

Dean Rusk Oral History Collection

Rusk DD

Dean Rusk interviewed by Richard Rusk and Martin Hillenbrand

circa 1985

DEAN RUSK: Well, on Berlin: Let me just say that I first became involved with the Berlin question when I was in the Operations Division of the General Staff, beginning in June 1945. Although then, we looked at Berlin more or less as a part of the general German question on which we were having great problems with the Soviet Union relating to the occupation of Germany. Then, I was in charge of the United Nations affairs in the State Department under George [Catlett] Marshall at the time of the Berlin Blockade of 1948. That was a very strenuous time and very much before the United Nations, both in New York and when the U.N. went to Paris for its General Assembly meeting of 1948. The Security Council had also been in Paris and the Berlin Blockade was very much alive and on the agenda. I came back to it in a major way in '61 and '62 when Chairman Khrushchev gave JFK an ultimatum on Berlin and the Vienna Summit meeting. I was with the Berlin question well into 1963, although the Cuban Missile Crisis tended to dampen down the intensity of that problem. So I have been involved with Berlin at different stages and in different ways along the way. All right Marty, go along with your questions.

RICHARD RUSK: Incidentally, you were ambassador to Berlin or West Germany in what years?

HILLENBRAND: Oh, that came later, that was '72 to '76.

RICHARD RUSK: You were head of the Task Force?

HILLENBRAND: Part of the time. From '61 to '63 I was Deputy Director and then I became Director when Foy [D.] Kohler went to Moscow.

HILLENBRAND: Some of this background may be a little repetitious, but it will set the stage for the questions I need to ask specifically. After the Vienna Summit meeting between President Kennedy and Chairman Khrushchev, the U.S. [United States] government went through an intensive internal process of preparation for the next round with the Soviets over Berlin. This led to Four Powers meetings at senior officer level, and in August a meeting in Paris with French, British, German Foreign Ministers and the American Secretary of State. Among various U.S. objectives, one was to warn the Soviets and to probe their position as to whether any opportunities might exist to move towards some sort of arrangement on Berlin which would be acceptable to us. At the Paris Foreign Ministers meeting, [Maurice] Couve de Murville, the French Foreign Minister, opposed any discussions with the Soviets as long as the Allied Powers were still under the threat of the Soviet Peace Treaty with the GDR [German Democratic Republic-- East Germany], with all of the implications the Soviets claimed this would have for the western position in Berlin.

Now the specific questions in this context. First, what do you recall as Couve's principal motives for the position which he took? Did he indicate to you, outside of what he said in long speeches at plenary sessions of the Foreign Ministers, what his problem was? Specifically, did he mention what President De Gaulle's position was?

DEAN RUSK: Well, it was very clear that President De Gaulle simply did not want to have any part of any further discussions with the Russians on Berlin and Couve was reflecting President De Gaulle's own position. He told me privately that was De Gaulle's position, and indeed, in at least one private talk with De Gaulle, he told me that was his view. I think De Gaulle had the feeling that if the Russians moved on Berlin, they would only do so if they wanted a general war; that they were not going to move on Berlin; therefore there was no point in talking about it. There was some--It was not a wholly irrational point of view of De Gaulle's because he knew, just as we knew, that there was no real basis for any new agreement on Berlin that would be agreeable both to us and to the Russians. We and the British particularly felt that we at least ought to talk about it further with the Russians and try to talk some of the fever out of the problem, because we were under a kind of ultimatum, in terms of time, from Khrushchev. The Germans were willing for us to have those talks, but they were very nervous about it and rather reluctant bystanders in the talks that Alec Douglas-Home and I had with [Andrei Andreevich] Gromyko. There is no question that Couve's attitude was determined by De Gaulle's very firm position that we should not enter into any negotiations with the Russians over Berlin.

HILLENBRAND: Why did the U.S., and you specifically, insist on going ahead with what were called "exploratory talks?" To determine if the basis for negotiation existed, that was the formula that was used, I believe, despite this French opposition?

DEAN RUSK: We felt that although we could not see clearly any basis for a reasonable solution to Berlin by agreement with the Russians, that nevertheless we ought to talk about it further. And Alec Douglas-Home and I decided we would talk just as long and just as repetitively as would Gromyko. So I do not know how impatient Gromyko got with us because he was not used to that kind of conduct by the West. So Alec Douglas-Home and I just talked, and talked, and talked. We repeated ourselves and made the same arguments over and over again and just decided to talk the matter to death. We did not really believe that there was any basis for a fresh agreement that would meet both our and Soviet demands, and so when we called it "exploratory talks" we tried to signal that we did not necessarily expect a successful conclusion.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, wasn't the search to see whether or not a basis for negotiations existed, wasn't that sort of a trade-off position where John Kennedy, on the one hand, was more or less an action-oriented president who wanted to find the solution, open up negotiations; and you didn't really think there was any possible basis for negotiations, and so you more or less took this other route: go ahead and talk and see if they search for a basis of negotiation, realizing there was probably not a solution?

DEAN RUSK: If the Soviets had come back with some major changes in the views expressed by Khrushchev at Vienna, then it is possible that something might have opened up. You see, we based ourselves on the position that we, and the British, and the French were in Berlin on the same basis on which the Russians were in Germany and in East Berlin. That is, we were

victorious powers in WWII, and that our rights in Berlin were ours by reason of that fact, and that the Russians could not give away something that they themselves did not have: namely, rights over our position in Berlin. We made that point very strongly with Gromyko more than once. The Russians could not, as we looked at it, give to the East Germans anything that impinged upon our rights on Berlin because those rights in Berlin were not at the disposal of the Russians; they were ours by right of conquest.

HILLENBRAND: In reacting to the French position, you at times, as I recall, expressed the view that they simply did not understand or comprehend that there was a nuclear issue involved somewhere in the background: that one had to, in good faith, explore every possibility of at least delaying any possible confrontation which might graze nuclear issues?

DEAN RUSK: Well, De Gaulle was completely sure in his own mind that the Russians would not seize Berlin by force. We were not so sure because Khrushchev had gotten himself way out in front on a major public commitment on this issue. And so we did not think that we could simply sit tight and rest on the assurance that they would not seize Berlin. You see, Berlin is there, one hundred and something miles inside of East Germany, surrounded by East German and Russian forces, that has only a token force of British, French, and American soldiers in it. It looked like a tempting target from the point of view of the Russians. It looked like something that should be easy to squeeze off, and since it was a thorn in their flesh, there in Germany, as a kind of island of freedom which had demonstrated rather extraordinary abilities to recover. Berlin was an embarrassment to them, and indeed we ourselves used Berlin for certain broadcasts into East Germany and the Eastern Bloc. It was a nuisance and it looked very vulnerable from a military point of view. And one of the points that Alec Douglas-Home and I had to make with Gromyko was that it was not vulnerable because the U.S., France, and Great Britain were there, and they should forget any idea of considering Berlin a vulnerable place. De Gaulle was relying wholly on his conviction that they would not seize Berlin by force. We felt that one cannot be all that sure of it, and so we undertook the talks.

HILLENBRAND: Now a related question would be whether, during that crisis, or perhaps afterwards, did you ever hear any hints from the Soviet's side, perhaps Gromyko, of perhaps swapping Cuba for Berlin?

DEAN RUSK: Not at that stage, no.

HILLENBRAND: Did that come afterwards?

DEAN RUSK: There was a little trace of a hint of that when Gromyko met with President Kennedy on the Thursday before Kennedy's speech on the Cuban Missile Crisis, but we did not pick up on that and go down that trail because we could not trade West Berlin for Cuba.

HILLENBRAND: Before you actually got involved in the exploratory talks, the wall went up in August of 1961 separating the eastern sector of Berlin from the western sector. Did you share the view of some advisors to President Kennedy that the wall would relieve the need for Soviet pressure on Berlin? And how did you react immediately to the building of the wall?

DEAN RUSK: We had thought, back in the summer of '61, that the East Germans and the Russians would have to do something about the rapidly increasing mass flow of people from East Germany to the West, not only in numbers but also the quality of people who were coming across: their professional people, their engineers, and people like that. This hemorrhage would bleed them to death and they would have to take some steps to change it. Now the actual means they used, the building of the wall, caught me, personally, somewhat by surprise. But when it occurred, it was clear to me that they had built the wall to keep their own people in, they did not build the wall to keep us out or anything like that, and that it was a startling demonstration of the nature of their society. We early came to the conclusion, as far as the U.S. was concerned the wall itself was not an issue of war and peace between us and the Soviet Union. There was a good deal of excitement, particularly in Berlin, but also in Germany, about the wall and our acceptance of the wall. So there was a political and psychological problem of considerable dimensions there. We did not seriously consider using tanks or any other form of force to try and knock the wall down. Had we done so, either we would have had an immediate confrontation with Soviet forces or they simply would have moved the wall back maybe fifty yards, one hundred yards.

RICHARD RUSK: That was never a serious option?

DEAN RUSK: We never seriously took up the question--

RICHARD RUSK: The fact that the Soviets put that wall up gradually, was that an indication?

DEAN RUSK: No, the wall itself went up instantaneously in the form at least of barbed wire and things like that. They later then built it into a much more substantial wall.

HILLENBRAND: While these things were going on, the U.S. was engaging in a military buildup. We called up the Reserves and we sent additional forces, or planned to send additional forces, to the Federal Republic and to Berlin. So after your first rather inconclusive round of talks with Gromyko in September on the margin of the General Assembly session, did you and the President feel that these U.S. military measures that were being taken, would over time significantly affect the Soviet position?

DEAN RUSK: Well, it is true that President Kennedy, in direct response to the Berlin Crisis, asked for several billion dollars more money for our defense budget, and called up some of our National Guard and Reserve units, and we began beefing up our forces in West Germany. We did that partly to impress upon Mr. Khrushchev that we considered this an utterly serious problem, and to try to get him to realize that a move on Berlin would be the gravest possible kind of crisis. After all, in Vienna in June 1961, when Khrushchev said that if we interfered with what he was going to do with the East Germans in Berlin that there would be war, Kennedy looked at him at one point and said, "Then Mr. Chairman, there will be war. It is going to be a very cold winter." So one of our problems was to convince Mr. Khrushchev that there was a high probability that those damn fool Americans might do something about it if he put through his plans on Berlin, and that buildup of forces there was part of that procedure.

RICHARD RUSK: Did Kennedy's measures with the Reserve call-ups, and the arms buildup, and the draft increase, was that more or less in accordance with your advice?

DEAN RUSK: I was in agreement with it.

HILLENBRAND: The NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] administrative meeting in Paris in early December led to further complications with the French, both in the drafting of the communique and in their general opposition to any further exploratory talks on your part with the Soviets. Do you recall any interesting sidelights of that Paris meeting which would throw further light on the French attitude? Was Foreign Minister Couve being kept on a tight line by De Gaulle? And were the British and West Germans generally supportive of your position?

DEAN RUSK: Well, the NATO Foreign Ministers, with the exception of the French, were unanimous that we should continue these talks with the Soviet Union, but we got locked-up on one word in the communique having to do with the talks. Couve would not accept it; all the others insisted upon accepting it. We spent most of a day on that one word, and I got Couve in the corridor and asked him why he did not telephone President De Gaulle and clear the way to go along with the overwhelming majority. At that moment he said, "One does not call President De Gaulle." But later I learned that, in fact, he had talked with President De Gaulle on the phone, and his instructions had been confirmed. As a result of that experience, I told my NATO Foreign Minister colleagues that thereafter I would not spend more than fifteen minutes on a communique, and if it took longer than fifteen minutes I would absent myself.

RICHARD RUSK: Were you working with English as the draft language there?

DEAN RUSK: Well, English and French.

HILLENBRAND: I do not recall the precise word, but it obviously had to do with the question of whether these exploratory talks would go on or that they would cease?

DEAN RUSK: That's right.

HILLENBRAND: Did you have any--as a result of your talks with Gromyko in the early fall and the subsequent communications with the Soviets--did you leave any impression that the Soviet position was changing in any way.

DEAN RUSK: Well, the talks with Gromyko started off with Gromyko taking a very hard boiled line, such as Khrushchev had taken in Vienna. And he repeated this statement that Khrushchev had made that if there was interference from the West there would be war. Well, at that point I said to Gromyko, "Well now wait a minute, if you want war, you can have war in five minutes. All you have to do is start one. But if you do not want war, then we better talk about this some more. But those talks at the beginning were rather tough. But then the rest of the time we simply explored the possibility of various alternatives. But we could not find any that seemed to be attractive to both sides. And I would think, rather than the Soviets agreeing to anything, they simply modified and backed away from their ultimatum and sort of petered out as an issue. I still have in my mind, and I do not know when you want to get into this, that somehow the missiles in Cuba were related to their views on Berlin. I mentioned that in his talk on the Thursday before Kennedy's television speech Gromyko rather hinted that there might be some

basis for some agreement involving both Berlin and Cuba, but we did not go down that trail. And then later on, we were told by a fairly senior official that they were going to tell us about these missiles in Cuba sometime after our elections in November of that year, because they were going to put those missiles in Cuba privately and quickly, and then return to the Berlin question later in the fall, and at that time tell us about the missiles in Cuba as a further bargaining weight with respect to Berlin.

HILLENBRAND: Now, where did that information come from?

DEAN RUSK: From a high Russian official.

DEAN RUSK: How accurate that story is, I have no way of knowing. Whether that impression we got from that Russian official was the accurate one, I do not know.

RICHARD RUSK: The fact that you had cordial and personal relationships, not only on an official basis, with Gromyko and some of these fellows, did that type of thing come out because of the relationship you had there? I am sure this was not communicated by the--

DEAN RUSK: No, cordiality is not the word. They were not warm in a personal sense. To begin with they were correct from a diplomatic point of view. Both sides treated the other with impeccable personal courtesy. But I would not call it the kind of cordiality and warmth that is rooted in genuine friendship.

RICHARD RUSK: Was that--that was fairly closely handled. Obviously you told Kennedy.

DEAN RUSK: I do not think it has been told. I have not seen it anywhere.

HILLENBRAND: I have not seen it anywhere either.

DEAN RUSK: Had you ever heard it?

HILLENBRAND: Well I heard it from you. That is all. Well as you will recall, the first few months of 1962 were devoted to intensive but inconclusive discussions in Moscow between Ambassador [Llewellyn E.] Thompson [Jr.] and senior Soviet officials leading up to your meetings with Gromyko in Geneva in late winter, I believe.

DEAN RUSK: That might have been either at the opening of the Disarmament Conference in Geneva or the Laos talks.

HILLENBRAND: It was the Laos talks. On the American side, the State Department was developing a so-called "principles paper." Was there any reason, as you recall, to think that the Soviet position might have changed to the extent of actually making this "principles paper" a subject of discussion, a serious subject of discussion?

DEAN RUSK: No, I do not. We never tabled such a "principles paper" with the Soviets or anything like that.

HILLENBRAND: I think you gave it to them informally. You gave it to Gromyko. You handed it to him.

DEAN RUSK: Did I? Okay. All right.

HILLENBRAND: Well, actually while you were meeting with Gromyko in Geneva you will recall that we were having problems in the air corridors to Berlin. The Soviets were dropping chaff in the air corridors. They were trying to preempt altitudes, and so on. Did this become part of the discussions you had with the Soviets?

DEAN RUSK: Oh yes, indeed. And I recall one session very vividly because Sir Alec Douglas-Home, who is normally kind of a mild-mannered kind of man, turned to Gromyko on this dropping of the chaff in the air lanes and other kinds of harassments--

RICHARD RUSK: That would disrupt radar?

DEAN RUSK: No, it would disrupt our air flights into Berlin, and it could disrupt radar. Alec Douglas-Home gave Gromyko unshirted hell on this matter, and just hit him right between the eyes. He said, "This has got to stop. This must stop. You just must not, and cannot, do this." I even think Gromyko was even a little startled at the intensity of Alec Douglas-Home's remarks. But that was very much a part of our discussions with Gromyko.

RICHARD RUSK: Did we lose any airplanes over there?

DEAN RUSK: And they dropped it fairly soon thereafter.

HILLENBRAND: It was, as you recall, quite noteworthy that flights continued, both civilian flights and military flights, without any real disturbances, despite the dropping of the chaff and the preempted attempt to put Soviet planes at altitudes below ten thousand feet where we were flying. General [Lauris] Norstad was, of course, very much involved.

RICHARD RUSK: Was there Soviet fighter plane harassment?

DEAN RUSK: Not really.

HILLENBRAND: Close passes but no (unintelligible) runs. Prior to your first session with Gromyko in Geneva you met with German Foreign Minister [Gerhard] Schroder in a villa outside of the city to try out the principles paper on him. Do you have any thoughts about his reaction?

DEAN RUSK: No, I found Schroder a very agreeable colleague. He was pretty sophisticated and he apparently was personally not as nervous as some of his own German colleagues were about what might happen in these talks. He wanted to be kept informed as to what was happening in the talks, and Douglas-Home and I agreed to do that. I think Schroder knew that we, the British and the Americans, were not going to sell out the Germans in Berlin. I think that

was the basic source of his relaxed view and his contentment on the matter. But you during this period I did something that the French, again, did not like very--much. It had been customary for the French, British, and American Foreign Ministers to meet in connection with every NATO Foreign Ministers Meeting: have their own meeting about German and Berlin questions. Well, I insisted that the German Foreign Minister be asked to join that group. The French did not like that very much. I insisted, so the German Foreign Minister regularly became a member of that special meeting of Foreign Ministers over Berlin and Germany.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, I have a related question to that. Were you convinced, in your own mind--and perhaps this is not the kind of thing you want to read into any oral history--but there has been some speculation that John Kennedy was "soft on nukes," that he worried that his policy actions with respect to Berlin and other issues might take this country into a nuclear war which we would not survive as a country. How far, in your own mind, were we willing to go, was John Kennedy willing to go to defend American interests?

DEAN RUSK: No one can answer that question. Only he could have answered it, and he did not have to face the problem. Now when people call him "soft on nukes" they're abusing the English language. Soon after he took office, John F. Kennedy spent much of the day with three or four of us going through the total effects of a full nuclear war, both direct and indirect. So we knew something about what the use of nuclear weapons would mean. So he was not itchy to use nuclear weapons. Now if that means being "soft on nukes," all right. Anybody who is not "soft on nukes" ought to go to an insane institution and have themselves treated.

HILLENBRAND: Coming back to your meetings with Gromyko: First of all, in reference to the harassments in the air corridors, did he react at all when you raised the subject with him, as you said you did?

DEAN RUSK: Well, Gromyko does not visibly react to almost anything that is said. He has a genuine poker face, and things like that. I have no doubt that he reported his conversations with us on that point back to Moscow, and Alec Douglas-Home's blow-up might have had some effect in Moscow in getting them to come off that kind of nonsense.

HILLENBRAND: Do you recall how he reacted when you informally gave them a copy of the "principles paper?"

DEAN RUSK: No, I just do not remember that.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, for the purpose of this oral history, do you recall what the principle points of that paper were?

DEAN RUSK: Ask Marty.

HILLENBRAND: Well, I have not seen the paper for over twenty years, the text of the paper. As I recall, it tried to create a framework for a modus vivendi on Berlin. In fact I think the word "modus vivendi" was used. And it tried to create that framework by first of all establishing the inviolability of the Allied position of the three western sectors of Berlin, but then offering what

might have seemed to be face-saving little concessions with regard to the role of the GDR. This question had come up before. Even during the Eisenhower administration there was a so-called "Solution C" which was supposed to be the ultimate fallback position of the Allies if we ever got into serious negotiations with the Soviets. Solution C contemplated letting the East Germans act as agents at the check points, even as far as Allied military traffic was concerned, if the Soviets specifically said they were acting as agents of the Soviets. Well, obviously this "principles paper" did not go into any details of that kind, nor did it refer to Solution C. But the path was at least, by implication if not by direct mention, left open for some sort of a compromise on the actual procedures at the checkpoints.

RICHARD RUSK: I think access was the main issue.

HILLENBRAND: Access was the main issue. That's right.

[Deletion at Mr. Rusk's request]

HILLENBRAND: If you will recall, bringing the U.N. into the Berlin problem periodically came up as a possibility or as an option, but it was never seriously put forward?

DEAN RUSK: The Berlin question was before the Security Council for some very strenuous sessions there during that period of the blockade, both in New York and in Paris. I remember a famous meeting in Paris of the Security Council over Berlin. The hall was absolutely crammed with onlookers, and Philip [C.] Jessup was our representative.

RICHARD RUSK: What year was this?

DEAN RUSK: That was '48. George Marshall later, at a luncheon in Paris, expressed his great appreciation for our having someone like Phil Jessup to represent us at this dangerous time. During that session, in this crowded hall, Mrs. [Lois Walcott Kellogg] Jessup was in the public audience listening. While Phil was speaking, she was knitting. A French usher came down the aisle and looked over at her very severely and said, "You must not knit, it is disrespectful to the speaker." Mrs. Jessup said, "But I am his wife. The speaker is my husband." The usher sort of stiffened up and went back up the aisle, and a few moments later came back down the aisle and bowed to her and said, "You are to knit."

HILLENBRAND: She did not say, "I always knit when he speaks."?

DEAN RUSK: Well, in one of these sessions in New York on the Berlin Blockade, the American and Soviet representatives, Gromyko being the Soviet representative, [were] going at each other hammer-and-tongs. And a friend of mine was sitting next to Mrs. Gromyko in the public audience, listening. At one point my friend turned to her and said, "What do you think of these proceedings?" She said, "These men are playing such childish and dangerous games." I will never forget that remark. Here this peasant hausfrau wisdom came to the front in her remark: childish and dangerous games. I've thought of that often.

HILLENBRAND: Coming back once more to the so-called "principles paper" because, as you

recall, it leaked out, or at least a version of it leaked out, and caused quite a furor in Germany with the German press. Chancellor [Konrad] Adenauer was unhappy, and all of this to the great embarrassment of Foreign Minister Schroder, who had more or less given his approval to it. Then, after all this happened, did Schroder ever communicate to you privately or in any way indicate that he was put in a difficult position by the leak?

DEAN RUSK: I do not recall whether he ever mentioned it to me or not. I know that it did. I do not quite know--where did that leak initiate?

HILLENBRAND: It came out of the Germans--probably out of the German Foreign Ministry because there were always people in the Ministry who were opposed to what they thought was too soft a line. They were systematically leaking things out which they thought would first of all, get the chancellor excited, and secondly would lead to unfavorable press comments.

DEAN RUSK: Adenauer was always inclined to take a very hard view on these German issues in principle, but we have some reservations about how deeply he meant them. He always insisted that we proclaim our dedication to the idea of the reunification of Germany. Well, I do not believe that Adenauer wanted the reunification of Germany, for all sorts of domestic, political, and other considerations. The Germans were always nervous as cats on these issues, so we had to keep an eye on that. Adenauer was a very great man and rendered a great service, both to Germany and to the West, in the postwar period. He was not the most accomplished diplomat. Everytime I called on him, for example, he would spend the first ten minutes reminiscing about the good old days of John Foster Dulles. I found this very amusing because I had known Dulles very well, and during the '50s, Dulles use to talk to me about the problems he was having with Konrad Adenauer. (laughter)

HILLENBRAND: Although you met again with Gromyko when he came to New York for the General Assembly session in the fall of '62, it was clear that your talks with him on Berlin had pretty much reached a dead end. Moreover, the Cuban Missile Crisis was on the imminent horizon. Looking back now, what do you think that your rounds of discussions with him over a year accomplished within the general context of American and Allied handling of the Berlin Crisis?

DEAN RUSK: I think the principal result was that we talked the fever out of the problem. I think the basic approach that Alec Douglas-Home and I adopted worked to a considerable degree, that we would just talk, and talk, and talk, and talk, and talk the problem to death. Well, I remember talks I had with [Anatoly] Dobrynin about Berlin during that period. We got to a point where we would refer to each other's arguments by the numbers. If a question came up one of us would say, "Well, that is our argument number four. Should we go over it or should we just pass on to another subject?" Well, even then you were making some progress in terms of talking the fever out of the matter. But I had a good many talks with Dobrynin about Berlin, underneath the talks with Gromyko. I think we finally, at least for that period, talked the fever out of it. Now, it may be that the Russians would have returned to Berlin if they had succeeded in putting the missiles into Cuba. Who knows? One interesting question to me to which I have no answer, is why Khrushchev did not seize Berlin during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Had he done so, then our European allies would have looked at us in dismay and said, "Now look what you damned

Americans have done. You have gotten us into all this trouble over Cuba." And there would have been considerable disarray in the NATO Alliance had he done so.

HILLENBRAND: That raises an interesting question. As you know, there was some concern in the White House and the State Department that the logical place where the Soviets would react would be Berlin. There was a task force working in the White House planning for such a possible Soviet reaction in Berlin. Was this purely a logical deduction on our part or was there some evidence that the Soviets ever considered reacting in Berlin?

DEAN RUSK: We never had any evidence that the Soviets were about to move on Berlin during the Cuban Missile Crisis. It was a deduction, both from that hint that Gromyko had made in his talk on that famous Thursday, as well as simply of the logic of the situation. We had overwhelming superiority in conventional forces in the vicinity of Cuba. Florida was about to sink under the ocean with the weight of military power we had assembled there. They had similar overwhelming conventional capabilities in the area of Berlin, so we had to look at it as a real possibility.

RICHARD RUSK: And were the choices really--was our conventional position so weak over there, not only American forces but NATO forces as well--that we were really facing problems down there?

DEAN RUSK: The forces that were actually located in Berlin had no capability of resisting the weight of power that the East Germans and Russians could have thrown against them. And the forces that we had back in West Germany were not of a scale that could have driven through to Berlin, through the Soviet divisions that were there. So it would have led very quickly to general war had that situation developed.

HILLENBRAND: Although many writers on the Berlin crisis have said that the crisis actually ended more or less with the resolution of the Cuban missile situation, the fact remains that as late as September of 1963 the Soviets harassed and blocked American military access to Berlin on the Autobahn.

DEAN RUSK: Let's see, was that over the issue of tailgate inspections?

HILLENBRAND: Tailgate inspections. That's right. And at least at the time it seemed like it was a major crisis.

RICHARD RUSK: I can remember that as a kid.

HILLENBRAND: It may have been only the last gasp of Mr. Khrushchev, but--

DEAN RUSK: Issues involving Berlin got to be a little like the dance of the gooney birds on Wake Island. There was a good deal of posturing on both sides. Every little thing got to have a symbolic character. Such issues as the height of the tailgates on our trucks and whether or not we would lower them to let the Russian people at the check points look into the trucks and things like that--those took on a most absurd political significance at the time. Yet we were very much

concerned about the possibility that the Russians would simply, by a succession of such things, nibble us to death there in Berlin, not through some big, single dramatic move, but by constant erosion of our position there. So we had to watch those things pretty carefully.

HILLENBRAND: Known as slicing the salami.

DEAN RUSK: That's right.

RICHARD RUSK: Were there flashpoints in that crisis: moments when you thought war, if not inevitable, was at least extremely likely?

DEAN RUSK: During the Berlin crisis?

RICHARD RUSK: Yeah. The tank confrontation, for example, would that have been one of them?

DEAN RUSK: At the time of the building of the wall?

RICHARD RUSK: Yeah.

DEAN RUSK: I don't think that the Berlin crisis ever reached the high point of danger that the Cuban Missile Crisis did. It was a serious crisis, because we could never know what this fellow Khrushchev was going to do. He was impulsive, unpredictable. He was a passionate Russian and dedicated communist. One thing that we did not know and we have never known about the Russians is the relationship among the various figures in the Politbureau. That is a crucial piece of information that we have just never known. The Russians have an extraordinary capacity to keep their mouths shut on such things.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you have the feeling that Khrushchev was really in control of his position.

DEAN RUSK: Oh, yeah. He was in control until he left office.

RICHARD RUSK: You don't see his handling of the Berlin crisis, and Soviet responses, in any way influenced by domestic Soviet politics?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, I don't know. Who knows about motivations? I think it's possible that his inability to get what he wanted in Berlin, plus the Cuban Missile Crisis helped to bring him down when he was removed from office. But I suspect a good part of that was his one-man rule and his colleagues in the Politbureau reached a point where they just didn't want to take this anymore.

RICHARD RUSK: I've got one question, and while you're here I'll ask it. Ted [Theodore Chaikin] Sorensen [Jr.] reports John Kennedy was "highly pleased with your performance." In the aftermath of all this there were some times when he was a little irritated with the smoothness of the State Department response and all that. Did Kennedy ever personally talk to you about your performance and convey this message to you?

DEAN RUSK: Kennedy didn't waste breath on that sort of thing. We just went on with a day's work. I did in the summer of 1963 tell him privately that if he wanted to make a change in my job, to get ready for the election of '64, that it was perfectly agreeable with me and he would have no problem with me if he wanted to do that. He said, "No." He said, "Don't bring that up again. I like your guts. I don't have many people around me here that have any guts."

RICHARD RUSK: Was the Foreign Service more or less behind Dean Rusk and his handling of the crisis there, or do you remember fights within the--

HILLENBRAND: No. There were no fights within the bureaucracy. Things were handled a lot more cleanly than in subsequent years. And the responsibility for making Berlin policy was pretty much left to the Secretary of State and the people who were advising him. There were intergovernmental or interdepartmental groups, most notably the Berlin Task Force, which served as a coordinating body. But the diffusion of responsibility which has characterized some later administrations simply didn't exist there. I think the State Department was solidly, to the best of my knowledge solidly, behind what the Secretary was doing. There were a few dissenters in the Legal Adviser's office and so on, but that didn't play a major role.

DEAN RUSK: You know, this raises an interesting little point. Since I never expected, in the world, to be Secretary of State, I didn't have any team with me when I went into the State Department. So my constituency was the Foreign Service. I knew a lot of the leaders of the Foreign Service. I had great confidence in them, and we used the Foreign Service very heavily. We had fellows like Martin Hillenbrand and Llewellyn Thompson, [Charles E.] Chip Bohlen, [James W.] Jimmy Riddleberger, a real top generation of professionals in the Department in my time. That was a great source of strength throughout the whole period. I once told a Foreign Service luncheon that, "You are my constituency." And it was generally true. I didn't have any other constituency--political or otherwise.

HILLENBRAND: Since you raised this question of delays in the State Department in responding to the Soviet note--

DEAN RUSK: Let me introduce your account of this with one quick remark. We thought that the reply to Khrushchev's ultimatum ought to be on a Four-Power basis. When you try to negotiate such a document, that itself takes time. People have to keep going back to their governments, their governments keep coming back suggesting changes, so it's not an easy problem. Some delay was inevitable under the circumstances, but Marty, you go ahead with your account.

HILLENBRAND: We produced the draft, which the Secretary signed off on, and went over to the White House within about a week or ten days at the most. Then there was absolute silence for a period. And when we began to make inquiries as to where the draft was and whether it was satisfactory, we got embarrassed evasions from the White House. Finally someone, rather shamefacedly, admitted they had lost the draft. Well, we immediately sent over another copy, of course. And again there was dead silence from the White House. Then we found, somewhat to our own amazement, the second draft had been locked up in the safe of one of the White House

staff members, who had then gone off on a two-week holiday and no one could get into the safe. Well, in the meanwhile, of course, we had circulated the draft to the French, the British, and the Germans as an informal draft, because we knew there would be some changes requested. At that point, obviously, people in the White House were trying to cover their tracks to the President, who was expressing impatience.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you think they ever explained to John Kennedy?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, for crying out loud!

HILLENBRAND: No, no, no. Because you can see, if you read both Sorensen and [Arthur Meier] Schlesinger's [Jr.] account, they blame it all on the State Department.

RICHARD RUSK: They sure do. Do you remember who the staff person was that locked the thing up?

HILLENBRAND: It was a fellow who later became active in New Jersey politics: Tom Dungan.

RICHARD RUSK: It wasn't Arthur Schlesinger?

HILLENBRAND: No. No. It wasn't Arthur Schlesinger.

DEAN RUSK: Oh, Arthur Schlesinger was not in the "chain" over there in the White House. He was sitting over there with the social secretaries in the East Wing of the White House.

HILLENBRAND: The worst was yet to come because--well, I won't say the worst--there was more to come. Finally--

RICHARD RUSK: Did you ever tell, did you know that? Did you know this story?

DEAN RUSK: I didn't know about the--I don't recall that I remember that the document was lost.

HILLENBRAND: Well, you signed a memorandum explaining some of this. It was rather gentle because it was all rather embarrassing. And then you will recall perhaps that after the draft had finally been resurrected and people had had a chance to go at it--the French, and the British and the Germans also had to have a chance to go at it--the White House didn't like the style because it was too factual. Then they let Ted Sorensen redraft it. It came out with very flowery language, but not language that you could use in sending a note, a formal document to the Soviets. The French, the British, and the Germans would never have accepted it. So that led to further delays as that flowery language got toned down a little bit. And then of course, the compromise, you will recall, was that the President used some of the flowery language in the speech which he made. And the response to the Soviet Aide Memoire, was in a tone which was more conventionally diplomatic, rather than oratorical.

DEAN RUSK: You see, long experience teaches you that in writing notes and Aides Memoires,

official communications; you try to keep the purple adjectives and adverbs out of it as much as you can. You just use very measured tones.

HILLENBRAND: When John Kennedy expressed irritation at the delay for the State Department response, and I'm sure he did that to you personally--did he?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, he might have. He might have.

RICHARD RUSK: You never bothered to inform him about this--

HILLENBRAND: Well, there was a memorandum that the Secretary sent over there, but I think it was diverted from-- (laughter). There is no evidence that Kennedy ever saw that memorandum.

RICHARD RUSK: Were you and John Kennedy eye-to-eye on the need and your wishes to develop a multilateral approach and to try to work with the U.N. where you could take time and not try to rush out there and commit ourselves to an action?

DEAN RUSK: Well, he knew and we knew that we had to work with the British, the French, and the Germans on this matter. He wasn't resistant to that idea. He could be impatient at the delay that was required at times, but--

RICHARD RUSK: When you were in accord on it, did you agree on it or did you use the slowness of the response itself--you know, the delays caused by the bureaucracy--in going to these powers as a means of influencing policy?

DEAN RUSK: No.

RICHARD RUSK: You didn't do that?

DEAN RUSK: No. No.

RICHARD RUSK: Marty, do you have any more?

HILLENBRAND: I think that exhausts the questions I had.

RICHARD RUSK: Well, I can always go on.

DEAN RUSK: Now, Marty, were you involved in the Russian negotiations in the early seventies that led to the new Four-Power agreement--

HILLENBRAND: Yes. As Assistant Secretary of State, I was in charge of the Intergovernmental Coordinating Committee.

DEAN RUSK: I might say, Richard, that during the Berlin Crisis of '61-'62, I was asked by a reporter what my hopes were with regard to Berlin. I said, "I hope to be able to pass this problem along to my successor." Now, that itself was quite an accomplishment--to pass it along rather

than to have it blow up in our faces. And we succeeded in doing that. Then in the early Nixon years, with Ambassador [Kenneth] Rush conducting our side of the negotiations partly, the Russians, the British, the French, and ourselves concluded a new agreement on Berlin. That has, so far, served pretty well to keep Berlin away from being a flashpoint of violence among the great powers.

HILLENBRAND: Well, it's had one ironic effect, and that is that it has been, probably, the principal reason for the increasing provincialization of Berlin. The Berliners always lived off excitement and tension and feeling they were on the front line. Now this agreement has worked so well that that tension has left the city and it has had a negative effect on morale.

DEAN RUSK: We had occasional bits of tension with the Germans over one aspect of the Berlin problem. The Federal Republic of Germany wanted to go as far as it could to incorporate West Berlin into the Federal Republic. For example, the occasional meeting in which they would elect their president met once or twice in West Berlin. The Russians didn't like that at all. We had some reservations about how far the West Germans should be allowed to go in this direction because, the more they asserted their own authority in West Berlin, the more this undermined our authority as victorious powers in World War II, and weakened our position over against the Russians. So, we had occasional tensions with the West Germans over that, but we ironed them out.

HILLENBRAND: You will recall that in the Four-Power agreement of '71, the language was specifically inserted that the western sectors of Berlin are not a constitutive part of the Federal Republic, nor are they governed by it. That was the price the Federal Republic had to pay for many of the other concessions which the East was willing to incorporate in the agreement.

DEAN RUSK: Now, the Federal Republic, from time to time, in enacting its own laws has extended application of those laws to West Berliners. And so far, that has not created great problems.

HILLENBRAND: But we've always, of course, through what is known as an umbrella procedure, every time before a law legally takes effect in West Berlin, it has to be approved by the three commandants.

DEAN RUSK: That's right.

HILLENBRAND: So that our authority is still maintained there. Those portions of the Basic Law, the West German Constitution, that would, in effect, amount to total incorporation of West Berlin into the Federal Republic have been suspended ever since 1949 when the Basic Law was first passed and remain suspended today. We have certain residual powers as--

DEAN RUSK: Well, we even conducted a trial over there.

HILLENBRAND: It turned out to be a fiasco.

DEAN RUSK: --Federal District Judge--

HILLENBRAND: The judge they sent over there was a crusading judge and he was trying a hijacking case and the plane landed in West Berlin. And, you know, our normal position would be that a hijacker should be punished, but we made exceptions simply because they were refugees from Eastern Europe. But the judge took the case in his own hands and ran with it, much to the embarrassment of the U.S. government. (laughter)

RICHARD RUSK: --independence of the judiciary. Pop, my remaining questions more or less deal with Vienna and various things before and afterwards. I don't know what your time commitments are, yours in particular, and I could work this in at any time.

HILLENBRAND: Fine. I think we've covered the subjects that I wanted to cover pretty well. Because I think you've never been given adequate credit by people who have written on the subject for the way you handled that year of discussion with Gromyko and the important role it played in buying time, and I think in eventually easing the intensive confrontation over Berlin. I think it's important to get this on the record.

DEAN RUSK: I'm not looking for credit.

HILLENBRAND: No, but I mean it's--

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, here's my problem. When I write my book, I don't want to spend a whole lot of time on foreign policy, which can best be done by other people, but I wanted to pick out one instance of policy that would be representative of my dad's work out there. It seemed to me Berlin would be a good one to write up in some detail and just see how it all worked out--in which patient diplomacy can succeed.

DEAN RUSK: I was hoping to do what was possible to take the fever out of a lot of hot spots. I once told some reporters that I would like to see a time when foreign policy news was on page twelve of the newspapers instead of page one, when the situation would be so calm and serene that they wouldn't even be much interested in it, or to find a time when the Secretary of State could cross the Atlantic by ship again instead of by airplane. George Marshall was the last Secretary to cross the Atlantic by ship. Now they frantically fly across.

RICHARD RUSK: With the kind of sailor you are, that's something you wouldn't like. (laughter) I remember my dad getting sick with a salmon boat bobbing up and down along a dock in San Francisco before it even left the dock.

END OF SIDE 1

BEGINNING OF SIDE 2

DEAN RUSK: --physics investigation with the Russians. We were talking about joining with

them to build a very, very modern, sophisticated thing that would take considerable space, maybe a few miles, to blow these atomic particles to the ground, and so forth. And some of us had the idea that that should be located on the Autobahn to Berlin.

HILLENBRAND: That was in the sixties.

DEAN RUSK: If there were some international presences along that Autobahn it would be less likely the Russians would head it off and they wouldn't play games with it.

HILLENBRAND: Also, you may recall that there was a proposal which never was put forward that the Autobahn be internationalized under general U.N. supervision.

DEAN RUSK: In retrospect it was a great mistake for us to agree--when was it? In London in '43?--when we negotiated with the Russians about where our respective armies would wind up in Germany.

RICHARD RUSK: What was the name of that conference?

HILLENBRAND: The European Advisory Commission.

DEAN RUSK: --and our representative--Marty's going to supply the name--the Ambassador there, agreed, in working out the agreement for Berlin, did not ask for a land corridor to Berlin. And he said later that he didn't because he didn't want the Russians to think that we did not trust them. But the purpose of diplomacy is to try to make arrangements where the issue of trust does not even arise. We should have asked for--In any event those negotiations, I think, occurred too early. We should have waited until--

RICHARD RUSK: Gee. If that was in 1943.

DEAN RUSK: That was very early. So we pulled back, at the end of the war, we pulled back from large areas of Germany--Solingen and down in there--in order to comply with those 1943 agreements. As a minimum we should have had a pretty broad corridor, land corridor, to Berlin.

HILLENBRAND: Well, we were operating on the basis of different assumptions about what the postwar world would look like.

DEAN RUSK: Yes.

HILLENBRAND: [Franklin Delano] Roosevelt, before he died, had the idea that we would be in Germany only a very short time and then we would get out and leave the Germans to their fate with the Soviets and with the French, who would take care of them in an appropriate way. Well, that obviously--

DEAN RUSK: Also, the Russians were pressing very hard for such an agreement because they were nervous. And one can understand why. They were nervous that otherwise the Germans would surrender to the West de facto, rather than wait for the Russians to come in and have to

surrender to the Russians. That might well have happened because most of the Germans who surrendered much preferred to surrender to the Western Allies than to the Russians. So, the Russians were pressing very hard for it. And since we had not yet established the second front, I suppose we were inclined to make such an agreement.

HILLENBRAND: Well, I'll give you a ring--your secretary--and tell her the name of that ambassador. I think I can dredge it out of one of my books. [*note: the ambassador is John G. Winant*]

DEAN RUSK: I would immediately recognize it.

RICHARD RUSK: Nice to have an intelligent interview, huh? To have some nice intelligent questions and answers for a change. I've been walking into these things just more or less flying blind, doing what I can.

HILLENBRAND: I see you have Alex [Alexander Bryan] Johnson's book there.

[break in recording]

DEAN RUSK: What are we doing putting this on tape?

RICHARD RUSK: I don't think we have it on tape. If you're going to give it to the Southern Center, you can give it to me right here.

DEAN RUSK: When they announced at Osla that Henry Kissinger had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, I called Henry and congratulated him. Then I pointed out that the Nobel Prize would be tax exempt, because it would be the view of our Internal Revenue Service that he had not earned it.

[break in recording]

DEAN RUSK: Some of my former colleagues have commented--not many, but some--that one problem they had with me was not learning from me what my own views were of a particular problem. In the army, traditionally, when you have a staff conference, you start with the juniors and you work up to the top to ask for their views on particular things. I learned from George Marshall that he did not want to formulate his own views until he had heard what others closer to the problem thought about it. And he would hold himself back until he had heard the evidence. That was more or less my practice. I had the feeling that in a staff conference that if I expressed my views too early, then I wouldn't get the best views of other people present. There would be a tendency for them to sort of repeat back to me what I, myself, had said. Do you have any particular observation on that? Be perfectly frank, no feelings involved.

HILLENBRAND: I would say that one thing that impressed me was a statement you made, or at least I think you made, that when we had been at a White House meeting and we had a position, a State Department position, and the President gave you an opportunity to talk, you were sort of reticent to express the views that we thought you had accepted. After you left, you were quoted

as having said the reason you didn't speak up was that Arthur Schlesinger was present at the meeting and if you'd ever spoken up frankly, everybody in the Georgetown cocktail circuit would know what you had said by evening. I don't know whether you ever said that.

DEAN RUSK: Arthur Schlesinger, in his book, *A Thousand Days*, said that I used to sit in those meetings like an old Buddha, without saying anything. That was true when there were thirty-five people, including Arthur Schlesinger, sitting around the walls. So, typically, I would either see the President ahead of time, in addition to one of those meetings, or pass him a note and ask him not to make a decision and let me talk with him about it in his office after the meeting. Because I did not want the content of such discussions circulated all around to the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, gossip, and so forth. But there was another aspect to it, and that is that I never brought back to the Department in any detail the content of my discussions with the President. There were times when I would see the President--I would present the Department's point of view as well as I could--and in a case where the President's decision went the other way, I would come back and give effect to the President's decision. For example, when I first took office, after a few weeks or months I learned that as a holdover from the Eisenhower/Dulles period, that someone in my outer office would listen in on my talks with the President on the phone and make little memos of those telephone calls and circulate them to people in the Department. Well, I immediately put a stop to that and immediately installed a phone to my office connected with the White House that no one outside could listen in on. Because I felt that there should be solidarity between a President and a Secretary of State over against the wide world, including the Department of State.

HILLENBRAND: Well, my problem was never that you didn't let me know what you were thinking on a specific issue; because as the State Department is structured, with the memorandum system and so on, if you signed off on telegrams, obviously that meant that you accepted what was in those documents.

RICHARD RUSK: Although you had two ways of saying those things: One way suggested that you had read it and the other way suggested that you--

DEAN RUSK: When I read it for information, I would put "DR" and a stroke through my initials, but when I read it and approved it, I would put "DR" without the stroke.

HILLENBRAND: That's usually been the way--not always, but usually the way Secretaries of State either assent or dissent from a specific position. In meetings, head-to-head meetings, I never had the feeling that you were holding back essential information. In fact, you were involved in drafting some things yourself. I remember when Foy Kohler and I worked directly with you in drafting a paper which was supposed to set forth three fundamental interests, vital interests, of the United States in Berlin. That went through a number of drafts. I think the idea was that you were going to take it up with the President and get his okay on that. That would then become sort of a fundamental assumption of American Berlin policy. Now, there were some things that made you impatient. I remember--is this being recorded?

DEAN RUSK: Shut it off.

[break in recording]

RICHARD RUSK: Tape's rolling. I ran across this in the literature. I'm glad you brought that up, Pop. One of the complaints that people had back then, in conjunction with good remarks, is that people had a hard time figuring out your mind, knowing what your mind was.

DEAN RUSK: Well I wanted to know what--

RICHARD RUSK: What was in your mind? Didn't you fellows in the Department of State, in the Foreign Service, over a period of time, develop little techniques for reading the mind of Dean Rusk? You know, like the way he would cock his eyebrows in certain situations?

DEAN RUSK: Let me comment a little bit on this matter of delegation. Again, I learned from George Marshall the great importance of delegation. Something like three thousand cables a day went out of that department with my name signed to them. And of those, I would see maybe six or seven in the course of the day. The President might see one or two. But the rest of them had to go out on the basis of authority and responsibility delegated to a lot of officers in the Department of State. I tried not to--I realize that when you delegate, you do not abdicate your responsibility. It was never complete. But on the other hand, I tried to encourage officers to fill up the horizons of their responsibility. You might be surprised, or Marty might be surprised, that on no single occasion in eight years did I ever criticize a colleague for exceeding his authority. The problem was to get people to fill up the horizons of their responsibility--to go ahead and take it and live with the results. I once wrote a little note to Harlan Cleveland on this, because Harlan was a fellow to whom you could delegate extensively. He would go ahead and act. He was that kind of fellow. I wrote him once and asked him how he figured that out. He said it was very simple, that when he thought he knew what I thought about something, he would go ahead and act. If he realized he did not know what I thought about something, he would come and ask me. Well, that's just an easy way to answer a very complicated question.

RICHARD RUSK: There was a guy back there that claimed that he could read the mind of Dean Rusk without really being told what was in his mind. Do you remember who that was?

DEAN RUSK: No, I don't remember.

RICHARD RUSK: By observing your facial gestures.

HILLENBRAND: I wouldn't ever claim to--

DEAN RUSK: Now, Marty is a fellow who could really accept responsibility.

RICHARD RUSK: Did anyone ever go to the mat with you and really wrestle with you directly on that point? Why don't you--you know, these critics who said that you held too many of the cards close to you? Did they ever really fight with you on that point?

DEAN RUSK: Sometimes it worked the other way around. For example, at one time the Iraqis were seriously threatening Kuwait with invasion. The British had a very small force there. In the

middle of this little crisis our Commander-in-Chief at Norfolk, who had a task force in the Indian Ocean, sent a telegram us saying that he had ordered Task Force so-and-so to steam north. [He was down in the Indian Ocean at the time.] He said, "Request instructions." So, I sent this to the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and asked them for their recommendation, and they came back with a pretty complicated, convoluted sort of thing saying if I thought so-and-so the Admiral should do so-and-so; if I thought so-and-so, he should--; if I thought so-and-so; and so forth. And I sent it back to them and said, "Look, all the Admiral needs is a compass direction. He can sail north; he can sail south; he can sail east. He can't sail west. He'd run into Africa. All I want from you is a compass direction." You see, they didn't have the operational sense of what was required by the Admiral who wanted to know which way to sail his fleet. I did find, Marty, if I may say so, that although I tried to delegate very heavily to Assistant Secretaries, it wasn't that easy to get the Assistant Secretaries to delegate to anybody below them. When I would call an Assistant Secretary in to talk about a problem, I would try to get him to bring with him his juniors who were working on the problem--

HILLENBRAND: I always thought that Foy Kohler was very good at that.

DEAN RUSK: Yes.

HILLENBRAND: Partly because we had this task force which threw us together in much closer juxtaposition than would normally be the case. Foy Kohler had the Ambassadorial Group to worry about. Berlin was a sort of perpetual, daily merry-go-round. You couldn't escape the subject. That does not--coming back to the original question, I don't have the impression that we ever suffered from your playing cards too close to your chest and were not taking us into your confidence and therefore we were sort of floundering around without adequate guidance from you. That's not the impression I had.

RICHARD RUSK: Some of that talk emerged in the very beginning of the Kennedy Administration when there was confusion as to who--

DEAN RUSK: There were a lot of hot-dogs in the Kennedy Administration.

RICHARD RUSK: Incidentally, did any of the White House people, staff people, get involved or interfere or inject themselves into the handling of this Berlin situation in the same way that there was some of that for, say, the Bay of Pigs?

DEAN RUSK: I think they were less involved in the Berlin problem than they were in the--than some of them were--in the Bay of Pigs.

HILLENBRAND: You will recall there was a group which included our Legal Advisor, [Abram] Abe Chayes, Schlesinger, Sorensen, and others in the White House--[McGeorge] Mac Bundy was never a member--who felt that the approach of the previous administration to the Berlin problem had been too hard, that there was a basis for negotiating with the Soviets. Dean [Gooderham] Acheson then became sort of their bete noire when he was brought in to make recommendations on Berlin. But all that sort of blew away after the confrontation in Vienna, because it was quite obvious then that there was not any basis for substantive negotiations with

the Soviets.

DEAN RUSK: See, Arthur Schlesinger would occasionally sort of move in to express views on some foreign policy matters, but he was not taken all that seriously by the President. For example, he has written, later, about my resistance and Ambassador [Frederick] Fred [G.] Reinhardt's resistance, who was ambassador in Rome, to the opening to the left in Italian politics. He was all in favor of all this, you see--bring in the Socialists and all sorts of other people. I simply took the view that the Italians were grown men, that his was an Italian problem, and that we were not going to put pressure on them, on a matter that was so essentially internal and domestic of character. Fred Reinhardt and I fully agreed on that, so we resisted Arthur Schlesinger's attempt to put pressure on the Italians to move to the left in their politics. I remember once sitting with Kennedy, talking about something, and Arthur Schlesinger came into the room, and he made some damn fool suggestion to President Kennedy about some foreign policy matter, and then he left. And after he left, Kennedy turned to me and said, "Arthur is sometimes very interesting in the rose garden." So, he was not a major shaker.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you care to reflect on Vienna itself?

DEAN RUSK: Another time.

RICHARD RUSK: Good, I would like to hear about some of that.

DEAN RUSK: Vienna happens to reinforce my view and that of other Secretaries of State that they should be very skeptical about summit meetings.

RICHARD RUSK: I take it Johnny Kennedy, based on his experience there, was not only a little shaken by it, but became less of a believer in personal diplomacy between the heads of state.

DEAN RUSK: Well, that was a meeting that--you see, there is something about the chemistry of a president that causes him to think that he can just sit down with the other fellow and that they can work things out. But that was a meeting that was without an agreed agenda. It was supposed to be a get-acquainted meeting. Kennedy wanted to have it. And in the get-acquainted meeting he came away with an ultimatum on Berlin. Although some of the Kremlin watchers would criticize Kennedy on one point about that meeting, which I agreed with Kennedy. Khrushchev started out with a long ideological diatribe about socialism, and the world revolution and all that stuff. When it was over, Kennedy did not respond in kind. I think he said something like, "Well Mr. Chairman, you are not going to make a communist out of me, and I am not going to make a capitalist out of you, so let's get down to business." Well, some of them, George [F.] Kennan among them, thought that Kennedy should have gone back with a long ideological speech of his own, you see. Well, I think I rather agree with Kennedy on that; to cut through all this ideological malarkey is probably the better way to do it.

RICHARD RUSK: So it was you and Kennedy, and Khrushchev and his foreign minister. Is that correct?

DEAN RUSK: Yes. Gromyko was there.

RICHARD RUSK: Did Kennedy make mistakes in the discussions there that you felt--

DEAN RUSK: I did not think that he made mistakes. I think that he was startled, and I must say I was surprised, that Khrushchev came at him in such a brutal fashion on this Berlin matter. It seemed to me that Khrushchev was deliberately trying to intimidate this young, new President of the United States.

RICHARD RUSK: In Kennedy's response to that, did he respond in any way that may have given Khrushchev the impression that the U.S. could indeed be jocking around?

DEAN RUSK: Not at Vienna.

RICHARD RUSK: Because the press reports and comments made of that period suggest that John Kennedy was shaken by those events. That would be more a reflection of what happened.

DEAN RUSK: Well, he was shaken by the idea that this fellow Khrushchev thought that he could do that kind of thing to the President of the United States. After all, Khrushchev said at one point, "If the West interferes, there will be war." Well now, diplomats at that level almost never use the word "war." They say such things as "the gravest possible situation," or something like that. But Khrushchev hit him with the word "war," and Kennedy went right back in kind. No, I am still very skeptical about meetings at the summit: anything that can be described as negotiations at the summit. I do not bother about good will visits and so-called get-acquainted visits. But on the American side, these meetings tend to build up expectations of a result. And a President is under a different kind of pressure than his Soviet counterpart would be. In a sense, [George Pratt] Schultz will be under that kind of pressure when he meets with Gromyko in January. A curious thing Marty, although when Gromyko accurately and ably represented the views of the Soviet government, and there are times when those views were very deceptive in character, that caused him, in effect, to lie from our point of view, as he did to Kennedy over the Cuban missiles. But in other kinds of relationships which were not directly related to the view of the Soviet government I found him, in effect, a professional colleague. For example, when we had talks we would agree as to what we would say to the press about the talks. He always abided by those agreements. And there were times when I would say something to him on the understanding that he would not make it public or transmit it to other governments, and he applied to those agreements.

RICHARD RUSK: Including his own government?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, no. No, I never tried to stand between him and his own government. You cannot do that.

RICHARD RUSK: What remark did Gromyko make to you on the occasion when you were leaving at a social function there in Washington?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, he spoke quite good English. And frequently when we would meet bilaterally there would be four or five of us on each side. But frequently we would, just the two

of us, draw aside over into a corner and talk about some things. Those were quite frank talks. But when we met for the last time, when he knew that I would no longer be in office, he drew me aside and spoke in friendly terms about the eight years' relationship we had had, despite the many crises we had to deal with. The old boy relaxed a bit. I appreciated that because I respected him as a professional diplomat, although I had to sit at adjoining foxholes and toss grenades at him quite a lot.

RICHARD RUSK: He certainly has proved that he is the world's record holder for longevity.

DEAN RUSK: Yes, he is dean of the world's foreign ministers now by considerable. And I think one of the principal reasons that he survived in their system is that he is a very competent diplomat. He knows the game, both in bilateral talks and in multilateral bodies like the United Nations.

HILLENBRAND: Same as [Anatoly F.] Dobrynin in Washington.

DEAN RUSK: Yes, they know the business.

RICHARD RUSK: The Soviets have this capacity for keeping their good people in the same spot where they are the most useful.

DEAN RUSK: There is one fellow they have under used, in my judgment. That is [Supagreth] their interpreter. He is a very able fellow, and my hunch is that in terms of his abilities he ought long since to have been an ambassador somewhere for them. But he is so good as an interpreter that they sort of kept him on the job. At least we promoted Chip Bohlen out of the interpreter's job which he had during or just after the war. But they have not done that for Supagreth.

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