

Dean Rusk Oral History Collection

Rusk AA

Dean Rusk interviewed by Richard Rusk, Thomas J. Schoenbaum, Martin Hillenbrand, and Loch Johnson

circa 1985

RICHARD RUSK: (several people talking at once) Do you recall an instance, Pop?

DEAN RUSK: Although Bobby [Robert Francis] Kennedy took a reasonably active part in foreign relations matters; when young Ted [Edward Moore] Kennedy came to the Senate we almost never saw him. He played no role in foreign policy matters. Now, what he might have said to his brother, Jack, at Hyannisport, or West Palm Beach, or someplace like that, no one knows. At least I don't know. He never participated in the meetings about foreign policy matters when I was there.

SCHOENBAUM: You should interview Martin on that. (laughter)

[break in recording: audio deleted from original tape at Dean Rusk's request; 1:03 of silence that resulted from this audio deletion has been edited out of the digital recording]

RICHARD RUSK: We more or less went through Martin Hillenbrand's list of questions in what my dad had interviewed with me.

JOHNSON: Well, I must say that after looking at Martin's questions, I apologize for being late. By the way, I had a class. He has very cleverly asked already everything that I thought was important. So, I don't want to get into the position of asking the same questions again. I noticed in drawing up my questions that I began to drift toward the question of international economic policy and what are some useful options in that area. But that's really not the notion of intergovernmental rivalries.

RICHARD RUSK: That ought to be a good session in its own right.

DEAN RUSK: Well, just for the moment, I was very fortunate in having around me some real experts in the economic field: George [Wildman] Ball and Tony [Anthony Morton] Solomon, who is now head of the Federal Reserve in New York, a very important position. [Werner Michael] Blumenthal was the deputy to Chris [Christian Archibald] Herter [Jr.], who was a trade representative, a very able fellow who was later to become the Secretary of the Treasury. John [M.] Leddy and others. Then we had William McChesney Martin [Jr.] over at the Federal Reserve, who was very savvy on foreign policy matters. So I was fortunate in having economic matters covered for me by very able colleagues. And I myself did not, therefore, immerse myself deeply in these economic issues.

RICHARD RUSK: By saying that, are you also suggesting that these economic matters are really not that crucial? And your colleagues in deciding these--

DEAN RUSK: No. They are very important indeed. But I had people who could handle them better than I could, so I let them handle them.

HILLENBRAND: The State Department did in fact take the lead in the Kennedy--

DEAN RUSK: Yes. Well, no that was done by a special representative to the President. Christian Herter was in charge. Christian Herter, former Secretary of State, did a very gallant job of public service there because he was crippled with arthritis. He was in terrible pain almost all the time. And yet he worked at that job, performed very ably indeed. It was really a self-sacrificing service that he performed.

RICHARD RUSK: Let me rephrase my question, if I may, Pop. In these areas of crisis, like Vietnam, Laos, Berlin, Cuba, Dominican Republic, were you guys discussing economics in there at all? Were you talking in the economic interest of the United States, or were you more concerned about the overall--

DEAN RUSK: Within limits because the political security aspects were far more important than the economic aspects. After I left office I heard from some of these protest groups that we had gone to Vietnam because of oil. Well, I never heard of oil in Vietnam until after I left office. It just played no role whatever. In any event, we were not in Vietnam for any kind of economic advantage at all. That would have been stupid. From an economic point of view it would have paid us to give every member of the Vietcong a lifetime villa on the Riviera. We tried using silver bullets in that struggle but it didn't work very well.

JOHNSON: Some people argue that economic policy is in fact an orphan, though, when it comes to our national decision-making, second to political and strategic decision-making. And in the case of Vietnam, you seem to reinforce that view.

DEAN RUSK: In certain issues. For example, in the Cuban missiles, economic policy had nothing to do with it. The case of Vietnam, at most one percent probably was an economic problem. As far as the United States was concerned, there were economic problems in Vietnam that needed attention and they got a lot of attention. But in terms of the motivations for the actions that we took, they were not economic imperatives. The Berlin Blockade had some economic aspects to it, but the central issues were political and security, not economic.

JOHNSON: Stop me immediately if this is redundant, but the overarching question I had regarded the fragmentation within our federal government and the difficulty of making the fragments work. And the question I was going to propose, relating to Justice [Earl] Warren's question about the engine freezing up, was how does one make collaborative government work more effectively in our nation?

DEAN RUSK: To begin with, this turns upon the personal relationships among members of the Cabinet. I think during the Kennedy years those relationships were good and easy. There were some differences from time to time but not overriding. President Kennedy suggested to me once that we have a monthly luncheon of the Cabinet, rotating in each other's departments, without

him, to facilitate open and free discussion around the table and give us a chance to get better acquainted with each other. When he made that suggestion I smiled and said, "Do you think you ought to put that in writing, because when Secretary [Robert] Lansing called a meeting of the Cabinet without [Thomas] Woodrow Wilson's permission, he got fired." And he laughed. But we had quite a number of those Cabinet luncheons rotating among the departments and those were very pleasant and useful occasions. You have to start with those personal relations at the top because they would help to mediate or balance the built-in tendencies for confrontation among their staffs down below. But we had a good many interdepartmental committees and fairly regular meetings on these economic matters. On the whole, they worked out very well. [Clarence] Douglas Dillon was Secretary of Treasury, had been Undersecretary of State, a very able man in foreign policy matters. So when he handled fiscal policy in relation to other countries, he did so with our full blessing and knowledge, and did it very well.

JOHNSON: Do I take it that you are somewhat skeptical of formal institutional tinkering. It's more a matter of having right people at the right places talking among--

DEAN RUSK: I have lived through a good many reorganizations in government. For example, our armed forces between World War I and World War II had no troops to command. They were mostly going to school and teaching in military schools and counting blankets and depots and things like that. They had all the time in the world to think about the organization of the armed forces to fight a war. One of the first things that happened after Pearl Harbor was that we were put through a complete reorganization of the Pentagon and the armed services after Pearl Harbor. I have been through a number of those reorganizations and I have become very skeptical about what can be done by reorganization as such. When you break up an indivisible whole into its component parts, there are always some illogical divisions of responsibility and labor. I am convinced, myself, that the most important thing is to get able people in the particular jobs and let them handle it, let them run with it, and that the organizational structure is relatively unimportant. Now some things we did from an organizational point of view that were useful. For example, I thought it was a useful experiment to combine the Bureau of Inter-american Affairs in the State Department with the Bureau of Inter-american Affairs in the AID [Agency for International Development] administration. For a number of years there were consolidated into a single bureau, serving both agencies. I think the creation of the Operations Center in the State Department to handle emergencies with special communications and all sorts of facilities, was a very useful thing because in the event of a crisis there was a place where everything came together. That was useful. But generally speaking, organizational tinkering was rather futile. Whatever you had, something else looked better.

RICHARD RUSK: This SIG-RIG system that you had in the Department of State, which was another--

DEAN RUSK: That was an attempt to somewhat simplify these interdepartmental relationships. You see, in Washington, and I suppose it happens elsewhere, but in Washington everybody who thinks that he is affected by a decision claims the right to participate in making it. So you have people coming in from all directions wanting to be a part of the decision-making in a particular matter. Then if they get their feet under the table, then they seem to think that unless they agree, then non-agreement is a veto and nothing can proceed without their agreement. That creates a

good deal of delay and bureaucratic bickering and things of that sort. I personally believe that we ought to clarify the chains of command and simplify them. But that doesn't work very well. And the State Department--Marty, you may remember that I tried to simplify the chain of command there from the country officer, the desk officer, to the Assistant Secretary, to either the Secretary or the Undersecretary down the hall. In effect, tried to get rid of a lot of these deputies--this and deputies--that and all the--I remember one telegram that came in to me once with seven different clearings at the bottom from the legal advisors' office. Seven different offices. Well, there was no need for that. Let the legal advisor pass on it, put his initials on it, whatever the discussion had been within his own office on the matter. But that didn't work very well: that simplified chain in command. Because the deputies, and the assistants, and this, and that, and the other soon found a way to worm their way back into it.

JOHNSON: Have you talked about the size of government, how the government got too big? Is that what's leading to all this?

RICHARD RUSK: We haven't brought it up. Maybe we can relate that specifically to the Department of State. You came into office in '61 and left in '69, January '69. What happened in the Department? Did it grow?

DEAN RUSK: I was told when I left office that there were 350 fewer people in the Department of State than I had found there in 1961 when I took over. As a matter of fact, there were some little speeches made on the floor of the House of Representatives on that subject. Because I took the view that you don't resolve your problems by simply appointing more people. So we held the size of the State Department through the sixties; even though we were establishing relations with twenty to twenty-five additional countries among the newly independent countries. There was sometimes a little chafing in the State Department. You see, in a bureaucracy I think we make a mistake in attaching so much importance to the pyramidal structure of government. The idea that a man's position, prestige, salary, rank, turn on the number of people he has working under him. In the State Department we are a policy department. It's appropriate that there be a disproportionate number of chiefs to Indians and that pyramidal notion should not apply to a policy department. As a matter of fact, once I named a former ambassador as a desk officer for an important country. I was trying to break through and get the idea that any of these jobs in the Department could be handled by people of rank and experience as well as by anybody else. And that helped break down somewhat the growing backlog of senior officers for posts not available. I think it's a built-in tendency. If you look at those job descriptions and go down to Congress with a budget every year, they really don't bear close inspection. A lot of it seems, in those job descriptions, turns on how many people you supervise or coordinate or do something else with.

RICHARD RUSK: They called that place "foggy bottom." Did you feel like you were really in charge of it as Secretary of State?

DEAN RUSK: I didn't have any problem of that sort. Now I tried to delegate as much as possible, although I found that the Assistant Secretaries, to whom I wanted to delegate very extensively, seemed to find it very difficult to delegate to anybody below them. But the term "foggy bottom" came from the actual locality of the State Department, there in that part of town, which was indeed once "foggy bottom."

RICHARD RUSK: And it stuck for other reasons.

DEAN RUSK: I think I put somewhere on another tape a figure that I don't ask anybody to believe, but more than 2,100,000 cables went out of that Department with my name signed to them, although I had only seen a fraction of one percent of them before they went out. It came to be almost 3000 a day on every working day, year after year. In thinking about those, I can recall only four or five times when a telegram had to be called back and rewritten because those who had sent them out had missed the point of policy which the President and I wanted to follow. I suggest that is one heck of a professional performance by the people in the Department of State.

JOHNSON: You know the CIA clearly has had some trouble with commanding control. They've got guerrillas in Nicaragua who seemed to be doing things without permission from on high. This raises the whole issue of accountability within organizations. Can you think of examples where, under your watch, the lower echelons and bureaucracies were out of control in any way?

DEAN RUSK: Well, one of the functions of intelligence, indeed one of the functions of our embassies abroad, is to have sufficient contacts with various elements in the population to be able to advise us as to what the situation is in that particular country. So normally you would expect to establish, either overtly or covertly, some contacts with any opposition elements to see what was going on. Now, when that is done either by State Department officers or CIA officers, back in Washington you can never be sure just what these characters said to get access to or to get information from these opposition elements. There may be some things said by individuals that were not in accord with policy. One can never know that.

JOHNSON: Nothing of great import?

DEAN RUSK: Not particularly. During the sixties, I think it is fair to say that no one in other governments ever doubted that the Secretary of State spoke for the United States. That was pretty well understood. And it was muddied a bit during the early seventies, during Nixon-Kissinger years. I didn't have any problem of that sort.

SCHOENBAUM: Did you find it curious, sir, that President Carter, especially President Carter, and to a certain extent President Nixon, never really seemed to resolve that tension that existed between the National Security Advisor and the Secretary of State? And Nixon expressed more understandably that Carter, Nixon being weakened by Watergate and having his own problems. But Carter--it seemed to me curious that he never straightened that out.

DEAN RUSK: It's curious. It was said that this matter wasn't straightened out, because only the President can straighten it out. [Zbigniew] Brzezinski, for example, had his own press representative. What in the dickens does the National Security Advisor need a press representative for? It's hard enough to keep the White House spokesman and the State Department spokesman on the same wavelength, because each one of them has the opportunity every day to make a hundred mistakes because they are being asked questions by reporters all day long at their regular briefings. And to have a third such joker wandering around town saying

things to the press seems to me to be a completely unnecessary complication. Henry Kissinger was his own press secretary, so he did that himself.

SCHOENBAUM: Did it strike you too that Hodding Carter [III] was a bit of a prima donna for a press spokesman for the Department during the Carter years. During the sixties the press spokesman for the Department was an invisible man because he wasn't a star performer as Hodding Carter.

DEAN RUSK: Hodding Carter fell into that role largely because of the daily interest of the press in the Iranian hostages and things like that. I think on the whole he did a very good job. When more and more attention came to be deserved, that's pretty heady wine for anybody. I thought Hodding Carter was one of the better ones. I had some very good press people myself: Jim [James Lloyd] Greenfield and Bob [Robert Joseph] Manning. They did a very good job in the Department of educating the Department about the needs of the press. To just leave the Department alone they would say "no comment" to almost any question that came up. Bob Manning and Jim Greenfield were very useful in helping the Department to understand the needs of the press. And that helped a good deal in our relations with the working press.

JOHNSON: Did you ever have any rules laid down that no one say or even the Undersecretary to speak independently to the press?

DEAN RUSK: No, I didn't, because such a rule is impossible to manage or enforce. After all, there was always the telephone or things like that. At one point, Bob [Robert Strange] McNamara put in a rule over at the Pentagon that nobody in the Pentagon could see anyone from the press unless a third-person note taker was present. Well, the press raised all manner of hell about that, indeed about the very idea of filing memos or conversations with reporters. It's very odd because when anybody in the wide world comes into the State Department to talk to somebody about official policy, they have to expect that there is going to be a memorandum of conversation made afterwards and put in the files. But this rule that applies to almost everybody seems to annoy the press for obvious reasons from their own point of view. But we didn't try to institute that kind of procedure.

RICHARD RUSK: Bob McNamara had to back off?

DEAN RUSK: Yes, he backed off. I think I have said before that a Secretary of State is not as much concerned about leaks as Presidents are. Presidents are in a different political position and get to be very sensitive on a good many things. But Secretaries of State are somewhat more relaxed, at least most of them. I was. Some of these so called leaks are simply intelligent reporters piecing things together for themselves. Now, they might add a little air of authenticity to the story by making some vague remark about officials here or something like that.

RICHARD RUSK: Yes, we have a lot of comments about press and media relations. We did a whole tape on that.

HILLENBRAND: Do you have the impression that the situation is worse now, as the press corps in Washington has gotten ever larger and more insistent, that the leak problem of really sensitive information now is really worse than during your time?

DEAN RUSK: I don't have any impression that it is much worse. One thing that does tend to stimulate leaks is these feuds inside of the administration: people leaking on each other, trying to discredit somebody else. Well, if you don't have the feud, you don't have that particular temptation to go around town leaking. I suppose that there is a certain amount of that going on now where it is known that there are major differences within the administration on some of these arms control matters, for example. And that you might get occasional leaks here and there. But I just don't think that it's--in the first place, I don't believe the secrets are as much of a problem as many people seem to think. I think the notion of secrecy has been greatly exaggerated. At any given time, there may be a few secrets in the nuclear field; there may be a few secrets in the electronic field. And at any moment, there are some at least temporary secrets about our negotiating position on particular problems. You don't head into a negotiation with a foreign government, put all your cards up on the table at the beginning. If we could talk simply among ourselves as Americans, secrecy would play a very small role. But you see when a high official speaks, he has got three other audiences out there listening in: he's got our allies, he's got potential antagonists, and he's got the non-aligned third world who are listening in to everything said. So it isn't easy to say something under those circumstances that fits American needs with all four audiences. That sometimes creates a problem. I don't know of any--And I say this seriously. I don't know of any subject on which a private citizen could not make a responsible judgment if he takes the time to get the information that is readily available on that particular matter. I don't believe that secrets impair the judgment of the private citizen about major policy issues. The worst argument in politics that I know of is, "If you only knew what I knew you would agree with me." I think that is a phony argument from the very beginning, and I think that is one of the problems that the administration is now facing with regard to what Nicaragua and Cuba may be doing in El Salvador. They haven't made a strong, public and factual case.

RICHARD RUSK: That's an interesting comment, Pop.

HILLENBRAND: The reason I put the question the way I did was because it seems to me that there has never been a book like the Strobe Talbott book, *Deadly Gambits*, which sounds like parts were directly dictated by either [John Richard] Rick Burke, or by somebody else in the State Department, or by someone else in the Pentagon. I can't ever recall--

DEAN RUSK: Where you have these strong differences of view, the participants attempted at times to take it to the press, take it to the public by leaks. I think that's a very bad business. Anybody who engages in that is in the wrong racket and ought to get out of government.

RICHARD RUSK: Do they take it to the press and go out with these leaks because there is no other effective channel for them to use? One channel that is not used in the country, but is in Britain, is this tradition of public resignation and protest. On key issues of policy or real stress there and lots of disagreement, you find top people in government in Britain resigning and publicly stating the reasons for why they are doing so. In this country, it is not a tradition.

DEAN RUSK: We have that occasionally. We had Cyrus [Roberts] Vance resigning over the helicopter raid in Iran. We had William Jennings Bryan resign opposing Woodrow Wilson's foreign policy.

RICHARD RUSK: That's two. Keep going.

JOHNSON: Walter [Joseph] Hickel.

RICHARD RUSK: What happened to Wally Hickel?

DEAN RUSK: A very large difference, Rich, is when a Cabinet Minister resigns in Britain he remains a member of Parliament. He remains in political life. He remains a part of the decision-making process. Whereas here, if you resign on these positions, you are out.

RICHARD RUSK: But isn't there a strong bias within our system? Within government among the foreign policy and the governmental elite and that team of people against "poppin' your cork" or whatever it is?

DEAN RUSK: Well, yes, there is a tradition in that respect, but it is rooted in something very specific indeed. The first sentence of Article II of the Constitution, says the Executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. Period. It is the President, only the President, who is elected by all the people to give direction to the executive branch of the government. So, there is a constitutional issue involved here, as well as--

RICHARD RUSK: World War II was fought over that issue. Nuremberg established the point that individuals and policy makers were subject to their own consciousness as well as the official policy or the--

DEAN RUSK: I am not sure how much you could generalize about Nuremberg because--

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DEAN RUSK: --on that within in our own system was once made by George Marshall. Harry Truman had pulled the rug out from under George Marshall pretty badly on the Palestine issue back in the forties. Some of Marshall's friends told him that they thought he ought to resign. He said, "No, gentlemen. You do not take a post of this sort and then resign when the man who has the constitutional responsibility for making a decision makes one." Now that was Marshall's view. That may be an extreme statement because, you see, there could be times, and apparently Cy Vance found himself in this position over the helicopters in Iran, where a Secretary of State would be called upon to defend the President's actions before committees of Congress and press conferences, speeches in different parts of the country, where the Secretary is simply unable to

do that effectively simply because he can't bring himself to do it. Then he ought to resign. We should have no confusion about who has the last word in the executive branch of the government, within the laws of the Constitution.

RICHARD RUSK: It's true the President has a four-year mandate to do what he thinks best for the country. But Presidents can go crazy within that four-year mandate. We had an example of it with respect to Richard Nixon. Under what circumstances would you have resigned and publicly stated your reasons for doing so? You mentioned one and that was your referring to John Kennedy with J. Edgar Hoover present then, if the FBI ever wiretapped your phone, you would bail out and--

DEAN RUSK: If anybody in our own government ever bugged me I would resign and make a public issue of it.

RICHARD RUSK: Now, what other possible incident would have caused you--

DEAN RUSK: That's an "iffy" question. It's obvious from the record that I never felt that I had reached that point.

RICHARD RUSK: That's true.

DEAN RUSK: But it's pretty hard to speculate.

HILLENBRAND: We do have one other example: Elliot [Lee] Richardson, who resigned after the "Saturday Night Massacre." (laughter)

RICHARD RUSK: It was the source of immense frustration. That's something you are not supposed to do in this country. You don't resign and publicly state your reasons for doing so. Take the anti-war movement for example.

DEAN RUSK: I remind you of a remark once made by George [Wildman] Ball, who strongly opposed, ably opposed, what we were doing within Vietnam within the government. But he did not resign on an issue. He said it was because that was one issue, but there were hundreds of other matters in which he was in full support of the administration, and that he had a clear chance to make his views known within the administration, and that he didn't feel that he was required to resign from a post in which he was working on so many matters in which he was in great support.

SCHOENBAUM: He wasn't called on to defend a particular thing to which he was opposed either.

DEAN RUSK: Well, on occasion, on occasion. But he did so with integrity and discretion.

RICHARD RUSK: One of the frustrating things from the anti-war movement in respect to Vietnam was that no single, high-level policy, public official did resign and publicly go against that war. They had no one to really mobilize around--

DEAN RUSK: I think I may have mentioned this on another tape. But one of the mysteries to me is that a number of these people became opponents of Vietnam after they left office, and not while they were in office. For example, at each Cabinet meeting, LBJ, McNamara and I would make some remarks about Vietnam. And he would go right around the table asking each cabinet officer, "Do you have any questions? Do you have any comments?" And they all sat silent.

RICHARD RUSK: Was that part of the Johnson treatment?

DEAN RUSK: Not necessarily, no. He wouldn't put on any act himself there. He would just go right around the table and there was silence. Later on, several of these people came out in opposition to the war. As I have mentioned somewhere else, [William] Ramsey Clark, after he left office, could go all the way to Hanoi. But while he was Attorney General, he couldn't lean eight inches to his left and whisper--

[break in recording]

DEAN RUSK: --that he was opposed to what we were doing in Vietnam. I've written letters to two friends to see if they can help me understand this phenomenon.

RICHARD RUSK: Which relates to the point I raised initially. It is not a tradition in this country, really, not to the extent that is elsewhere--

DEAN RUSK: Well, the more I have looked into that question, the more complicated it becomes. For example, I am sure in our system that there is a strong pressure towards tending to your own business and not intruding yourself into the business of other Cabinet officers.

RICHARD RUSK: It's out of your own area of responsibility.

DEAN RUSK: Out of your own area of responsibility. We don't have in this government decisions by Cabinet. It's the President who makes the decisions. They simply don't intrude themselves into matters that are not within the purview of their particular departments. But there are many others. I find it hard to believe that for most of them it is simply a matter of holding onto their jobs. I think for most cabinet officers, they are ready to go any time and take on something else personally: burdens of being a Cabinet officer.

RICHARD RUSK: More of a reason than that would likely be this ethic towards team play--

DEAN RUSK: There is that. There is that. There is that. Some of it comes from assessment of the nature of the opposition. I am sure that there were some people in government who did not resign or openly oppose it because they did not want to associate themselves with some of the strange characters who were out there in opposition.

RICHARD RUSK: Touche.

DEAN RUSK: You have to think about those things before you take office to a degree. Because within a constitutional system of government, you cannot pursue your own personal thoughts on every question that comes up. You are an officer of government. You are expected to act like an officer of government. And unless you are prepared to do that, you better stay out of it.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you come close to it all? Any instance?

DEAN RUSK: No. Not over issues of policy. In the summer of '63 and again in '67 I spoke to both Kennedy and Johnson and told them that they should know that if they wanted to make a change in my office getting ready for the forthcoming election, they should feel free to do so. There would be no problem for me at all. Kennedy told me not to raise that subject again. He wanted me to stay there, that he admired my guts and there were too few people around who had any guts. Lyndon Johnson simply said, "I will not hear of that. I want you to be Secretary of State as long as I am President."

RICHARD RUSK: Were those his exact words?

DEAN RUSK: Yes.

RICHARD RUSK: And Kennedy's exact words?

DEAN RUSK: Each one of them knew that I was not just trying to hang onto that job by my teeth and that I was ready to go any time. They didn't even have to say anything, just had to nod their heads or something and I would be ready to go. That itself achieved a certain amount of independence on my part over against them because they knew that I could leave the next week.

JOHNSON: Did you find John Kennedy's use of task forces that would go out on their own in pursuit of information and policy direction outside of official channels helpful or hurtful to the State Department?

DEAN RUSK: Not particularly, because we were always present with those task forces and always knew what they were doing. When you delegate important matters to a group of wholly independent citizens, from academia or wherever else, you have to be a little careful because they do not share the crucial element of official responsibility. In a sense, they get a "free ride" on their view. They don't have to take the consequences of their own advice. Dean [Gooderham] Acheson was very allergic to such people. He used to call them "just another bunch of sons-of-bitches from out of town." I found that these various advisory groups that we had in the State Department, and almost every bureau had one, were quite useful in giving some ideas to how thoughtful people outside were looking at things. Sometimes they would make suggestions that were worth paying attention to. But I must say, and this may surprise some people, with all that controversy on Vietnam, Nobel Prize winners taking part and all sorts of professors and others, I never heard a new idea on Vietnam come out of all that turmoil that had not long since been thought of, and looked at, and judged in the Department of State. The only genuinely new idea came from dear old Senator George [David] Aiken of Vermont, who once said, "Well, let's just declare we won and get out!" Well, that's a new idea. I think people outside tend to underestimate the intelligence and imagination of people in government who are working on

these matters. For example, a good many scientists, including those who gave us the nuclear weapon, tend to be very patronizing about politicians and policy people. Well, damn it all, we have put behind us now thirty-nine and a half years without firing of a nuclear weapon. And these scientists have no basis on which to be scornful over policy people thus far.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, I've just got one final question here in relation to this public protest thing. And I am not willing to roll over and play dead on it. Would you agree that the lack of a traditional public resignations and protest leads to people like Daniel Ellsberg, Pentagon papers, leaks, the press getting involved in all kinds of confidential things because people don't go public with serious issues and policies--

DEAN RUSK: Ann [S. Dunn], do you think you could put your finger on that book review that I did for the American Journal of International Law on Resignation and Protest?

RICHARD RUSK: I've got it.

DEAN RUSK: All right. (Briefly talks to Ann Dunn, Rusk's secretary)

RICHARD RUSK: Okay. We don't have this tradition that Britain has and it is causing us problems because we don't.

DEAN RUSK: I don't think that tradition here justifies the stealing of government documents.

SCHOENBAUM: Britain has an official secrets act which, as I understand it, would tend to punish those responsible for stealing government documents and leaking them to the press. What's your feeling about that?

DEAN RUSK: I am opposed to a general, official secrets act. I think there is a built-in tension in our system between reporters, whose jobs it is to try and get the story, and officials of government, who sometimes have the obligation to keep their mouths shut. I think the primary responsibility rests upon the officials in government, and I think that this tension is wholesome. If you didn't have reporters burrowing in to get the story, people in government would greatly abuse confidentiality. But there are times when officials have to keep their mouths shut. I don't blame reporters for trying to get the story on a, say, top secret matter, provided they do not use unlawful means to get it: for example, bribery, or the theft of official documents, or things of that sort.

SCHOENBAUM: But as a Channel 8 [Georgia Public Broadcasting Station] program pointed out, if I am a government employee in a sensitive position and I have access to classified documents of a military nature, military secrets, and I give this to a newsman and that newsman publishes it--or that newsman can even enter into negotiations with the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and even the President over the conditions of publication of that document. And there is absolutely no constraint or restraint in our system of a legal nature that would prevent the prior publication, other than an extreme case that has not happened yet. And furthermore, there is no punishment that that newsman will incur. And perhaps the employee would be punished, but the employee is pretty well protected by the newsman and the refusal of

the newsman to give away his sources. Does that make government somewhat difficult to manage? That has to do with the very management of government.

DEAN RUSK: Sometimes. But you know reporters around Washington don't protect their leaks, their sources, nearly to the extent that is commonly supposed. We normally did not have much problem in the State Department in finding out who had leaked to a particular reporter, because a reporter would tell us, if he knew that this would not be made public and the person who did the leaking would not be publicly punished for it. You can find out who does the leaking. And you take that into account when you make assignments, things of that sort. Sometimes it has other consequences. I will turn this off for the moment.

[break in recording]

RICHARD RUSK: It's rolling. Go ahead.

JOHNSON: I was at a conference in Colorado in June--

RICHARD RUSK: Speaking of Roger Hilsman.

JOHNSON: He was rather hot under the collar regarding his relationship with you, particularly during the Cuban Missile Crisis. And he told me that he thought you tempted to stifle his opportunities to make I&R [Intelligence and Research] data available to the President and on other occasions too.

RICHARD RUSK: Were you talking personally with him or did this come out in some address of his?

JOHNSON: Personally.

DEAN RUSK: I just don't think that's true. We were in touch with his Russian people in I&R. So was Llewellyn Thompson, whom we looked to advise us strongly on the Russian side of that. It may be that we didn't ask Roger Hilsman to give us guidance on what we should do. But that wasn't his job.

JOHNSON: I think he also mentioned inability to get information from his Cuban specialists to the NSC [National Security Council] during the Bay of Pigs episode.

DEAN RUSK: Well, that's true, because I was directed not to talk to anybody in the Department about the Bay of Pigs. I wasn't permitted even to talk to the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, which is one of the reasons for the mistake, which I listed in a memorandum I wrote about some of the elements that went into the mistake of the Bay of Pigs.

RICHARD RUSK: I've got to read this one little quote into the record here, from this Russian writer, referring to this public protest bit, Pop. His name was Alexander Galech. And he says, "Where today are the shouters and grippers? They have vanished before they grew old. But the silent ones are now the bosses. And the reason is silence is golden."

DEAN RUSK: (laughter) It's just true that, by and large in our system, there is a respect for the constitutional position of the President over against others in the executive branch. I think it should be that way. You don't want the anarchy that would come about with everybody down the line appealing to a higher law of some sort in pursuing their own individual policies. Because we tend to wrap the mantle of God or of higher law around our own ideas, prejudices, glandular reactions, and I am very cold about appeals to higher laws over against the constitutional President on matters of that sort. Now I may disagree with the President, as a private citizen, and I will say so. But if a President has heard out his Secretary of State and taken the Secretary of State's views into full account, then by and large there is not a very good basis there for a Secretary to resign just because he, himself, would not have done it exactly the way the President was doing it. You see, no two people would have the same views and come to the same conclusions on the many, many issues of foreign policy that come before the executive branch of the government. No two people would handle it the same way. So you've got to leave some room there for the Constitution.

JOHNSON: You know, someone once said that the President is like a cowboy. He goes out and he gathers in the cattle and tries to put them into the corral. And the cattle are spread all over the place and there is a good deal of fragmentation. But his job is to try and bring as many together as possible. And occasionally he will even bring one down from Capitol Hill and try to consult with him and persuade him to come along. My question would be, in gathering people together to support a President's view, what role is played with alliance politics? That is to say, do we attempt to consult with our allies and bring them into the corral too, on important issues?

DEAN RUSK: This matter of consultations has come up for a good deal of discussion, and Marty you might have some comments on this. But one of the problems we run into is the way to consult is to consult. Our allies know what major questions are in front of us. They can read the newspapers as well as anybody else. They know what is going on in the world. But very rarely do they take the initiative to get their own views in during the policy making processes of the United States government. The British Embassy understands this and does so. So that our allies tend to sit there like pouting dowagers, waiting to be persuaded after we have finished our policy making process. At one time during the sixties, Marty, I ran a count on the numbers of initiatives taken by members of NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] to raise issues of discussion in the NATO Council. At that time, the United States had taken the initiative about 10-1 over the rest combined, to bring matters up for discussion in NATO. So these other governments know where the State Department lives. They've got our address. If they've got anything to say, they can say it. But very often, they don't even come to their own conclusions until they have something from us to react to in one way or another. And that's not the way to consult.

JOHNSON: And from what you said earlier, I get the impression that Congress does the same thing. It sits up on the Hill like dowagers.

DEAN RUSK: That's right. In my eight years there I can remember maybe only half a dozen times, in eight years, when a senator would take the initiative to call me on the phone and say, "Next time you're down here, drop by. I want to talk to you about something," or, "Let me come by to see you on my way home. I would like to talk to you about something." Now part of that, I

think, is respect for the busy schedule of a Secretary, and so on; but I think it is, broadly speaking, the view that the initiative for consultation rests with the executive branch.

JOHNSON: You know, the problem I have with the statement you just made is that often Congress and our allies simply don't know enough about policy areas pending to ask the right questions.

DEAN RUSK: If they want to take some time, if they will commit the time to digging into it, which they can do with the help of the executive branch, then they will have a chance to ask what would appear to them to be the right questions. I think we can improve this relationship between the executive and the Congress in a variety of directions. I think we have taken that up on another tape, maybe. But, there is no substitute for frequent and genuine consultation between the executive and legislative branches. Now if the Congress is in a situation where there is nobody that can speak for it, in the absence of an actual vote, then consultation becomes difficult. You can't really consult with 535 people. So the Congress ought to shape itself up in such a way as to present the executive branch with someone with whom to consult, as with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during the 80th Congress, when Arthur [Hendrick] Vandenberg was its chairman.

JOHNSON: No, I didn't mean to go over what we've done before. But it seems to me when we talk about collaborative government, we also need to think about collaborative alliance government. If our policies in this country are going to work, our foreign policies, it seems to me they need to be carried out in coordination with the rest of the western alliance.

DEAN RUSK: Well, there's some interesting and complicated questions there to which I don't have any answer. Suppose that at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis we had simply asked our NATO allies what they would do in a certain circumstance: complete confusion. They would be all over the place. They wouldn't know what to think, what to do, what to recommend. I don't know. Marty, would you agree with me on that?

HILLENBRAND: On the Cuban Missile Crisis? I think that's probably a realistic assessment. I think the only question of what we did, raised in my mind, is whether we--You know, sending out Dean Acheson and people like that to Europe, who sort of had an autocratic way of telling the Europeans what we were going to do. Perhaps, Dean Acheson wasn't necessarily the best man to send to see [Charles Andre Joseph Mario] de Gaulle, and so on, because he did sort of just lay down the law: "This is what we are going to do."

DEAN RUSK: In the beginning, de Gaulle said, "Mr. Acheson, are you consulting me or informing me?" And Dean said, "I'm informing you, Mr. President."

RICHARD RUSK: And de Gaulle said, "That's the way I like it," on an issue of this--

HILLENBRAND: I think that is more a matter of style. But I fully agree that if we had asked for advice, we would have gotten confusing advice. There is one question--has it ever been raised before? That is, the growing practice, which really started during the Kennedy Administration of foreign ambassadors going directly to the White House and seeing the President or seeing senior

officials in the White House, which has grown so that [Ernest] Gruening now has an open sesame. He can see anyone in the White House any time he applies. You may recall that [David] Ormsby Gore and Herve Alphand pretty much had an open door. But poor Ambassador [Wilhelm G.] Grewe, who tried to run with the hounds, didn't make it.

RICHARD RUSK: Who was Ambassador Grewe?

HILLENBRAND: He was the German ambassador.

DEAN RUSK: German ambassador. Kennedy, unfortunately, found him boring. You see, any foreign ambassador in Washington has the right to see the president if he insists upon it. Sometimes presidents are very restless about this and foreign ambassadors normally don't press that. Only rarely do they press it. Our president has to acknowledge that right because frequently we send telegrams to our ambassadors in other countries, instructing them to see the chief of government of that country and give them an urgent message of some sort. And if our ambassadors are going to have that opportunity, we've got to accord that to their ambassadors here. Now Ormsby Gore was a personal friend of John F. Kennedy and saw Kennedy frequently: socially, not just officially. And Alphand, representing de Gaulle, could if he insisted. He didn't do it very often, very rarely in fact. He could see the President and so could any other ambassador if they insisted. But normally they see, in the first instance, the Assistant Secretary of State. Then, I always made myself available to ambassadors if they wanted to see me. There is a little give and take in this.

HILLENBRAND: There should be some reciprocity, you know. Because the Soviets, for example, have played this game very successfully for twenty years. Our ambassador in Moscow doesn't get to see the Chairman of the Communist Party. He seldom gets to see the Foreign Minister. Whereas--

DEAN RUSK: Llewellyn Thompson used to be able to.

HILLENBRAND: That's right. He was pretty much an exception. Whereas [Anatoly F.] Dobrynin can see anyone he wants, any time. In fact as you know, for a long time he had his private entrance into the State Department. He arrived into the basement.

DEAN RUSK: I established that myself so he could come to see me and use my private elevator, and not have reporters swarming all over town trying to find out what he had come to talk about. We've commented on that particular point on another tape.

RICHARD RUSK: So if Kennedy sends a guy like Galbraith out to India, for example, I imagine the State Department would rarely be allowed (unintelligible).

DEAN RUSK: They were not as frequent as some suppose. But India was not a big enough country for John Kenneth Galbraith.

HILLENBRAND: Did you have some interesting relations with him?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, yes.

RICHARD RUSK: You told us about the four stages he personally went through as ambassador.

DEAN RUSK: I told that on another tape. But he would send telegrams back to the Department that were abusive to people in the Department. And we tried to put a stop to that. That's not a function of the Ambassador. He should use at least courteous language when he is making his point.

RICHARD RUSK: How did you explain it to him?

DEAN RUSK: Messages both from me and from McGeorge Bundy over at the White House on behalf of the President told him to cool it.

JOHNSON: Speaking of collaborative government, I don't think we have touched on this. But I find in my research a lot of departments entering into executive agreements without the State Department really being aware of them. One gets the sense we have a dozen State Departments in Washington, D.C., carrying out their own negotiations overseas, some of which can be quite important. Such as military bases--

RICHARD RUSK: Executive agreements put out by the President?

JOHNSON: By the Department of Defense--

DEAN RUSK: The basic agreements on military bases is usually handled by the State Department. I have negotiated on those myself a number of times: Greece, Turkey, Spain, and Portugal, and so forth. But there are always subsidiary things that have to be attended to. And some of those can be handled at the so-called working level between the Defense Department or the local base commander and the local government involved. Usually the American ambassadors are kept informed on things like that, and the State Department is kept informed. If it is anything that involves money, then the Congress has to be a part of it. Now in the trade field, almost every week there comes across my desk an exchange of letters between our government and another government on such things as textile quotas, things like that, which are a part of the process of administering and thereby sometimes amending the formal executive agreements or even treaties. The administration of treaty relationships requires thousands of secondary, tertiary agreements. But the fact that that goes on is known to the appropriate committees in Congress.

JOHNSON: And you don't think they venture out beyond the framework of the original authority.

DEAN RUSK: I don't think so. If they do get beyond the framework, then--

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