Jr.] of Georgia, Senator Arthur Vandenberg, Senator Everett Dirksen and others who understand that the powers given to the Congress are given to the congress as a corporate body and not to individual senators and congressmen and that it is important at the end of the day for the congress to act as a corporate body and that may require them to make adjustments in their individual views in order to come forward with a congressional point of view. Sometimes some of them overlook that and that creates a degree of harassment for those in the executive branch of the government.

Now, I happen to believe that the professional Foreign Service of the United States is a diplomatic service which is second to none in the world in terms of ability, dedication, and where needed, just sheer gallantry. But--we do not insulate our professional Foreign Service from the political process in the same way as do the British. During the sixties, I was having lunch in London sitting next to the Treasury official who was head of the British Civil Service, and during lunch I complimented him on the way the British Civil Service stays outside of party politics. He said, "Oh no, you've got it wrong. The British Civil Service supports one political party at a time." Now, under our constitutional system it is the duty of the professional services to take their direction from those whom the people have put there to give them direction. And that is not always understood, but I have tremendous respect for the capacity of our professional services.

Now, that puts another--attaches additional importance to another factor: the conduct of our foreign relations is a mass business. Three thousand cables a day go out of that department to our posts and to governments all over the world. The Secretary of State, personally, might see six or seven of those before they go out. The President may see one or two. The rest of them have to go out on the basis of responsibility and authority delegated to hundreds of offices in the Department of State. Otherwise, the day's business simply couldn't get done. Now, I'll put a figure on the record here that I won't ask anyone to believe and they can do with it what they want. I mentioned those 2,100,100 cables that went out of the Department of State with my name signed to them of which I had seen only a small fraction of one percent before they were sent out. But I can recall in eight years only four or five of those cables which had to be pulled back and rewritten and turned around because those who had sent them out had somehow missed the point of policy which the President or I wished them to follow. To me that is an extraordinary professional performance in the Department of State. There are times when people would like to criticize the President or the Secretary of State but do not dare to do that, so they criticize the professional Foreign Service. The professional Foreign Service responds to directions from the President and the Secretary of State if they get those directions. And I've never seen any instance of professional officers revolting against the policies of their superiors. Now, some of them have resigned as anyone can resign in our system, but it is a disciplined service and I think has earned our gratitude over the years for the quality of the service it performs.

RA'NAAN: Well, wouldn't you say that the insulation of the service from the daily vicissitudes of political life is one of the ways of enhancing its professionalism and there the most important

factor is probably being leak-proof? I know in your time you were often called secretive, but, in fact, I think what they meant was Dean Rusk didn't leak stories. And wouldn't you say that the temptation--it is really a temptation to which more and more people have succumbed in all of (unintelligible) service in the White House and elsewhere--to leak has made that professionalism much more difficult, has made the insulation much more difficult.

DEAN RUSK: To a degree because of course there are leaks and leaks. Some of the leaks come from the top.

RA'ANAN: I know. (laughter)

DEAN RUSK: But there are often stories which appear to be leaks which are simply the result of highly informed energetic, intelligent reporters figuring out for themselves what is going on, and too, in the political field, there are times when that appears to be leaks. Of course, there are times when someone leaks in order to try to frustrate a policy he does not approve of.

RA'ANAN: That's what I meant.

DEAN RUSK: That is the kind of indiscipline, I think, which we cannot have in our system. But I never myself floated balloons through leaks. I didn't abuse the press by using them for trial balloons. I never thought one thing and said another to the press, and I think that is the only sound policy that one can pursue.

RA'ANAN: Parenthetically, that's much older than most people realize. [Otto Eduard Leopold von] Bismarck did it constantly. Really, the modern man manipulation media started in the second half of the nineteenth century.

DEAN RUSK: Yes, right.

RA'ANAN: It's another twentieth century invention--I 'm sorry. I didn't mean to interrupt.

DEAN RUSK: Well, the real managers of the news are the media themselves. When a newspaper publishes the slogan "All the news that's fit to print," they should put in parentheses just under that "At least two percent of it," because there is such a mass of information that no newspaper or certainly no radio or television station can use more than a small fraction of the daily output of the wire services. And so selecting what to use is a part of the management of the news in our media themselves. There is only a limited extent to which government can influence that process and should not try very hard to influence it.

RA'ANAN: You were saying before that the professionalism shown by the fact that in their outgoing cables individual officers knew very well what the policy was and one didn't have to rewrite it which leads me to a major question: to what extent is it really possible to generate policy meaning policy of (unintelligible). I don't mean tactics, I really mean strategy. My own experience has been that more often than not, policy looked at from afar looks like a line but when you are close by, it's a series of thoughts, that is, individual decisions that had to be made under extraordinary pressure which may perhaps subliminally link up, but at the time they are

being made nobody really has time to say, "Now, how do we see this in a strategic way? How do we look upon this as overall policy?" But rather we have a particular issue and we have to resolve it.

DEAN RUSK: Well, when people take high office in our government they do not come in with a (unintelligible). They've observed the world. Many of them have experienced the world. They have their own education: everything they have read, thought, done is a part of the process. But Dean [Gooderham] Acheson once said that you can only think in action when you're thinking about foreign policy. He was very opposed to the notion that somehow you can ponder your navel and come out with great ideas in foreign policy. There's something to that, although one must not exaggerate that. But there are occasions when searching review of ongoing policy comes about. For example: President Kennedy was very conscious of the fact that he was the first president to be born in this century. He looked upon himself as part of a new generation and he wanted to ask fresh questions about the conventional wisdom, about ongoing lines of policy, to see whether or not those policies were adequate to the kind of new world that he felt was coming into existence. For example, during the nineteen fifties the impression grew up with the help of Secretary John Foster Dulles that the United States felt that neutrality and non-alignment were immoral. Well, President Kennedy looked at that and he and I took the view that wherever there was a country that was secure, concerned about the needs of its own people, reasonably cooperative on the international scene, that there was a situation in the interest of the United States and that the distinction between neutrals and allies had become greatly exaggerated. And so in the early sixties we made a special effort to improve our relations with some of the non-aligned leaders: [Josip Broz] Tito in Yugoslavia; [Jawaharlal] Nehru in India; [Gamal Abdel] Nasser in Egypt; [Ahmed] Ben Bella in Algeria; [Kwame] Nkrumah in Ghana; [Achmed] Sukarno in Indonesia. Now, we didn't always succeed because some of those people turned out to be rascals and one could not sort things out with them.

RA'ANAN: Particularly Sukarno.

DEAN RUSK: Yes, but actually, at least the effort was made. That was one example of a new generation arriving on the scene and looking hard at ongoing traditional attitudes of policy.

RA'ANAN: I recall it was only a couple of weeks or so after the inauguration that the president sent out a letter that I think went to President Nasser and some ten or twelve other major non-aligned countries. In the case of Nasser I think he undertook to resolve the refugee problem. It was very early--

DEAN RUSK: Yes, and during the Kennedy years we worked out a multi-million dollar, three-year program of food aid for Egypt. At one point there we were feeding about forty percent of the Egyptian people with food aid. Unfortunately, President Nasser would not even be silent on the subject. We didn't expect him to get up before those crowds and bow and scrape and say, "Thank you, Uncle Sam." But he would get up before those crowds and shout, "Throw your aid into the Red Sea." And he did that to the point where he persuaded Congress to do just that. And that food aid program came to an end.

RA'ANAN: That was (unintelligible) the Johnson Administration if I remember correctly when he made that statement.

DEAN RUSK: Well, probably a little after the Johnson Administration. But we made a major effort there with President Nasser.

RA'ANAN: Well, he partly ruined it through the Yemen war.

DEAN RUSK: Yes, right. (laughter) But--one must always be prepared to rethink patterns of policy. It was I who eventually established a group of young Foreign Service officers, then called The Open Forum: about a dozen of them to go aside and challenge basic assumptions; to challenge traditional interpretations of factual situations; to raise new ideas, including weird ideas. I told them when I set them aside for this purpose that they would find that good ideas, good new ideas are very hard to come by. Well, they sort of smiled when I told them that initially, but after a year on the job they told me they thought I had been right in making that remark. But, nevertheless, one must always have a searching and inquisitive mind about set patterns of policy because the world changes and there may be situations where those attitudes ought to be given fresh thought.

RICHARD RUSK: Could I play the devil's advocate for a moment--and that is precisely the point upon which your critics nail you in the sense that--particularly with respect to Vietnam, but probably in other areas, too--that you didn't take a fresh look and that you followed old traditional lines of policy. Without responding to any specific criticism on any specific line of policy, how would you respond to that in general?

DEAN RUSK: Well, one begins in our system, in my judgment, with the law of the land. When President Kennedy took office, the Southeast Asia Treaty was the supreme law of the land and it stated that if those protected by the Southeast Asia Treaty were under attack, we, the United States, would quote, take steps to meet the common danger, unquote. Now, as an example of the way one's total experience has a bearing on policy judgments, let me say that I belong to that generation of students which was led down the path into the catastrophe of a World War II which could have been prevented. We came out of that war thinking that collective security was the key to the prevention of World War III. It was written very simply and very strongly into Article I of the United Nations Charter, reinforced by the Rio Pact in the western hemisphere, NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] across the Atlantic, and certain treaties across the Pacific. Now, collective security was very real to that generation and that included President Kennedy, President Johnson, President Eisenhower, and others. Now, the idea of collective security has eroded in recent years. The United States alone has taken almost 600,000 casualties in dead and wounded in support of collective security since the end of World War II and the effort has not been very collective. We put up ninety percent of the non-Korean forces in Korea, eighty percent of the non-Vietnamese forces in Vietnam. I can understand why American citizens might feel that if collective security costs us 50,000 dead every ten years and is not even collective, maybe it's not a good idea. I have great respect for that reaction. But that leaves us with what is still an unanswered question: if not collective security, how do we propose to prevent World War III? And this time there's a difference. Throughout the history of the human race it has been possible for people to pick themselves up out of the death and destruction of war and start over again. We

may not have that chance after World War III. At long last the human race has reached the point where it must prevent that war before it occurs and that's going to take a good deal of thought, planning, sacrifice, attention, in a way that has never been necessary before.

END OF SIDE 1

BEGINNING OF SIDE 2

DEAN RUSK: How you prevent World War III. I hasten to point out that we did not entirely fail in that respect, because in this year of 1986 we've put behind us forty-one years since a nuclear weapon has been fired in anger despite a good many serious and dangerous crises we have had since 1945. So, I'm not pessimistic at all about the prospects of avoiding World War III. Indeed I'm very optimistic about it.

RA'ANAN: I think the basic assumption has been--and I think it's correct--that wars start overwhelmingly because somebody feels they can get away with it and find out too late that maybe they can't but then it is too late. Of course, I am also a product of the generation that learned from Munich and I guess I share those feelings.

DEAN RUSK: I think there is one other element that one must watch and that is simply fumbling and bumbling. Foolish men in a number of European governments allowed the assassination of an arch-duke to move step-by-step into the horrors of World War I. Now, we have to be very careful not to let that kind of thing happen again, to let events, in effect, take control. And keep these problems insulated and restrained before they develop into situations which cannot be controlled.

RA'ANAN: I am glad to hear you say that because (unintelligible) Howard at Oxford has come forward with what I think is an almost obscene comparison between 1914 and 1939. And I think they are fundamentally different. In one case you are dealing with essentially a war without villains where people drifted into it. In the other case, you are dealing with a war deliberately precipitated as part of a long term plan, and I can't forgive Howard for having--

DEAN RUSK: Yes, I think you are quite right on that. To me there is no analogy between 1914 and 1939.

RA'ANAN: To come back to policy and the number one question: How does one institutionalize policy-making? Now, when I look at the various bodies that were created, I find they're not really policy-making. They are crisis decision-making bodies. The body that President Kennedy put together very early in his Administration: The National Security Policy Council and then later on the Executive Committee of the National Security Council. I mean they all are essentially crisis decision-making bodies which is not the same as policy-making. And when I look at the alphabet soup, the (unintelligible) and the (unintelligible) again, they're dealing with specific crises and this is a very worthy goal in itself, but what I have never found--and I must

say in any foreign service--is a really institutionalized section that does nothing else but sit down and, as you say, study its neighbor and make policy. (unintelligible) my suspicion (unintelligible) that it can't be done. That the reason it doesn't exist is because everybody finds after a little while that life is too complex and futurology [sic] is too vain an exercise to be able to do this.

DEAN RUSK: Well, you know when you think of the presidents that we have had since World War II: Harry [S] Truman; Dwight Eisenhower; John F. Kennedy; Lyndon Johnson; Richard [Milhous] Nixon; Gerald [Rudolph] Ford; Jimmy [James Earl] Carter [Jr.]; Ronald [Wilson] Reagan; it's almost breathtaking to notice the extraordinary differences among those people. Now, each president is going to want to handle his office in a way with which he is comfortable, and they're all different, and so we must expect, I think, different modes of operation. For example, President Eisenhower, who had lived in the military staff system, created an extraordinary structure associated with the National Security Council: (inaudible); committees; and sub-committees and special groups and things of that sort, to the point that my friend Robert Bowie [?] of Harvard who was the State Department's principal liaison officer to the National Security Council, once told me that he had only one-half day a week which was not taken up with regular meetings of these various bodies. Well, President Kennedy saw all that structure and he swept it away and started over again with a much more streamlined and, if you like, ad hoc kind of organization. Another illustration: during Eisenhower's period there was prepared a very thick manual--maybe two inches thick--on American national security policy and that was approved by President Eisenhower. When Kennedy became president, the policy planning staff and others worked very hard to revise that for the Kennedy Administration and they came out also with a thick volume addressed to that subject. President Kennedy would not approve it, nor would I, because we did not believe that these generalizations have much to do with the real problems that you run into Monday morning at nine o'clock which have in them far more complications than these generalizations take into account.

You see, it's very important for people who try to understand this foreign policy process to understand that every important foreign policy problem has locked up in it dozens and dozens of secondary and tertiary questions and that these problems are changing day by day, and the policy officers cannot answer those questions simply by a reference to generalizations in some prepared study and be in actual contact with the real world. A pilot who takes off a modern jet aircraft will go through a long list of questions that he must answer before he takes off the aircraft. Well, a policy officer, in his mind at least, must have a similar kind of checklist through which he goes with respect to every policy question that comes up: what is the question; whose question is it; what does the constitution say about it; what does statutory law say about it; what does international law say about it; what are the attitudes of governments that are only secondarily involved; what do the American people think about it or are likely to think about it; what do members of Congress think about it if they knew about this tomorrow morning? All sorts of questions one must think of before making a foreign policy decision. The complexity of that process is poorly understood.

Now, we have in the Department of State--and I don't want to stir the ire of my academic friend here--we have in the Department of State a section, we used to call it External Resources Division--they have a new name for it now--whose job it was to read everything they could get their hands on that was put out by scholars and historians and writers and so forth, and to call the

important materials to the attention of policy makers. Well, actually, very rarely do you come across a book or an article which is directly relevant to your immediate problem because of time factors because those authors have not taken into consideration many factors which the policy officer must take into account. They're very useful in terms of general background and perhaps raising some questions which the policy officer might otherwise overlook, but very rarely does that outside material really point toward a decision in the actual circumstances in which one is working.

RA'ANAN: In any case, the academic community has nothing to complain. We are brought in as consultants right, left and center all the time and I don't think there's any room for complaint. (laughter)

DEAN RUSK: Well, as you know, Dean Acheson was allergic to such outside groups. He used to refer to them as "just another bunch of sons of bitches from out of town." (laughter) But I, myself, found them quite useful. I used to meet with them very frequently.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, is there a little inconsistency between the two stories you told earlier about policy planning and the kind of negative feelings you have about the possibility or the relevance of policy planning? Those who have worked in that role--policy planning--for you did point out that you were among one of the more frustrating Secretaries of State to work for in that regard. And the earlier statements you made that it is necessary from time to time to sit down and reexamine the traditional lines of policy and take a fresh look--some of your former colleagues said that you weren't very good at doing that.

DEAN RUSK: Well, I think the policy planning process is an important process and I think it is appropriate that the State Department had a policy planning group, but every policy officer must also be a planning officer. He must always be thinking of the longer run and the general aspects of the policy which he is considering. So, in that sense policy planning cannot be a monopoly of something called a policy planning staff. There is also an operational problem that has intruded into the work of the policy planning staff. To do that work successfully you have to have able people assigned to policy planning. A George [Frost] Kennan and a Paul [H.] Nitze for example under George [Catlett] Marshall, but because they are able people they are frequently called on to help out with immediate problems: writing a speech or taking a particular decision so they are not really left alone much. If they are any good, they are not left alone to concentrate on their primary purpose of thinking in the longer range and in more general terms about policy.

RA'ANAN: And it's there also a danger that they are taken out of the career patterns to some extent, that it looks like an interruption.

DEAN RUSK: To some extent there are those who--there are some professional officers who think that assignment to the policy planning staff produces--"out of sight, out of mind" kind of reaction, so they don't apply for that particular job. Most policy officers like to have line responsibility.

RA'ANAN: And the key word you use is, of course, operational. Isn't it a major problem: the British until the nineteenth century had two Secretaries, the northern Secretary and the southern

Secretary. One with the Baltic. One dealing with the Mediterranean. What has happened to us is, those who scoff at dominoes know not well of what they speak because of the immediate instantaneous effect of everything upon everything else--part of the electronic media and all that goes along with it. But surely that has led to something else, that perhaps until the twenties or thirties it was perfectly possible to have a superb officer who was essentially area-oriented and who could steep himself in law, the culture, the events, the politics of one region and do a very good job by doing that and nothing else. The flip side of that, of course, was the disease known as localitis.

DEAN RUSK: Yes.

RA'ANAN: That he then eventually became more of the ambassador of that country to his own government than the other way around. That really has certainly, since about 1935, 1940, has become impossible.

DEAN RUSK: Yes, that's correct. Because the--among other things the communications explosion produces ripple effects all over the world from actions taken in a particular region or in a particular situation so that you still have your geographic bureau in the Department of State. But they all get involved in most major foreign policy decisions and sometimes you find them in competition with each other for influence on the final decision. One of the important functions of the most senior offices of the Department of State is to find the national interest among the competing views of the geographic bureau. For example, in that entire decolonization process our bureau of European Affairs was relatively resistant compared to our bureau of African Affairs and our bureau of Asian Affairs on the whole decolonization process. Well, that has to be reconciled by the senior officers of the Department and sometimes by the president. I did a good deal of that during one period under the Truman Administration when for a time I was named as a Deputy Undersecretary. My job was to coordinate the views of the geographic bureau. Well, sometimes that problem became rather difficult and painful because these local, these regional responsibilities are not easily reconciled at times, but it's a job that has to be done because at the end of the day we must try to find where our national interests lie as a nation, not just as a geographic bureau.

RA'ANAN: Let me come to an area of very direct professional interest. For a long period the making of policy vis-a-vis the Soviet Union has been bedeviled by two problems. One is what I call the Winston [Leonard Spencer] Churchill problem. Remember the enigma inside the sphinx inside the riddle: in other words it's unknowable, and therefore it's essentially a prescription for defeat if you can't know it, and let's not waste our time trying to find out how it works. And then you'll find a great deal of speculation about factions within the leadership--who is for what, who is against what and so on. The flip side of that is equally bad and that is to say, well basically it's pretty well like ourselves only a little different, some cultural differences, but essentially we're dealing with a mirror image. The truth is that neither one of these is correct. What I have never found--and here a little academic bitterness speaks--there is, of course, there was particularly in the forties and fifties, a very flourishing industry called (unintelligible). And on the whole these fellows didn't do badly. You may remember the famous headline in the the *New York Post* when there had been an unremarkable cultural event at the Bolshoi. The dancers of meritorious milkmaids and others and the whole leadership turned up with one single exception and the *New*

York Post said maybe Beria doesn't like ballet. Well, maybe he didn't, but he was dead. And they had turned out to show their unity, etc. The Sovietologist always pointed out the importance of the iconography of the pictures, of the way in which leaders appeared in--(interruption) The Sovietologists have been able to come up with a reasonable description of the way in which the Soviet system works and that includes the fact that it cannot function monolithically. All monolithic systems in fact, make for factionalization [sic]. It's unofficial. It's illegal, but it exists. Except these factions don't fight over policy. They fight over personal power, over personal allegiance and so on. But for the period of their (unintelligible) assigned quarrel, they often use policy issues as footballs against one another to score brownie points. And that opens some possibilities I would like to mention. For instance, the period prior to the invasion of Czechoslovakia in '68, there was a fair amount of material about indecision in the Soviet leadership, how to proceed and so on. And my feelings have always been that we deprive ourselves of a great deal of leverage by closing our eyes to this process. Either by saying, like Winston Churchill, we can't possibly know so let's forget it or as others say let's assume that they are hard liners and soft liners and moderates and extremists which is, of course, balderdash. It doesn't work that way in the Soviet Union. I would like to know your experience and, of course, you had a fair number of people who were pretty good: there was Chip [Charles Eustis] Bohlen; there was Tommy [Llewellyn E.] Thompson [Jr.] and so on. To what extent was there ever at any one stage, a serious discussion with some input of what we know about how the Soviet system functions, or what we can know in the context of a particular episode like Czechoslovakia? To what extent we can play upon these differences and so on?

DEAN RUSK: One gives a great deal of thought to that. We should understand that relations between the United States and the Soviet Union are of the utmost importance because we and they are the only two nations who have locked in mortal conflict and can raise the serious question about the survival of the human race. Now, we and the Soviets share a basic common interest in the prevention of nuclear war. No one in his right mind in Moscow or Washington would deny that. We and they also share a primordial common responsibility to the entire human race because of the sheer destructive power which they and we possess. But the bottom line is that whatever we think of the Russians and whatever they think of us, somehow at the end of the day we and they must find some way to inhabit this speck of dust of the universe at the same time. Now, we have never been very well-informed about the personal relations among the members of the Politburo. They do know how to keep their mouths shut on that particular question. We are, of course, constantly thinking about it and studying it. There is one ploy, which you hinted at, which Soviet diplomacy occasionally uses--

RA'ANAN: Good cop, bad cop, it's called.

DEAN RUSK: That's right. That's right. They will say to you, "Now, you really ought to make a concession on this point in order to strengthen the hands of those in the Politburo who are interested in good relations with the United States." Well, that's often used as a diplomatic gambit on their part. We come back with them with a similar gambit. That is, "Well, whatever we in the executive branch think about this, we have to have the approval of Congress." And so, we trade such things in the course of negotiations quite frequently. But, I think, that--that we simply do not know some of the central things it would help us to know. For example, on the invasion of Czechoslovakia which you mentioned, after they invaded Czechoslovakia, we

thought we had learned that they--they had invaded Czechoslovakia on a certain Tuesday evening, our time--we thought we learned that they made that decision on the preceding Saturday, about three days before. Now, when we asked our Soviet experts like Llewellyn Thompson who was very good indeed, a week before whether the Soviets would invade Czechoslovakia, he told us that their forces were there; they had had their maneuvers; they had the capability of moving in, but whether or not they would move in, we don't know. Well now, he couldn't know because the Soviets did not know a week earlier because they had not made their decision. So sometimes you would like to have information which is not present in the real world. But, I think over time we have become more and more accustomed to the way the Soviet authorities operate and we have tried to help them understand this very complex and puzzling political situation of ours. I've spent a lot of time with people like Ambassador [Anatoly F.] Dobrynin and Mr. [Andrei Andreevich] Gromyko to help them understand this strange constitutional system of ours. I wish they would be somewhat more forthcoming in the way their system operates, but it is an extraordinarily important question on which our information is always less than we would need in order to meet each situation completely adequately.

RA'ANAN: Well, let me posit a scenario. Some of us thought at the time and subsequently that what we had discerned--and here it was almost a matter of indifference--who among the leaders was saying what, that we could at least see two or three groups of which one was saying, "Look. We can't possibly tolerate this. We can put an end to it and it's not going to cost us anything. The West will not react." Equally important, by the way, "The Czechs will not react. There will not be local resistance." And the second group saying, "Look, if you insist, go ahead, but remember Czechoslovakia has a common frontier with the NATO countries, unlike Hungary in '56. That makes it (unintelligible). And why we also don't think the Czechs will react, we are not sure about the West. Who knows?" And that decision was made at the time to fly a kite in order to elicit potential Western response and that in one way or another they thought that they could read body language that said, "Look. We sure hope you're not going to do it, but if you do, what can we do about it?" and that argument within the leadership, that body language was read out triumphantly by those who wanted to divine saying, "You see, you lot of miserable cowards, the West isn't going to do anything. We told you so all along and therefore we can go ahead because it's safe." It's that kind of discussion that one would like to see replicated in our councils of policy: the awareness that our body language may be interpreted that way by them. And I'm mentioning this just as one scenario because it comes to mind, but there have been lots of occasions like that.

DEAN RUSK: Well, whatever one thinks about it, the attitude of the West since World War II has been that however disagreeable we find these regimes in Eastern Europe, what these regimes do to their own people is simply not an issue of war and peace between East and West. This came about in connection with the various actions in East Germany, in Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Now, in Poland there was another factor. You mentioned that the Russians must have anticipated that the Czechs would not offer any significant resistance if they moved into Czechoslovakia. They cannot know that in the same way with respect to the Poles, because the Poles have a capacity for being crazy from a rational point of view.

RA'ANAN: And I'm sure that's why the martial law was taken--

DEAN RUSK: And I think the Soviets were much more cautious about moving on Poland than they were in moving on Czechoslovakia. I think today they might be more cautious moving on Hungary again, given some of the changes in attitudes in Hungary. But, I think they could--if their intelligence apparatus was thoughtful and accurate--they could have easily deduced that actions taken against their own people in Eastern Europe was not an issue of war and peace for the West.

RA'ANAN: No, but possibly of deterrence. And here, after all, this was prior to the final Helsinki Accord, we had not given implicit legitimation as we did eventually at Helsinki and (unintelligible) to the situation in Eastern Europe and we did not regard Czechoslovakia as being one of theirs. As a matter of fact, of course, they had not stationed troops in Czechoslovakia for some considerable time and that had been one of the major changes. One clearly doesn't mean that the West could have or should have gone to war. The question is how much deterrence could have been applied that might have given the Czechs another five percent of a chance. No more than that. But that five percent can be important.

DEAN RUSK: Ah, but you see it's very important not to bluff on these things. You must be very careful not to create the impression that you will take action if, in fact, you are not prepared to take action. Because bluffing in this business can be very dangerous indeed. Now, when the Soviets moved into Czechoslovakia, we immediately took a variety of steps to deter, as you put it, an expansion of that attitude in Rumania and Yugoslavia.

RA'ANAN: Rumania.

RICHARD RUSK: That's the point you made on the phone.

DEAN RUSK: We even had some military talks with the Yugoslavs as to what military equipment they would need; what kind of ammunition they would need and things of that sort and possibly with the understanding that rumors of those talks would get back to the Russians somehow. And that, therefore, the Russians would be more cautious about Rumania and Yugoslavia. But--

RA'ANAN: I posited a theory about it and I would very much like to know if you feel it's accurate--what I call the double deterrent--that in the Rumanian case between President Johnson's speech "Do not unleash the dogs of war," and the Rumanians carrying out exercises that showed their army falling back in front of an invading enemy into the Carpathians in order to carry out guerrilla warfare, that that constituted a double deterrent for the decision among the leadership in the Soviet Union in the Rumanian case to go in the opposite direction of--

DEAN RUSK: Yes, I think there's something to that, but also added to it is that in Czechoslovakia one of the key issues came to be the monopoly control of the communist party. That to me is a point on which the Russians are going to be extraordinarily sensitive, because that threatens their own regime. Whereas, in Rumania, although Rumania had taken some independent lines in foreign policy questions, they had a very tight communist regime inside the country in their domestic affairs and so Rumania has been able to exercise a considerable amount of independence in international matters partly because there is no challenge to the monopoly

control of the communist party inside Rumania. Now, another element of deterrence the Yugoslavs demonstrated during World War II is a very strong guerrilla capability. I mean, they gave the Nazis plenty of trouble there and if the Yugoslavs--we had every reason to believe if anybody moved on Yugoslavia, the Yugoslavs would fight. Now, I think that helped to deter any thinking in Moscow that maybe what happened in Czechoslovakia would be applicable in other places. But I think the Soviets themselves have a major problem among the peoples of Eastern Europe. One gets increasing signs--have for a good many years now--that peoples of these smaller countries of Eastern Europe have a strong nostalgic feeling of wanting to be once again part of the great community of art, science, culture, letters, of Europe quite apart from differences between communism and capitalism and that the heavy hand of Moscow is becoming increasingly heavy to them. And so, I think that is one of the main issues facing Soviet leadership: how they are going to work out in the longer run their relations with the Poles, the Czechs, the Hungarians, the Rumanians, and so forth?

RA'ANAN: There's an enormous difference between being forced to assimilate upward or downward, if you are a (unintelligible) or a Cossack with all the repressiveness of the regime. Nevertheless, there is social development; there's economic development; there is a jump forward by a decade. If you are a Czech, you are being dragged back by a century. You were a central European country of advanced standing and I think that is what is intolerable: oppression plus backwardness.

END OF SIDE 2

