

Dean Rusk Oral History Collection

Rusk DDDD: Part 1 of 2

Dean Rusk interviewed by Richard Rusk, Thomas J. Schoenbaum, and Louis Bruno Sohn  
circa 1985

The complete interview also includes Rusk EEEE: Part 2.

RICHARD RUSK: We're talking this morning with Dean Rusk. The interview is on the United Nations, and doing the interviewing is Professor Louis Sohn, Tom Schoenbaum, and Rich.

SOHN: One of the issues you had to face when you came back to the State Department in the 1960s was the [Hubert Horatio] Humphrey proposal for the establishment of ACDA, the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, and the touchy question of the division of work between the new agency, the State Department, the autonomy of the agency, and the kind of concurrent problem of [John J.] McCloy being also involved as kind of a sad view of false views dealing with arms control and negotiating with [Valerian A.] Zorin.

DEAN RUSK: I suppose that there was a problem in precise legal terms because there was a little confusion around the edges. But the head of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency took the rank of an Undersecretary of State, and it was clear that in things like negotiations he would be working with the advice of the Secretary of State. Now we were fortunate in having William [C.] Foster as the new head of that agency because he and I were old friends from earlier service and we had the same general views toward arms control. We wanted to make some headway. So with the Arms Control Agency keeping in very close touch with the Arms Control Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee of which Hubert Humphrey was chairman, we worked out relationships very well. Now we did have in those days what we called a Committee of Principles. That was a group composed of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the chairman of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, the head of CIA [Central Intelligence Agency], and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. And we spent a lot of time in that committee, not through delegates, but ourselves--we ourselves at that level. And we soon developed a pretty strong consensus there about how we might make some headway in the arms control business. We didn't always succeed; we had some disappointments; but we did achieve the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and one or two other things. But the working relationships, although theoretically complex, were really quite easy because of the personal relations among the individuals involved.

SOHN: What was your view on the McCloy and Zorin Agreement?

DEAN RUSK: Remind me of what that was.

SOHN: There was an agreement in the summer of '61 that the United States and the Soviet Union would work together on a treaty on general and complete disarmament. The United States' insistence at that time was in particular that there would be two things in addition to disarmament, namely effective control and adequate peacekeeping machinery, something that already Chris [Christian Archibald] Herter developed in one of his last speeches. Just those three

points and then you emphasized those points in your later speeches. There was a superficial agreement between McCloy and Zorin, at least on a piece of paper which had then been approved by the United Nations and reapproved a few years ago in connection with the First Special General Assembly Session on Disarmament. It is kind of a sacred document for the disarmers, but I don't know whether the State Department really paid much attention.

DEAN RUSK: Well the Soviets from time to time have come up with resolutions calling for general and complete disarmament. But we always had great skepticism about the content of any such phrase as far as the Soviets were concerned. For example, we did not believe that the Soviets would withdraw their forces from Eastern Europe because if they were to do so they ran the risk of losing the loyalty and allegiance of the countries of Eastern Europe. And we did not believe that they would demobilize to an extent that would expose them to the masses of the People's Republic of China. So what we tried to do was to find some way to take some important steps within the general rubric of general and complete disarmament that at least would get going down this trail toward limitation of arms on a practical basis where one could. But that McCloy-Zorin agreement was one of those kinds of agreements in principle kind of thing. Secretary George [Catlett] Marshall used to tell us never to agree in principle because all that means is you have not agreed yet; wait until you get the fine print spelled out before you know whether or not you have a meeting of the minds. A little bit like the later agreement in principle between President [Gerald Rudolph] Ford [Jr.] and Mr. [Leonid Ilich] Brezhnev at Vladivostok where it took two or three years before we found that we were not going to agree on the details. So I wouldn't attach too much importance to the McCloy-Zorin agreement as far as actual moves in the field of arms limitation were concerned.

SOHN: One of the proposals at the time that it seems both the State Department and the Defense Department agree upon was that you can disarm about one-third without anybody really suffering much. And therefore when the draft treaty was--When the General Complete Disarmament was written in the beginning of '62 it really was a treaty for one set of disarmament plus one set--second part was perhaps a second one-third, and in the far, far future, the third one-third. But it really was a treaty for one-third disarmament, something that the Russians have proposed since the 1920s though it was not thought in Washington that it might be possible.

DEAN RUSK: Yes, that is correct. The idea was that we would do this by stages and that each stage would then be tested thoroughly to see whether it was adequate for purposes of peace before moving on to the next stage. Now we were prepared to take a one-third reduction, certainly in nuclear as well as in conventional forces. But when you got around to taking the actual steps necessary, we found the Soviets more reluctant than their rhetoric would suggest that they might be.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, in view of your comment about George Marshall's reluctance to agree in principle to the details that were spelled out, what was your specific position with respect to this reply? Were you advising the President to go ahead?

DEAN RUSK: I think it was clearly in the field of rhetoric, propaganda, theory and that it would not mean very much until you put arms and legs in it with some specific agreements on some

specific measures of arras reduction, or at least limitation. Now I didn't object to it, but I just didn't think it was going to produce much of a result standing by itself.

SOHN: Another problem, of course, that people thought you were going to have coming into Secretary of State was the fact that the same time Adlai [Ewing] Stevenson was appointed the head of the United States Mission to the United Nations with Cabinet status and people were worried how that could really work.

DEAN RUSK: When President [John Fitzgerald] Kennedy telephoned me--I have described this in another tape--to tell me he wanted me to take on the job, I told him that there were many things we should discuss before he made any such decision. So he asked me to come down to West Palm Beach the next morning and we could have a long talk. And I did; and we spent all morning going over a variety of things. But particularly, I hoped that he would call Adlai Stevenson and insist that he take the United Nations job. He was one of our most distinguished Americans, standard bearer in two elections for the Democratic Party, well-known internationally; he had been involved in the birth of the United Nations. And so I thought it would be a great thing if we could get him to take the U.N. job, whatever he might have wanted to be as far as the Presidency was concerned or even possibly Secretary of State. I had talked to Kennedy earlier about Adlai Stevenson as a possibility for Secretary of State; but it was clear that he shied away from that, possibly because of Adlai Stevenson's behavior in the Democratic Convention of 1960, possibly because he did not want someone as Secretary of State who might forget who was President. And Adlai might have been a person who would readily do that. But anyhow, I was there in the room with Kennedy when he telephoned Adlai Stevenson that morning to take on the U.N. job, and I must say Kennedy did quite a selling job on Adlai. When Kennedy got through describing the role of our Ambassador to the United Nations, I had to wonder what was left for the President and the Secretary of State to do. (laughter) Every President builds up that job up there when they're trying to recruit somebody to take it. But anyhow, Adlai, rather reluctantly, did take it on and he made us a very good representative up there.

SCHOENBAUM: There are some accounts that say, referring to that conversation, that say that you talked to Stevenson at that time and that you sold Stevenson on the job.

DEAN RUSK: Oh, I might have had a few words with him. No, it was Kennedy who carried the burden. But anyhow, I per--

RICHARD RUSK: Did he ever forget who was President and who was Secretary of State?

DEAN RUSK: No. No. Not when he was at the U.N. He did, however, underline the interest of the new administration in the United Nations. And I feel, myself, we should always have one of our most distinguished Americans on that job up there to do just that and also to see to it that the U.N. is given adequate and careful consideration in Washington.

SOHN: How did it work? Did he actually come to meetings with the Cabinet?

DEAN RUSK: He would come to Cabinet meetings and occasional meetings of the National Security Council, and came down frequently when there were ad hoc meetings to take up particularly important questions, such as the Cuban Missile Crisis for example. But the person at the U.N. cannot participate in policymaking in New York. That person has to get down to Washington because of the different departments and agencies involved and all the cumbersome procedures we have to go through in forming policy. So we had an office for him in the State Department Office and a secretary and a car so that he would feel comfortable when he came to Washington to present his views and to take part in policymaking. And he did a good deal of that. Of course it was easy to consider him a member of the Cabinet; he had been the standard bearer of the Democratic Party for two campaigns. So he was considered a member of the Cabinet, and indeed second in rank to me, for some reason. When the Cabinet would enter a joint session of Congress, I would be leading the parade of the Cabinet officers and he would be at my side, rather than have the secretary and the treasurer be the number two men.

SOHN: How was it later when Arthur [Joseph] Goldberg took that job? Was it more difficult?

DEAN RUSK: Let me say about Adlai first that Adlai sometimes grumbled to his friends about getting so many instructions from the Department of State, and I understood that. But it seemed to me that no one was more glad to get instructions than Adlai. He was such an intelligent and imaginative person that he could see the disadvantages of any course of action and often would find it difficult to make up his mind. And these instructions helped in that process. But he was brilliant in advocacy. If law students want to see a brilliant piece of advocacy they can look at the handling of the Bay of Pigs for us in the United Nations by Adlai Stevenson. He hated every bit of it, every word of it--

RICHARD RUSK: Didn't have a leg to stand on for any of it.

DEAN RUSK: --and a very poor case to handle, but he handled brilliantly what was almost an impossible case. But there was an interesting contrast between Adlai Stevenson and Arthur Goldberg. Adlai was not a good negotiator. If you gave him a position and then sort of indicated where a fallback position might be, he would be at the fallback position in five minutes because he was so anxious to get an agreement with anybody on anything. Now Arthur Goldberg could make some dull speeches. Compared to Adlai's they were certainly dull. But he was a brilliant negotiator: that lifelong experience as a labor negotiator. If you gave him an opening position and then a fallback position he would take the opening position and he would gnaw at it and work at it and badger the opposition and do everything he could to move the opening position along before he would give any thought to the fallback position. So if you could find someone with the forensic skills of an Adlai Stevenson and the negotiating skills of an Arthur Goldberg, you would have an ideal representative at the United Nations.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, can I follow up your one comment on Adlai Stevenson being almost too cerebral a man to be able to come to a decision on things? Did you run into that with other people? Is it possible for a man to be almost too intellectual in positions of real leadership?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I wondered since I strongly supported Adlai Stevenson both in '52 and '56 to no avail, I sometimes wonder what kind of a President he would have made because of this

problem of reaching a conclusion and making a decision. Now contrast that a bit with Harry [S ] Truman. You could present Harry Truman all the elements in a very complicated question, and they would build up there like a heap of jackstraws all linked together, intertwined, pointing in different directions. Harry Truman would study that heap of jackstraws and then reach into it and pull out the one that he thinks is the decisive element to him in that problem and he'd pull that jackstraw out of the pile and make his decision and go home and never look back. Now I personally believe--I can't document this--that successful decision-makers have to be capable of oversimplification at the moment of decision. They have to find what seems to them to be critically important. Another example: Harry Truman asked me to head the delegation to negotiate the first administrative agreement with Japan that had to do with the stationing of American forces in Japan after the peace treaty. Well the bureaucracy had built up a foot-high stack of papers about all the things that ought to go into that agreement. We went over and briefed President Truman on it and he listened and then dismissed us. Then he called me into the oval office and said, "Now Dean, don't worry about all this crap. I want you to go out there and get an agreement like the NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] agreement that does not discriminate for the Japanese, does not discriminate against the Japanese. Now those are your instructions. You go on out there." So I went out there as head of that delegation and sometimes my own staff did not completely understand what I was doing when I was insisting on one point and giving away another one, but that is the simplification that a decision-maker has to have if he is to be successful. You see, another thing about that is that someone like an Adlai Stevenson who sees all the elements and can worry about all of them might tend to try to balance these things off and find a middle ground or even the least common denominator. And very often the least common denominator is the worst decision. So one has to be careful with that.

SOHN: Another subject I would like to raise relates to relations between United Nations and the Organization of American States in your period.

RICHARD RUSK: Pardon me. The relations between the United Nations and the Organization of--

SOHN: Of American States.

DEAN RUSK: O.A.S.

SOHN: You remember early in your tenure there was the Punte del Este conference and exclusion of Cuba from the Organization of American States. Immediately Cuba and Russia brought it to the Security Council and tried to get Security Council to overrule it or at least ask for an advisory opinion of the International Court on the subject. And that was one of the first important crises between the U.N. and the O.A.S. But there were some others since.

DEAN RUSK: Louis, you were at San Francisco and you will remember that it was the Latin Americans who insisted upon that section of the charter that deals with regional arrangements. There was some reluctance in the American delegation on that. But with a lot of help by Nelson Aldrich Rockefeller and others, the United States delegation finally came around to it. But the underlying idea there was, among the Latin American states, that they wanted the international law of the western hemisphere to be determined in the western hemisphere. And they did not

wish problems in the western hemisphere to be subject to the activities of the U.N. Security Council where the Soviet Union was sitting there with a veto. So that was the beginning of the attitude in the O.A.S., that the affairs of the western hemisphere would be handled in the O.A.S., not in the U.N. Now once in a while when some member of the O.A.S. is disgruntled about what has happened in the O.A.S. on a particular matter, they might themselves take it to the U.N. And on certain occasions the O.A.S. must report to the U.N. on what they have done in particular matters. In any event, what the O.A.S. does is full public knowledge and any member of the U.N. can bring it before the U.N. Security Council if they wish to do so. But if the O.A.S. is prepared to take charge of and handle a particular problem, then it is not easy for the United Nations to take it up and try to deal with it in the United Nations. That's been a pretty strong position of the Latin American countries as far as the U.N. is concerned.

SOHN: After the Cuban crisis, because another case that caused a lot of trouble on that subject was the Dominican Republic in 1965. There were several Dominican Republic crises before, but going the other way, when [Rafael Leonidas] Trujillo was trying to stir up trouble in Latin America, trying to assassinate the President of Venezuela and things like that. At that time again--I think that was very probably the first case in which the O.A.S. and U.N. clashed slightly because the Soviet Union said the O.A.S. cannot make sanctions against Dominican Republic. That was before the Cuban case.

DEAN RUSK: Without the permission of the Security Council. SOHN: Without the permission of the Security Council and Article 53.

DEAN RUSK: Yeah.

SOHN: And the United States went there trying to defend the O.A.S. action by saying that those are not sanctions, those are only economic sanctions and economic sanctions are permissible. It's only the military sanctions--

DEAN RUSK: Or they are not measure as intended by the charter. Well that's always been a thin point for us to skate on when the O.A.S. takes action. Now that was also true with the unanimous resolution on the Cuban Missile Crisis. Was that resolution lawful without the approval of the U.N. Security Council? And it takes a good deal of leger de main for our lawyers somehow to distinguish actions of that sort from measure as contemplated in the U.N. Charter. And I'm not sure that we've always been successful in doing so. Now in the Dominican affair one has to, if one understands it, one must think of two phases--two phases that were really quite separate as far as Washington was concerned. Juan Bosch had been elected president in the Dominican Republic; we had supported him; we wished him well; we had him to Washington on a visit. But some of his key friends in the hemisphere, like Governor [Luis] Munoz Marin of Puerto Rico, [Romulo] Betancourt of Venezuela, [Jose] Figueres of Costa Rica, said that Juan Bosch would not last a year, that he was a poet, a dreamer, a writer, and he had no idea whatever about how to organize an administration and run a country. Well we tried to get those three to give Juan Bosch some real advice because they had all three had experience in administering a country; but he wouldn't take it, he wouldn't listen to them, he wouldn't give them much time. Well he lasted just less than a year, I believe. There were outbreaks of violence throughout the country and heavy fighting in the area of the capital, Santo Domingo. The Bosch government

collapsed and he fled. Now in that turmoil, the head of the military forces and the head of the police forces both told us that they could not accept responsibility for the safety of American and foreign nationals in Santo Domingo. It looked as though these American and foreign nationals were in very serious danger there. A good many of them had collected at a hotel outside of the city and some very drastic reports were coming in about the internal situation. So at the urging of our ambassador, then President Johnson, using a contingency plan which had been prepared on the personal direction of President Kennedy, landed the Marines for the purpose of securing American foreign nationals. The Foreign Diplomatic Corps in Santo Domingo was strongly in favor of this. A few days later we got a message of thanks from the Papal Nuncio, who was the dean of the Diplomatic Corps, for doing this. So we landed the Marines. Well as soon as we established a position ashore, various elements began coming out of the city, Santo Domingo, to tell us what was going on in the city. One of those was the Secretary General of Juan Bosch's own political party. They seemed to agree that there would be a blood bath; that as a result of that blood bath there would be either a Trujillo-type dictatorship or a [Fidel Ruz] Castro-type dictatorship; and they urged that something be done about it. Now that led to phase two. So we decided to get the OAS involved, to try to negotiate an interim government which would be in charge during elections. There was an OAS peace force with some elements from other countries joining American forces on the island. Then we had elections. Juan Bosch did not return to the Dominican Republic to campaign. He was fearful of his own life, perhaps with some reason. He would not return to campaign without American military escorts. Well we couldn't, we feel, escort a particular candidate around the country while he was campaigning, so we turned that down.

RICHARD RUSK: Does Juan Bosch acknowledge these things?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, I'm not sure that Juan Bosch's account would be exactly the same as mine. My own hunch at the time was that had he come back to the Dominican Republic and campaigned, then he might well have been reelected. He might well have been elected. But he didn't do that and wouldn't do it without American security escorts.

RICHARD RUSK: Can I raise one point here? That is, former Ambassador [William] Tapley Bennett [Jr.] will be here June 17, and we've saved this whole Dominican Republic situation in an interview for him. I'd like to invite you to sit in with us if you're here and are available. That would be a lot of fun. We plan to devote an entire interview of [sic] the Dominican Republic.

SCHOENBAUM: That's June 17 at 11:30.

RICHARD RUSK: That's right.

DEAN RUSK: Well, let me say that when--

RICHARD RUSK: What we could do for the purpose of this interview is, if possible, rather than get into the detail of this, stick to the United Nations aspects of it.

SOHN: Yeah. That's what I want to do.

DEAN RUSK: I must say that where the members of the Organization of American States feel strongly about it and they take the view in the United Nations that the United Nations should not get into a particular issue, they should leave it to the Organization of American States; well that plus the United States establishes a very powerful position in the United Nations because there are a good many other members of the United Nations who are very sympathetic to that view. So it was very difficult for the Soviet Union to push the United Nations into a matter where the Organization of American States was opposed to their participation. Now always; sometimes it would come before the U.N. Security Council or something of that sort.

SOHN: In this case when one of the later incidents occurred in which quite a number of people were killed, some fighting, the matter went back to the Security Council. The Security Council adopted the resolution and authorized the Secretary General to send his representative to the Dominican Republic. At that time it was a nice group of people because it was special representative of the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, special representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations, and Mr. McGeorge Bundy went on his mission as well. So there were three people trying to advise the various local people who were involved in trying to solve the problem from three different points of view. The O.A.S. people got so angry that they resigned and said they cannot do their job of trying to find a solution if United Nations and United States would be interfering later. I wonder whether they came to you to try to smooth the feathers.

DEAN RUSK: Well that particular enterprise simply produced no results. It really didn't amount to very much. That was the one instance during the sixties that I can recall where we called on the Assistant to the President for National Security to undertake any negotiation. And the results were not good so we didn't do it again.

RICHARD RUSK: Talking about McGeorge Bundy?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. But--

RICHARD RUSK: That's not always his best role, I understand.

DEAN RUSK: (laughter) But in any event, the representative of the U.N. Secretary General was simply not in touch with the real forces at work in the Dominican Republic. You see, when we were faced with this possibility--

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DEAN RUSK: --very much mindful of the fact that the Organization of American States had imposed both sanctions, both on Trujillo and on Castro. So there was a disposition in the Organization of American States to avoid either type of dictatorship in the Dominican Republic,

and a good deal of feeling that we ought to give the Dominican people a chance to decide for themselves what kind of government they wanted. But, no, at that time the interest taken by the United Nations had very little to do with the outcome on the island itself in the Dominican Republic. This was largely done through O.A.S. functions and forces.

SOHN: So I gather you feel that between the regional organization and United Nations, regional organization should get preference normally.

DEAN RUSK: Well I would say that is true as far as the western hemisphere is concerned. I wouldn't necessarily broaden that judgment to any other regional organization, but it's possible that the same situation would obtain there. But I think there is a kind of presumption in the Charter that if regional organizations can handle these problems they should do so. You see, when you look at Article 33 of the Charter, the exhaustion of other remedies article, it seems clear to me that those who drafted the Charter thought that debate in the U.N. was a drastic remedy because questions are not even supposed to be referred to the U.N. unless negotiation, mediation, arbitration, all regional agencies have all been exhausted. Now some of the strong supporters of the U.N. more or less overlook Article 33, but if you don't throw something immediately into the U.N. they charge you with bypassing the U.N. But the U.N. is the last resort as far as the charter was concerned.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, you made an earlier statement that the major impetus for the Organization of American States, the collective security aspects of it, and the idea of matters relating to the western hemisphere being settled within that regional organization, came mostly from other members and not necessarily from the United States.

DEAN RUSK: I think the strong initiative for that came from the Latin American countries as a group at the San Francisco Conference which drafted the U.N. Charter.

RICHARD RUSK: Okay. But how does that fly in the face of our own Monroe Doctrine, the action you've just described in the Dominican Republic. The Marine Corps history that I personally remember as a recruit at Paris Island goes back over the last 150 years? Surely we were not indifferent to that particular argument. And did we not also play a role in seeing to it that indeed the affairs of the western hemisphere would be decided by a regional organization and not necessarily the United Nations? That's certainly been our role.

DEAN RUSK: Some of the members of our delegation at San Francisco who were looking upon the U.N. as a universal organization and sort of were jealous of any infringement on its universality--people like Leo Pasvolsky were pretty skeptical about these regional arrangements. So there was not unanimity in the American delegation. You mentioned the Monroe Doctrine. I don't know whether the Marines taught you, Rich, that although the Monroe Doctrine has been a very important part of our foreign policy throughout the 19th century that we have generalized the Monroe Doctrine into the Charter of the Organization of American States and the Rio Mutual Defense Treaty. In other words they--

RICHARD RUSK: The Marines only taught me that the Marines landed frequently. (laughter)

DEAN RUSK: Right.

RICHARD RUSK: And with great pride through that century.

DEAN RUSK: Well the Monroe Doctrine has been made in effect the responsibility of the entire hemisphere through the charter of the O.A.S. and--I never invoked the Monroe Doctrine myself.

RICHARD RUSK: Have we renounced the Monroe Doctrine?

DEAN RUSK: Not necessarily. But we've put it in the back corner because we've created a hemisphere-wide organization to deal with the issues raised by the Monroe Doctrine. And I think that's a great improvement on the Monroe Doctrine myself.

SOHN: It goes back to Franklin [Delano] Roosevelt who, in 1933 I guess or something around that time, declared that the Monroe Doctrine had been replaced by the Good Neighbor Policy.

DEAN RUSK: That's right, which became the charter of the O.A.S. and the Rio Treaty.

SOHN: One other crisis in your early days at the United Nations was, of course, [Nikita Sergeevich] Khrushchev proposals for a Troika Secretary General after he got very unhappy at what the United Nations was doing in the Congo.

DEAN RUSK: Well he came in with that proposal for a Triune Secretary General; one from the-

RICHARD RUSK: How do you spell that, Triune?

SCHOENBAUM: T-r-i-u-n-e.

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. A three-headed Secretary General. There would be one drawn from the capitalist countries, one drawn from the Soviet block, one drawn from the neutral countries. And these three could only act in unanimity. Well we resisted that very hard, partly because the proposal had come from, as Louis Sohn points out, irritation by the Russians at Dag [Hjalmar] Hammarskjold, for example. And we managed to beat that back. However, I think the Soviets did, by pressing for that proposal very hard--and they did press it hard--did tend to water down the role of the U.N. Secretary General. Because U Thant and those who have followed him have not been as assertive as Trygve Lie and Dag Hammarskjold were when they were Secretary General. The charter refers to the Secretary General as the chief administrative office of the U.N. In the United States we thought that he ought to become, as much as possible, a chief executive of the U.N.; that there should be a strong Secretary General who would take the charter in his hands as his Bible and who would fight for the charter and let the chips fall where they may. Trygve Lie started out fairly effectively in that role. Dag Hammarskjold was that kind of a person. But this impends pretty frequently upon Soviet policies and interests, and they didn't like that kind of a Secretary General very much.

RICHARD RUSK: Wasn't U Thant that type of person with respect to the war in Vietnam?

DEAN RUSK: Well U Thant, in my judgment, was a weak Secretary General because he did not attach himself to the charter and say, "Here is where I stand. Here is what I'm fighting for." He was looking to circumvent problems, rather than deal with them. He was looking for compromise and things of that sort. Dag Hammarskjold would call the disputing parties into his own office around his famous coffee table, either one at a time or sometimes together, and really press them very hard to make some sense out of what they were engaged in.

RICHARD RUSK: Did he ever call you to his coffee table?

DEAN RUSK: And--I've been in there. I've been in there. But U Thant didn't do that. It was awfully hard sometimes to know where he was, or even what he had said when you'd had a talk with him. So I, myself, do not think that he helped to strengthen in any way the office of the Secretary General. Well, when he left office he made a remark that really surprised me. He said that he had never rejected the nomination of any government for a person to take a post in the United Nations Secretariat. Well now, to me that's almost outrageous because the U.N. Secretariat is supposed to be an international civil service recruited, of course, from all, among its members. But it's the Secretary General's job to be sure that the people who are appointed to the Secretariat are qualified for the jobs. But he said he had never turned down a national nomination for a job which was available to the country who was making the nomination. So that's just another sign of his relative weakness as Secretary General.

RICHARD RUSK: For the record, excuse me Professor Sohn, but do you recall the instance or the instances where Dag Hammarskjold called you in to press the Americans on an issue of foreign policy?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, I think he called me in once on the Congo situation. You see, my interest in the U.N., which had been very strong since 1945, caused me as Secretary of State to go up to the United Nations for a period of two to three weeks at the beginning of each General Assembly.

RICHARD RUSK: We do have this.

DEAN RUSK: So that I could have a bilateral discussion with every foreign minister or prime minister who was attending that opening session of the U.N., usually eighty to ninety of them. It was not necessary for me to go and participate in debate because we had Adlai Stevenson there, and who was I to take his place? But that included some meetings with the Secretary General during that period when I was up there. So I got to know Dag Hammarskjold and then U Thant quite well during those annual visits to the U.N.

SCHOENBAUM: Did you ever have any tense meetings with either Hammarskjold or U Thant? Or were they friendlier meetings?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I said some very frank things to my friend Ralph [J.] Bunche on occasion and hope that he modified them a bit if he talked to the Secretary General about them. (laughter) But U Thant once pretended that he had a message from Hanoi on Vietnam and he made a proposal more or less allegedly based on such a message. Well we were in touch with Hanoi and

we knew that he did not have any such message from Hanoi. He was probably in one of those situations where he pretended to each side that he had some indication from the other, you know. That kind of maneuver. I thought he acted in bad faith in that particular situation because it got to be a public matter and question of U Thant's integrity over against ours and I didn't like that very much.

SOHN: You mentioned a minute ago the point about nominating people for the Secretariat.

DEAN RUSK: Right.

SOHN: How did this really work in the United States?

DEAN RUSK: Well this subject which illustrates the point that the answer very often is greatly conditioned by the way the question is put. At the very end of the war when we were drafting the U.N. Charter, the question in our minds was did we want the Soviet Union to have a veto over appointments to the Secretariat from some of those people from the eastern European countries who had served the League of Nations. There were several individuals we had in mind at that point. And when we put the question that way, the answer clearly seemed to be no. So we started out backing and supporting the complete independence of the Secretary General in naming his own staff. Alright now, during the Eisenhower administration, following the [Joseph Raymond] McCarthy period, the question was asked in a different fashion: Do we want Americans to serve in posts in the United Nations if they cannot pass loyalty and security tests in the United States? And when the question was put that way in the early fifties the answer came out: No, we do not want such Americans serving in the United Nations. So our representative went to Dag Hammarskjold and told him that we would want to have the right of approval of any American citizens hired in the Secretariat and at that point, apparently, Dag Hammarskjold smiled and said, "Well I've been waiting for this because every other member of the United Nations has already insisted upon that right." (laughter) So I'm afraid that the quality of the U.N. Secretariat as a genuine international civil service has been diluted by this necessity for national government approval of appointments to the U.N. Secretariat. It also reduces somewhat the quality of the U.N. Secretariat because some of these national nominees would be better off in almost any other job.

SOHN: I have heard complaints at United Nations that the United States is not suggesting for appointments good enough people from the United States, that the United States simply passes when people don't apply otherwise. But when there is a vacancy in an important position like one of the Undersecretaries, which usually is, one of the, is an American. The United States very seldom presents really a very strong candidate, presents somebody that, of course, has acceptance by the State Department for other reasons but not necessarily somebody that's--

DEAN RUSK: Well after all, one can't improve on Ralph Bunche.

SOHN: No, Ralph Bunche was--

DEAN RUSK: And didn't [William B.] Buffum go to one of those positions? And [F. Bradford] Brad Morse, the head of the U.N. Development Fund for many years?

SOHN: Yes, you named three very good people. (laughter)

DEAN RUSK: Very good people.

SOHN: How many were lesser?

DEAN RUSK: Well you know, I think maybe that is changing now. There was a time when it was very difficult to get highly qualified Americans to take these U.N. posts because the pay was low, and often the service was somewhere abroad, so we set up a section in the Department of State whose job it was to recruit Americans to fill the posts that were available for Americans in these U.N. agencies. You see, in the broad sense, it's not exactly accurate, but the posts that are available are related in a general way to the percentage of contribution you make to the budget. So the United States as the largest contributor had more posts available to it. But it was not easy to recruit people for these U.N. jobs. Now that's turned around because these international agencies base themselves at least on U.S. civil servant pay scales, they are tax-exempt for practical purposes even though not theoretically in all cases, and they have generous retirement and allowances, and allowances if you terminate your job and things of that sort. So they are quite attractive financially to Americans. So today I think the reservoir of people who are willing to serve is greater than it was, say, during the fifties and early sixties. Matter of fact, there are heavy complaints now in our Congress about the lavish salary schedules being used in the United Nations.

SOHN: You mentioned also a minute ago that you liked to go to the General Assembly once a year to talk to various people. What's your feeling about the Scandinavian proposal that has been made now many times and recently again that there should be at least annual meetings of the Security Council composed of foreign ministers or even heads of government to look at the situation of the world and to get kind of a report from the Secretary General and show their personal interest in what's going on there rather than just coming just to the General Assembly making a speech.

DEAN RUSK: I think that's a good idea, myself. The Charter provides, as you know, for--

SOHN: Twenty-eight.

DEAN RUSK: Representatives of ministers of government to sit in the U.N. Security Council. We have at any one time, normally only two people who are authorized to sit in the Security Council for us: our permanent representative and his deputy. Of course, it is taken for granted, everybody knows, that the Secretary of State is qualified to sit if he decided to come and sit. I never, myself, sat in the Security Council for the United States, but James Byrnes did with the Azerbaijan question back in 1946. Maybe one or two others have done so. But I think that would be a good idea if they would maybe take a week for such a meeting for a general review of the world situation: an exchange of views. Not because they could necessarily settle these questions but that it would be a fine exercise in order to help each other understand what is in the other fellows' minds. I think that if they had such a meeting that they ought to have two or three of those meetings privately and not there publicly in front of all the press, to see what might

happen. Of course, such a meeting would mean that there would be bilateral discussions among those ministers who turned up for such a meeting and those could be useful. So I would be in favor of that idea.

SOHN: You just mentioned the problem of private and public meetings. Officially all the meetings of the United Nations are public. Though sometimes, of course, nobody can stop them meeting in private as well. The League of Nations had a different procedure. They always met first in private, talked about a question and tried to decide what are the problems and so on. Then only they went to the public meeting which sometimes they repeated the same speeches. But because of the preliminary discussion, it was to some extent modified and coordinated, etc. Do you think that's a good idea?

DEAN RUSK: I'm not sure I would be in favor of making this a matter of regulation, a requirement. But I think it's valuable for the Security Council members to consult occasionally informally and not at a regular meeting. And that has happened occasionally. The Secretary General might ask for such a consultation. The president of the Security Council might have one. Of course, the Security Council has a dinner once a month given by the then president of the Security Council and that gives some opportunity for informal conversation. But I think there's much to be said for that kind of informal consultation away from the glaring klieg lights and all the reporters.

SOHN: Of course, in the League, both meetings were later published--minutes of the meetings. So it was not kind of like--we have a meeting of the United Nations now on the same kind of, what you say, informal meetings before meeting of the Security Council, and so on: people just talking in the chamber on what they are going to be discussing later. But this is informal, completely informal in the sense of no records or anything are kept. In the League, there were formal or informal meetings or whatever you wish to call it, in which the records were kept, but they were only published a few months later.

DEAN RUSK: Well I myself think that whatever is done on that there should still be left open the opportunity for consultation without records and without reporting on what was said. When I think back over the years in our many, many meetings with Andrei [Andreevich] Gromyko, there were times when we would, without specific authorizations from our governments, would sort of box the compass and try on various possibilities to see whether there is anything down that trail that we might profitably pursue. And I think it would have been unfortunate if those conversations were recorded and on the record. I should emphasize that Mr. Gromyko always accurately represented the views of his own government, and it was always clear to both of us that any such tentative discussions were just that, and nothing more. [But our talks] were very useful attempts to find possibilities. You can't do that in the atmosphere of a football stadium. If such conversations are going to be a part of the record, then I think it tends to stifle such conversations and reduces their usefulness.

SOHN: Don't you have, however, to make a record? Suppose you talked with Gromyko about something. Don't you, then, after the conversation dictate to your secretary a little summary of that?

DEAN RUSK: In most conversations with Gromyko we had note takers on each side. But once in a blue moon, he and I would simply draw off in a corner, just the two of us, since he spoke very good English. And I can't say that I put on record a memorandum of conversation of each one of those conversations that was held. I'm sure I did some of them, but not necessarily all of them.

SOHN: In the Law of the Sea Conference once we ran into trouble, as you perhaps remember, with our Secretary of State at the time, who--

RICHARD RUSK: Who would that have been?

SOHN: Henry [Alfred] Kissinger, who in a very touchy point of negotiation decided to participate. So he went and talked to a group of the developing countries about trying to solve the crisis about seabed mining. But he refused to take anybody with him to that meeting and did not make a record of what was considered. And we were faced later with the problem that from time to time one or the other of the participants would say, "But Henry Kissinger promised us to do this next and you are not doing it." Or, "He offered, as *quid pro quo* or something, certain concessions and now you are refusing to make those concessions." We couldn't get out of Henry what he actually said and whether the record supposedly quoted by the others was correct or not.

RICHARD RUSK: That's interesting.

SOHN: And that makes your life difficult.

DEAN RUSK: That's correct.

RICHARD RUSK: What was his response to your efforts to get that information?

SOHN: That this was a private conversation and that if anybody was disclosing something that happened from it, he's not going to participate in that kind of disclosure. It may or may not be true, but he wouldn't say one way or another.

DEAN RUSK: Well I never did have private talks with Gromyko about anything that was a matter of ongoing negotiations which could have in any way distorted those negotiations. Anything of that sort I would report to my own colleagues about.

DEAN RUSK: But you know, Louis, when matters are before the General Assembly and the Security Council, very often the most important part of it will be conversations in the corridors among delegations: that is, discussions, negotiations away from the table. And I think we ought to keep those channels wide open and give them every possible facility. Now there are times when you have to maybe gain a little time, even an hour or two. And so there usually were people at the United Nations that you could call on to make a speech for an hour on any subject whatever. And they were invaluable members of the U.N. (laughter) (multiple people talking simultaneously)

RICHARD RUSK: Do you recall an instance?

DEAN RUSK: Oh yes. [Jamil] Baroody of Saudi Arabia was one of those. What's the name of that man from Peru, the old fellow who could do that?

SOHN: [Victor Andres] Belaunde?

DEAN RUSK: No. There was somebody else there. And there was a fine old man from Lebanon once who could do that.

SOHN: Charles [Habib] Marik?

DEAN RUSK: But it was great too, because you needed that time and you didn't want to say, "Now let's suspend here because we want to sneak out in the back and have some talks," so you just got one of them to make a speech.

RICHARD RUSK: Sort of like an American filibuster.

DEAN RUSK: Of course in the old days in the Security Council you had consecutive translation. Every speech was translated into English and French as the two working languages. And sometimes that took a very long time. Sir [Mohammed] Zafrulla Khan of Pakistan and--Oh, what's his name from India? I'll get his name in a minute. But anyhow, they made the--

SOHN: [V.K.] Krishna Menon.

DEAN RUSK: Krishna Menon. They made the record speeches in the U.N. on Kashmir: over seven hours each one. Well it took three meetings of the Security Council to hear those speeches and the interpretations. Now generally interpretation is waived so that they don't do that consecutive translation because they've got the simultaneous translators that are giving it through the earphones. It'll be a matter of the written record anyhow. Oh, one little incident about the U.N., Louis, I'm not sure you ever heard: The U.N., just after the war, met out at the Sperry Gyroscope Plant on Long Island as an improvised meeting place while we were waiting to get a new headquarters. At that time we had seven channels on the headphones. Five of the channels were in English, French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese. The sixth channel was for the speaker, whatever language he was speaking. And the seventh channel was soft music, so that in the middle of long debates you could always turn to soft music if you wanted to. (laughter)

RICHARD RUSK: Just kind of doze off for a while, huh?

DEAN RUSK: But when they came to the new headquarters in the U.N. they decided that was not up to the dignity of the United Nations and so they dropped the soft music channel. (laughter)

SOHN: I used to work at the Sperry Plant. In fact, I lived in Glen Oaks next door and that's how I got involved in the Korean crisis because I was the nearest member of the Secretariat available. A fellow called me in to help him prepare the Secretary General for the meeting.

DEAN RUSK: There's one interesting point about that Sperry Plant that some might find amusing. During the war the Sperry Plant was tax exempt as a war industry, but when the U.N. came out there and occupied those quarters--This is before the headquarters agreement between the United Nations and the United States. So this plant suddenly turned up on the tax rolls. But we didn't want the U.N. to pay taxes on this thing, so we declared the United Nations to be a war industry, (laughter) We got by the tax problem that way.

SOHN: One interesting point about that plant, however, was that everything was horizontal. So when you have a problem you'd simply walk to somebody and it was kind of the usual way to do it. Well I got to the United Nations because I was--the first year when we moved to the United Nations--I was also still at the U.N. Everything was vertical. And to get from one office to another sometimes you had to change elevators, in addition. And somehow that cut down the number of face-to-face communications.

DEAN RUSK: I think that's true. It's true on a university campus where we sprawl all across the place and there's a shortage of parking space and that tends to get in the way. But also I think that in those early days, Louis, the numbers of people were much smaller and responsibilities in the Secretariat were somewhat more concentrated, and you knew with whom to talk. You knew who had that thing on his or her agenda. But communication in those early days was much easier, faster, and much more common than I suspect that it is now.

SOHN: It was kind of completely different atmosphere, those years. Lake Success, we called it, before we went to--

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