

Dean Rusk Oral History Collection

Rusk FF: Part 2 of 3

Dean Rusk interviewed by Richard Rusk, Thomas J. Schoenbaum, and James Ralph Beard  
circa 1985

The complete interview also includes Rusk EE: Part 1; Rusk GG: Part 3.

BEAIRD: Some interesting events occurred just at the end of Dean's term of Secretary of State--second term--that impact on Georgia and immediately after. I think it's rather interesting that when Dean [Rusk] was invited to come and give the Law Day speech in 1968 that he confronted, upon arriving at the Fine Arts auditorium, a group of pickets across the street.

SCHOENBAUM: Milner [S.] Ball! (laughter)

BEAIRD: They were demonstrating against his participation or involvement in the Vietnam conflict. One of those picketers, maybe the one leading the group, is now a member of the Law faculty and at the time was a law student. He had formerly been a Presbyterian chaplain on campus. Do you recall that, Dean?

DEAN RUSK: I recall it very well. Of course, by that time I had become somewhat accustomed to these things and these pickets bothered people here locally much more than they bothered me. One thing leading up to the Georgia end of it, back in 1961 [E.] Smythe Gambrell, then president of the Atlanta Bar Association, one of our very distinguished lawyers here in Georgia called me on the phone and asked if I would come down to speak to the annual meeting of the Atlanta Bar Association. We had a policy in those days, so I asked Smythe, "Well is the Atlanta Bar integrated or segregated?" And there was a pause on the end of the line, and then came back his reply. He said, "We are not integrated now, but we will be by the time you get here." That was the first time that blacks had had dinner in the Biltmore Hotel in Atlanta. I occasionally meet some of those black lawyers who were there that evening and we kind of laugh about it.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you recall any of the names of those fellows, Pop?

DEAN RUSK: No.

RICHARD RUSK: You say you had a policy about that. Do you mean an understanding among the higher level officials in the government?

DEAN RUSK: Within our administration we did not want to cater to segregated situations.

RICHARD RUSK: Or accept any speaking engagements for groups that were not integrated?

DEAN RUSK: Well, we didn't make it a flat rule, but that was our general approach.

RICHARD RUSK: You talked about it during the cabinet?

DEAN RUSK: Sure. That prompted my question.

BEAIRD: That was the general rule throughout the executive branch beginning in the 1960s.

DEAN RUSK: Then when we were coming up on the end of service in Washington, Lindsey Cowen, Dean of the Law School here, talked to me about coming here as a professor of international law. That was really quite attractive because Virginia [Foisie Rusk] and I had long since decided that we did not want to live any longer on the Northeastern Seaboard: that urban complex reaching from Washington up to Boston. We had had a lot of experience with that and felt we would either go west, which was her home, or go south, which was my home. Then when I was a young man studying law at Berkeley before World War II, my secret ambition then was to be a university professor of international law. So this combination of doing what I had originally wanted to do as a young man and coming home to Georgia, where I have hundreds of cousins and many, many friends, was very attractive. Now, I could only tell this story as I knew it from my end; but I was told that there had been a telephone poll taken of the Regents, and that telephone poll turned out to be unanimous. But then Mr. Roy [Vincent] Harris of Augusta, a former Regent who was at that time George [Corley] Wallace's campaign manager in Georgia, apparently decided that he had an issue here. I think it was related in part to our daughter Peggy's [Margaret Elizabeth Rusk Smith] marriage. So he called for a special meeting of the Regents and that set off a lot of controversy--the fact that it was coming up. During that period before the Regents made their final decision the president of the Student Bar here at Georgia and the president of the student body in the University generally, both called me and urged me to forget about all of this controversy, to come on down. All sorts of other messages from people down here. The Regents final vote was about--what?--eleven to three or something like that.

BEAIRD: Eleven to four: fifteen Regents.

DEAN RUSK: Well, the closing chapter of that was a bill that was introduced into the State Legislature to reduce the appropriation to the University of Georgia by the amount of my salary. I think that was defeated by a vote of something like 114 to 13, or something like that. And that, literally, is the last I ever heard of that. Since actually coming to Georgia, I haven't had a post card, letter, telephone call, or anything else raising issues of that sort.

SCHOENBAUM: Did that delay your appointment at all, as a university professor here?

DEAN RUSK: I don't think it delayed it. It just meant a special meeting of the Regents, I think.

RICHARD RUSK: Ralph, do you remember any of the details? (everyone speaking at same time)

DEAN RUSK: Now that I am a member of this faculty and see how we make appointments and things like that, someday I'm going to get three or four of my colleagues aside over some highballs and ask them to explain to me how in the world I ever got offered this post as a full professor at the University of Georgia. (laughter)

RICHARD RUSK: Well, you've got one of them right here.

BEAIRD: Probably the most difficult position to achieve in the civilized world.

DEAN RUSK: Well, the President of the University of California once, when I was at the Rockefeller Foundation, offered me a post as a full professor on the faculty out there. And when he did so, he smiled and said, "Now, I'll have to bring you in as full professor, because since you don't have a Ph.D. you would never get to be one if I didn't start you off this way." (laughter) So maybe there was something to that in this appointment here.

SCHOENBAUM: Did you ever seriously consider that?

DEAN RUSK: No.

BEAIRD: Well, the faculty here, of course, voted unanimously.

DEAN RUSK: You know, that's the first time I've ever heard that.

BEAIRD: To extend the invitation.

RICHARD RUSK: A unanimous vote?

BEAIRD: Oh, yes, a unanimous vote. During the discussion with the faculty, there was probably some concern raised about the fact that Dean had only attended two years of law school, but Lindsey was very persuasive. The central theme of the meeting was, you know if we look ahead fifteen, twenty years, international law is going to play a major role in this region and we need to take steps now to build a good base in the Law School. Well, the teaching and instruction of international law really was not a subject that was even dealt with. I recall the anecdote that many years ago they wanted to offer international law into the curriculum of the Law School and they looked around for somebody to teach it and the only one that they considered qualified was former All American football player [Robert] McWhorter, who was then on the faculty. His credentials included the fact that he had worked one summer for International Harvester and that's the closest we came.

DEAN RUSK: This sounds self-serving, but it would be hard to find anyone who has practiced more international law over a longer period than I have: In three administrations, every day. There's a cute little story that may be on another tape, Rich. But when I got down to Georgia a friend of mine on the Harvard law faculty sent me a very warm letter of welcome into the profession. Then he passed along a story about Harry Truman which he said that I could use if I needed it. After he left office, Harry Truman went up to the Harvard Law School to talk about constitutional law. During the discussion period one of the Harvard students stood up and said, "Mr. President, do you know anything about constitutional law?" And he said, "Hell yes, I made a lot of it." (laughter) So that might have been an appropriate story here.

BEAIRD: I remember in the discussions, not only during the meetings dealing with the appointment of Dean to the faculty, but after in the coffee lounge and so forth, a lot of people

started inquiring, "What is international law?", you know. "How do you teach it?" You hear people talk of teaching torts, teaching criminal law, and this and that and the other. The point you just made was made, you know, no one practiced more international law than the Secretary of State. That's like getting a Supreme Court Justice to teach constitutional law.

DEAN RUSK: Well, on every working day, as I pointed out before, three thousand cables would go out of the State Department to our posts and to governments all over the world. I think you'll find that spot checks of that daily output would show that about twenty percent of those involved important points of international law. So, it's a continuing process. It goes on all the time.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, do you care to read your comment into this record that LBJ at one time considered offering you the Supreme Court position and you, yourself, raised the point that you didn't have a law degree?

DEAN RUSK: I don't know to what extent this should be used. But he called me in in 1968 and told me that he was going to nominate me to the Supreme Court. Well, this was typical of his generosity toward his colleagues that he wanted to "take care of," just as he sent Bob McNamara to the World Bank, for example. And I told him, "Mr. President, World War II kept me from finishing my law degree. I've never practiced law. I've never been on the bench." He said, "The Constitution doesn't require that for the Supreme Court," which is true.

SCHOENBAUM: It's true.

DEAN RUSK: And I said, "I think it's most unlikely that I would be confirmed by the Senate." He said, "Oh, no. I've taken care of that. I talked to Dick [Richard Brevard] Russell [Jr.] about it and he said you'd be confirmed very easily."

RICHARD RUSK: Why did you turn that one down?

DEAN RUSK: So I said, "Mr. President, I very much appreciate your generosity of your thought in this matter, but as your adviser, I must advise you strongly against it. And as the person under consideration, I will have to tell you that I would not permit my name to go forward."

SCHOENBAUM: Was there a vacancy at the time?

DEAN RUSK: Well, yes. As a matter of fact, had my name gone forward in 1968 it would not have gotten anywhere because it would have gone out with the nomination of Abe Fortas to be Chief Justice. As a matter of fact, he then nominated former Congressman [Homer] Thornberry of Texas to the bench and both of those nominations failed in the Senate and simply weren't acted on. Abe Fortas resigned and then Nixon made those appointments.

RICHARD RUSK: Why did you turn it down? That's quite a position.

DEAN RUSK: Although the Constitution does not require that justices of the Supreme Court be accomplished lawyers, I personally think that they ought to be. I'm not keen about amateur

lawyers sitting on the Supreme Court. I'm not sure that they could carry their load as justices of the court. But in any event, I was not prepared to be the guinea pig to test out that idea.

BEAIRD: This is a little afield from the subject, but I'm just curious, do you think Arthur [Joseph] Goldberg regretted leaving the Supreme Court to be U.N. Ambassador?

DEAN RUSK: Well, LBJ talked to me about that before the appointment was made. Whatever Arthur says about it, and he has strongly denied this, LBJ was convinced that Arthur was getting bored on the Supreme Court and wanted a more active political life. This was one way to open that up to him, you see. From the point of view of our representation at the U.N., it was a very good appointment. Arthur Goldberg is one of the finest negotiators that ever came down the track. He was a much better negotiator than Adlai [Ewing] Stevenson [III], although his speeches were relatively dull compared to Adlai Stevenson's. For example, we were very hesitant to give Adlai Stevenson a fallback position in the negotiation because he would be at the fallback position in five minutes. (laughter) Whereas, Arthur Goldberg, who had long experience in labor negotiations, would take your opening position and he would gnaw at it and he would press, and he would fuss and he drained every drop out of it before any question came up of falling back to another position. He was a great negotiator. And incidentally, he played the crucial role in negotiating Resolution 242 following the June '67 war; and the fact that he was Jewish did not get in the way of his effective communication with--

RICHARD RUSK: What was Resolution 242?

DEAN RUSK: That was the resolution of the Security Council setting out the bases for peace in the Middle East. And it's still the fundamental document on the subject.

BEAIRD: We in the Labor Department had the distinct impression that he was bored on the Court. As a matter of fact, the Chief Press Officer for the Labor Department was called up to the court every day to brief Justice Goldberg on what was going on. One time he invited several of us on the legal staff up for lunch. He wanted to keep in contact with what was going on. He invited us up for lunch and we had lunch in this special room and he served wine with the meal. He said that was the first time wine had ever been served in the Supreme Court building and he had to get the Chief's permission to do it--Chief Justice Earl Warren.

SCHOENBAUM: And this was what, '63, '64, somewhere along in there?

DEAN RUSK: The Supreme Court justices live a pretty antiseptic life there around Washington. Most of the time they are very careful not to let themselves be drawn into things which might later come before the court. For example, there were times at Embassy dinners when Chief Justice Warren would be there and as the Senior American it was up to him to return the toasts offered to the President by offering a toast to the Chief of State of the Embassy country. He would rise and offer his toast and then he would say, "And now I will call on my friend, the Secretary of State to make some remarks." He would never let himself be drawn into any comments on the relations between our two countries and things of that sort. Some of the Supreme Court Justices, like [Hugo LaFayette] Black and some others, took very little part in the social life of Washington. You never saw them turn up at these parties and things. Once in a

while one would. So it was very unusual when, in Johnson's time he would call a meeting to talk about Vietnam or some other issue and he would ask Abe Fortas to come down and join the meeting. I was a little uncomfortable about that. I don't think that's the role for a Justice of the Supreme Court.

SCHOENBAUM: Did Abe Fortas join in the discussions on Vietnam and such?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. Sure. Sure. And he consulted him frequently. Abe Fortas had been an old friend and had consulted with him on such things prior to going to the court. But it continued after he went to the court, which I thought was a little odd.

RICHARD RUSK: There was some pressure for the court to review the constitutionality of the Vietnam War.

DEAN RUSK: Well they did on a number of occasions.

RICHARD RUSK: And they decided not to get into it. They ducked the issue.

DEAN RUSK: The cases sometimes turn on different grounds. One was that it was a political question, which the court should not get into. But another one was that the Congress had legislated on the matter, that therefore those who were challenging it had no basis on which to make a successful challenge.

BEAIRD: Justice [William Orville] Douglas and Justice [Potter] Stewart toward the end did an unusual thing. It's not so unusual now, but they did an unusual thing stating an opinion why they voted to grant certiorari in cases where the majority denied certiorari, primarily on political question grounds. There was a growing sentiment, I think, to have the Supreme Court review the constitutionality of the Vietnam War.

DEAN RUSK: Justice Douglas used to travel a lot, all over the world, particularly to the mountains, to the Himalayas and things like that. He had a pretty bad habit at times of leaving his seat on the Supreme Court and going out somewhere to make speeches about foreign policy. I tried to give him a hint at a press conference once by suggesting that I would try not to decide Supreme Court cases if he would not try to make foreign policy. But he didn't take the hint. One time at a White House party when we were standing around at a reception, Chief Justice Warren came up to me in the corner and he said, "Dean, I think I ought to tell you that if you feel that you have to respond to ray brother, this would not be interpreted as an attack on the Supreme Court."

SCHOENBAUM: Did you have any special relationships with any of the Supreme Court, on a personal level, members of the Supreme Court?

DEAN RUSK: No. I had known [Byron Raymond] Whizzer White while he was in the Justice Department at the beginning of the Kennedy administration before he went to the Court. We were former Rhodes Scholars and bumped elbows a few times.

SCHOENBAUM: Was he there when you were there, Ralph?

DEAN RUSK: No. He was much later. He was there later. I lost a number of cases before the Supreme Court on some of these civil rights issues. I think it's worth a comment on it because of some of the side effects of it. We had an American who had been a naturalized citizen for forty years or more, named [Beys] Afroyim, who went to Israel. While he was there he got caught up in the enthusiasm of the day over there and he voted in an Israeli election. So the State Department took his passport away from him. The law at that time very specifically said that if you vote in a foreign election you lose your American nationality. So, that went to the Supreme Court. Now, here's an interesting thing. I, myself, thought that particular part of the law was unconstitutional. Nevertheless that was a law which had been passed by the Congress and signed by our President, part of the law of the land. So I had a duty, it seemed to me, to try to sustain that law. So we cooperated with the Justice Department in trying to sustain the constitutionality of Afroyim against Rusk. When the decision went against Rusk, I was in the position of being rather glad even though I had been on the other side of the case technically. But then something else happened. When that decision came down we were under pressure from some of the senators not to change our regulations to conform to that decision, but to let the next fellow carry the burden of doing his own litigation: and then the next one, and the next one, you see. Because all the Supreme Court had decided was the case about Mr. Afroyim and an election in Israel. Suppose this had been an election in Poland or somewhere else? It was a five to four decision. It might have gone the other way, you see. But I took the view that we shouldn't play that kind of game and so we changed the regulations to eliminate in our own administration of the law voting in a foreign election as a basis for losing nationality.

SCHOENBAUM: It's a great story.

RICHARD RUSK: Why would that have been a congressional issue?

DEAN RUSK: Well, Congress tinkers all the time with the administration of the law. Their oversight-- and then the politics of it is such that they get involved in these things all the time.

SCHOENBAUM: Do you remember any other court cases specifically that carry the name Rusk?

RICHARD RUSK: Just about all of them have carried the name Rusk, I think.

DEAN RUSK: I lost several Supreme Court cases, I think generally in the right direction, I might say, as far as I was concerned.

BEAIRD: I think that there are a number of cases--This all occurred in a period in which the court ceased looking to the group and started looking to individuals in applying the Constitution, over a period of mid-1950s on up until maybe mid-1970s. Many of the group concepts developed in the New Deal days: upholding the constitutionality of legislation. The Legislature pretty much reigned supreme. The court deferred to legislative judgments and started coming under attack during this period in the name of individual rights. I think this was part of that development. There were many paying their Social Security payments to individuals who lived in foreign

countries and so forth. It was all part of that same thing. The court generally upheld the rights of individuals versus what was considered to be in collective interest of the United States.

DEAN RUSK: The public doesn't understand as well as faculties of law schools do, the extent of law making which necessarily had to be done in the administrative process of applying the law because so often legislation is pretty vague and somebody has to decide what it means. For example, we can deny a visa to somebody on the grounds of moral turpitude. Now what is moral turpitude? There's a famous case back in the twenties of Lady [Vera Fraser] Cathcart of England, who got to be known as quite a swinger around London. She applied for a visa to come to the United States and it was denied to her on the grounds of moral turpitude. Punch, the British humor magazine, made the comment, "Our American friends go to such extreme lengths to make themselves appear ridiculous, it would be downright churlish of us not to concede the success of their efforts." (laughter) You're not supposed to admit somebody who would become a "public charge" in the United States. Well what does that mean? What specifically does it mean in an individual case to become a public charge? An awful lot of lawmaking--I'm sure you would agree, Ralph--goes on in the administrative process of applying general language of the law to specific cases.

BEAIRD: I think, as a matter of fact, the executive branch quite often uses the strategy in getting legislation passed when it looks doubtful that it will pass, making sure that the legislation that is passed is nebulous enough so it can be administered in a way that--(unintelligible, multiple people speaking at same time)

DEAN RUSK: We call that in the executive branch, putting appropriate flesh on the skeleton. And there is no way in which a legislative body can cater for every possible contingency that might arise under the law. A lot of it has to be left to an administrative process and to lower courts.

SCHOENBAUM: Did you get involved much in approving regulations where--I suppose those were mainly approved at a lower level and not the Secretary's level. But did you get involved in any specific sets of regulations for visas or--

DEAN RUSK: Well, occasionally I would call some of these regulations into my own office for review. But there's a quirk in our law that might be of passing interest. The law vests in our consular officers abroad the power to decide whether or not to grant a visa. That is not vested in the Secretary of State, and from a strictly legal point of view the Secretary of State cannot instruct a consular officer abroad as to whether to grant or refuse a visa. He can advise him, and if that consular officer doesn't want to wind up in Ouagadougou he'll generally take that advice.

SCHOENBAUM: Be careful. We're trying to go to Ouagadougou!

DEAN RUSK: But the responsibility rests with the consular officer. There were a good many regulations that were constantly needing revision, partly because they just turn out to be absurd or inapplicable. One thing that I did that I think helped me a good deal, long before the phrase "zero budgeting" came into use I would hold appropriations hearings myself in my own office with the different parts of the Department before going down to Congress because I wanted to

know where every dollar in that appropriations bill was. If you follow every dollar every year, you cannot help but uncover some wastes and things that don't make sense: things that just develop by inertia over time. That happens in any large organization: foundations, universities, wherever. I'm very much in favor of a chief executive knowing where every dollar in his budget is because it reveals a lot of things.

RICHARD RUSK: You've testified about immigration. Racial relations surely must have been a factor in American immigration policies. Evidently under Lyndon Johnson, I think in 1965, the administration made a major effort to amend immigration law.

DEAN RUSK: There had been pretty strong racial aspects to immigration laws. It was tilted against blacks and orientals and people like that.

BEAIRD: Didn't Senator [Patrick Anthony] McCarran play a large role in early legislation?

DEAN RUSK: That's right. But, we managed to get that immigration law changed.

SCHOENBAUM: I believe it was [Edward Moore] Ted Kennedy in his very early days who was one of the movers on that immigration bill. Was the Department involved heavily?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, yes. We were heavily involved.

SCHOENBAUM: In what way?

DEAN RUSK: We had a special officer in the Department, whose name I can't remember at the moment, who was almost passionately interested in these civil rights matters. He worked very hard on them. He was not very good in his working relationships with key members of Congress. Indeed, at one point we were advised by the leadership of the Congress that if we wanted to get those changes in our immigration bill we had better keep that fellow away from Capitol Hill and keep him in the Department.

SCHOENBAUM: Did that mean that you had to do more work as a result of that?

DEAN RUSK: I did more work as a result. You see, when you go down and testify, either on the Civil Rights Act of '64 or on the changes in the immigration law, you've got to put in an awful lot of just plain drudgery before you go down there because there's no rule of relevance in the Congress. In any event, you could get questions from any direction on any aspect of any pending bill. So you had to work very hard to get ready to go down there. Usually I would only get ten percent of the questions that we figured ahead of time might come up. But I would usually go down there with a big black book like this with tabs in it so that I could turn quickly to the relevant materials in case a question did arise. It isn't just a casual thing. You have to work at it.

BEAIRD: This is a field, too, that I recall--talking about going down with a briefing book and so forth. I recall, though, that when you went down before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in about 1967 you went with nothing but your hat and testified for about, what, three days?

DEAN RUSK: Two days solid. Of course, I was briefed to the gills on that before I went down there. That was a kind of an amusing incident to show how the wheels turn around in Washington. LBJ told me he did not want me to appear on a televised public meeting of the Foreign Relations Committee on Vietnam during that particular period of time. So, I stalled--

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BEGINNING OF SIDE 2

DEAN RUSK: I would arrange to do this in a private session, an executive session. During this period when I was stalling at the direct instruction of President Johnson, both [James William] Fulbright and I knew that if we wanted a foreign aid bill, I would have to come down there in a public session to defend foreign aid. So finally the time came when I had to go down for foreign aid. I went down, and for two days there was no mention made of foreign aid. It was all about Vietnam. If anyone would have watched that hearing, you would think that there were senators there who were trying to cut my liver out. But when the hearing was over, we went into a little room in back of the hearing room and had a drink and people were on a first-name basis. Senator Albert Gore of Tennessee, who had been pretty rough during the hearing, wrote me a note a few days later and said, "Dear Dean: I just thought I'd let you know that I have been looking at my mail and you won." The personal relationships are usually quite different than the public relationships.

RICHARD RUSK: Getting back to this immigration policy for a minute, if I can just reiterate the major thrust of what Lyndon Johnson was trying to do. Specifically, I think you fellows were trying to achieve three things, and one was eliminate the national origin system under which quotas for each country were determined; also eliminate the Asia-Pacific triangle provisions which require persons of Asian stock to be attributed quota areas, not by place of birth, but according to racial ancestry. And the other was to accord immigrants from newly independent former colonial areas in the Western Hemisphere the same non-quota status presently enjoyed by immigrants from the other independent nations. Were you able to achieve all that in 1965?

DEAN RUSK: Yes. Yes. It was really quite astonishing. You see, the sense of wanting to straighten out some of these matters of discrimination was a part of the ambience of the country. It was sort of generally recognized by a lot of people that the time had come to do something about these things. We managed to get a pretty good vote out of it. We got some conservative senators and congressmen voting with us on it.

SCHOENBAUM: Where did the initiation of the idea to straighten out the immigration laws come from? Do you remember?

DEAN RUSK: A combination of State and Justice.

SCHOENBAUM: Who at State and who at Justice? Was it you at State? Or you and a group of people at State?

DEAN RUSK: It's a little hard to put your finger on a particular individual when something emerges out of group discussion. Several people made contributions toward it.

SCHOENBAUM: And you proposed it to President Johnson?

DEAN RUSK: Well, we and Justice, together, proposed it.

SCHOENBAUM: That's a real feather in your cap and in everyone's involved.

RICHARD RUSK: Have those changes survived the test of time here? Do we still have a racially tolerant immigrations policy?

DEAN RUSK: Pretty much so. You know there about two and one-half million people standing in line all over the world at any given moment waiting to get a visa for immigration to the United States. Entry into the United States is still a very valuable privilege. There are places where they would pay \$50,000 for a visa to this country. It's a process which has to be watched very closely, very carefully, because under those circumstances the possibilities of corruption are always present. It's a delicate matter. It has to be supervised very carefully.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, my question is: What influence did race relations or civil rights have while you were at Davidson College, or perhaps Oxford? We talked about your boyhood experiences. Let's follow it on up through the various stages of your life.

DEAN RUSK: Davidson was a segregated college for white men. While I was there the question did not even arise, and indeed the segregation in the little village of Davidson was very clear. The blacks lived across the railroad tracks from the college, had their own community, their own church, their own school, and things like that. I dealt with a considerable number of blacks at the little bank where I worked when I was at Davidson, and indeed sometimes the blacks would come in and let us check over their--the tenant farmers would come in and let us check over the figures that had been turned out, largely by their landlords. Sometimes we found discrepancies there and the landlords did not particularly like our meddling in such things. We were able to be of some help.

RICHARD RUSK: Was the bank president aware of the fact you were doing these things?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, yes.

RICHARD RUSK: This wasn't while you were working at the bank that you were checking these figures?

DEAN RUSK: Any of us at the bank would do that if the blacks asked us to.

RICHARD RUSK: You don't remember any exchanges in particular?

DEAN RUSK: One Monday morning during the summer when I was working in the little bank there, it was my turn to open up the bank in the morning. I went down there, and when I got there was a considerable line of blacks outside the bank. And when I opened up, it was clear that they were all lined up to come and get their money out of the bank. There seemed to be a black run on the bank. It didn't cause any banking problem because their accounts were very small and we had plenty of cash to deal with, but we were curious about just what had started this. We learned that the black preacher over in the black church the night before, in exhorting his flock to put money in the collection plate, said to them, "You go down to that bank and get your money out and give it to the Lord. That bank's gonna go broke, but the Lord, he isn't gonna go broke." They believed half of his story and they came down to get their money out. Then in a few days, in a rather shamefaced way, they trickled back in and put their money back in the bank. It was a segregated life at that time. Then when I went to Oxford--

RICHARD RUSK: Just a minute, were there colored people of any types at Davidson? Was that strictly white?

DEAN RUSK: There were no blacks in the student body. There were black servants, waiters, janitors, things of that sort. There were no professional blacks living in the little village of Davidson in those days. We did not have a black man with the faculty. We had black trainers for our sports teams and things of that sort.

RICHARD RUSK: Intellectually, was it an issue on campus?

DEAN RUSK: No. It just didn't arise during the late twenties and early thirties. When I went to Oxford, however, there I was involved with students from all parts of the world: all colors, races and things of that sort--Africans and Asians and others. It was just taken for granted that there was no problem about it. It was just there and I had friends of different races and so forth at Oxford.

RICHARD RUSK: When you showed up at Oxford--obviously later in your life it was quite clear that you had more or less shed whatever racial biases you might have picked up in the South. But when you first showed up at Oxford did you find yourself in a strange environment in terms of your racial beliefs? Were you challenged at all, being a Southerner?

DEAN RUSK: No, not at all. Because as a child, you see, I had been a delivery boy for that little one-man grocery store run by a man named Claude Leatherwood. Part of my work there was to go into the black community and take their orders, then come back and fill up a little red wagon with their orders.

RICHARD RUSK: You had no trouble mixing with the people you encountered at Oxford?

DEAN RUSK: I had no problem at all and had sort of taken it for granted, taken it in stride. Then after Oxford when I went to California to Mills College, there were a few black girls in the student body, not many. Then race was not that much of an issue around Mills College, Oakland, and San Francisco at that time.

RICHARD RUSK: There were some black students at Mills?

DEAN RUSK: A handful. Very few. Then during the war and those two years in the China-Burma-India theatre I was working in a sea of people of other races. I was a part of a very small minority of whites in an ocean of people of other races and colors.

RICHARD RUSK: That was probably the first time that you had been part of a minority group in any way.

DEAN RUSK: Yes. And I didn't feel any particular tension as a result of that. The Chinese were very race conscious. We had great difficulty getting Chiang Kai-shek to admit black soldiers into China. He seemed to think that since we considered these to be second-class soldiers, he didn't want second-class soldiers in China. The Chinese and the Japanese have very strong racial attitudes and feelings.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you have a lot of black American soldiers in the CBI [China-Burma-India theatre]?

DEAN RUSK: A good many, but they were parts of the engineer battalions working on the Burma Road and jobs of that sort. I don't remember any blacks in a position of high responsibility on the general staff or as troop commanders.

RICHARD RUSK: Were you close enough to the troops to know how the relationships may have been between black GIs and whites in the CBI?

DEAN RUSK: No. I really got into that question later when I became special assistant to Secretary of War Robert Patterson, who was working very early on the integration of the army. My adult experiences with people of different races came naturally and easily without tension or strain. You see, I did not bring with me out of the South the old magnolia plantation attitudes toward race. It just wasn't there.

RICHARD RUSK: At what point in your career do you think you could call yourself a truly racially tolerant sort of person? Would this have occurred early? At Oxford?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, I think probably that started in my childhood--

[break in recording]

RICHARD RUSK: This is in China.

DEAN RUSK: In China during the war we sent our convoy of, say, a dozen trucks from one city or town to another, with military supplies on board, driven by Chinese. Chances were that at least six or seven of those trucks would simply disappear en route.

RICHARD RUSK: [Professor] Homer [C. Cooper] said one entire convoy--I think it was the

number 13th convoy--disappeared--the whole shebang--and they never could find it. It checked out at the Assam end and never checked back in at the China end. Talk a little bit about your experience or involvement with writing the order that integrated the armed forces. You say you helped Robert Patterson work on that?

DEAN RUSK: He was determined to break down these racial lines in the armed forces, and moved on it pretty strongly. It's always been of interest to me that the Army was one of the first major units of our society to take seriously this problem of integration/segregation and do something about it. Now, it was off to sort of an uneven start because, oddly enough, there was a black special assistant to Robert Patterson to work on these things as well.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you recall his name, Pop?

DEAN RUSK: No I don't. We got the impression in those early days that blacks themselves did not wish to serve under black officers until they saw blacks commanding white troops. There was a little bit of a special problem there for some reason. They were inclined to look upon black officers as second-class officers and they didn't particularly like that. As soon as we started mixing black noncoms and officers into white units then that problem rapidly disappeared. I think the Army was ahead of the other armed services in desegregation: ahead of the Navy and possibly even ahead of the Air Force.

RICHARD RUSK: If you had to describe exactly to what extent you were responsible for integrating the armed services--You worked for Robert Patterson in the drafting of this order?

DEAN RUSK: No. I don't think I was directly involved in the military orders. I was simply a staff officer to Robert Patterson. Robert Patterson should be given the credit for making the effort. I wouldn't be able to assess any specific contribution that I made in the process. I was in favor of what he was trying to do and tried to help out in whatever way I could.

RICHARD RUSK: Was there a considerable fight within the Army hierarchy over this very integration of the Army?

DEAN RUSK: Not by the end of the war. I don't know whether I've put this on tape before, but earlier, when I was captain in G-2 military intelligence on the War Department general staff, just before and after Pearl Harbor, I was charged with a section of G-2 which dealt with British areas in Asia: Afghanistan, India, Burma, Malaya, Australia, New Zealand, the British Pacific Islands, Hong Kong, and so forth. Over in OSS [Office of Strategic Services] there was a young black who had sort of specialized on those areas and I found myself working fairly regularly with him. One day he was over at my office for lunch and--

RICHARD RUSK: You're talking about Ralph [J.] Bunche?

DEAN RUSK: Yes. And I took him into the officers' dining room in the War Department there for lunch. Apparently that was the first time a black had been taken into the officers' dining room, and the timbers began to quiver. This man's name was, indeed, Ralph Bunche. The colonel in charge of my section of G-2 strongly supported me on this and nothing happened to me. But it

was quite an incident when I did that.

RICHARD RUSK: How crowded was the lunchroom?

DEAN RUSK: It was a large cafeteria-style lunchroom. There must have been--it probably could seat four or five hundred officers at one time.

RICHARD RUSK: Gee whiz. Was there that size of a crowd in there at the time?

DEAN RUSK: It was a large number.

RICHARD RUSK: What exactly was the reaction when you walked in there? First of all, did you two fellows know what you were doing when you did it?

DEAN RUSK: Had no idea. I had no idea that blacks did not come to the officers' lunchroom. Anyhow, that was something that I remembered, and Ralph Bunche himself remembers that.

RICHARD RUSK: I'm sure he does. Is he alive?

DEAN RUSK: No, he died several years ago.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you recall anything that was said to you? Was there any unpleasantness down there?

DEAN RUSK: No unpleasantness in the lunchroom. But the repercussions sort of trickled back through the chain of command, in effect, and there were remarks made to me, but more to the colonel who was in charge of my section: Remarks along the lines of, "What does Rusk think he's doing? Doesn't he know what this is all about?" or something like that.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you remember when that was?

DEAN RUSK: That was in '42. There was a later little story, also involving Ralph Bunche. During the Truman administration, Ralph Bunche had been working as a high official at the United Nations. President Truman asked me to go up to New York to see if I could persuade Ralph Bunche to come down to Washington to become an Assistant Secretary of State. I did, and I talked it over with Ralph. And finally he said, "Well you know I appreciate this offer by President Truman, but I have lived in Washington before and I just don't believe that I, as a father, can ask my children to live in the circumstances in which they would find themselves in Washington." He said, "When we lived there before my children were small and we had a dog. The dog died and we took it out to a pet cemetery to bury it and they turned us away. Of course," he said with a laugh, "The dog was black." He would not come to Washington during the Truman administration because of the circumstances in which blacks had to live there, in which his children would have to grow up.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you report that back to Harry Truman?

DEAN RUSK: I sure did.

RICHARD RUSK: What was his reaction?

DEAN RUSK: He regretted it. But my guess is that old Harry Truman would have been ready to move on some of these basic human rights issues, but he knew that at that time there was no way to get it through Congress.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you ask Ralph Bunche to have lunch with you that time?

DEAN RUSK: Yes. He was in my office. We were working together and it came time for lunch and I just asked him to come have lunch with me.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, would you care to comment on the effect that World War II itself might have had upon race relations in the United States? You read in the history books that the fact of American troops serving side by side, scattered to all different corners of the world, all in behalf of the same cause, itself must have played a role in the transitional way of thinking.

DEAN RUSK: Yes. I think that's a very interesting point. The Supreme Court case of Brown against the Board of Education came in 1954. My own hunch is that if that decision had come in 1945, just at the end of World War II, it would have been much more readily accepted around the country because we had millions of men who were coming back from service all over the world where they had fought alongside of, or been supported by, peoples of different races and colors, religions and so forth. And it would have been much more naturally accepted. The Brown case would have been much more readily accepted at that point. But they had to come home and get reacculturated back into their earlier attitudes. I have no doubt, in my own mind, that if that Supreme Court decision had come right at the end of World War II there would have been more general acceptance and less friction connected with it.

[break in recording]

RICHARD RUSK: Did the Supreme Court decision Brown v. Board of Education have any effect on you, or were you involved with that?

DEAN RUSK: With the Rockefeller Foundation operating under a charter purpose of contributing to the well-being of mankind throughout the world, we had had a good deal of experience traditionally at the Foundation with peoples of other races and colors and so forth. First priority of the Rockefeller Foundation since 1913 had been this hemisphere. And, of course, this hemisphere had in it different races and colors. We tried to move in various ways to support the principle of Brown against Board of Education. We had already given substantial sums of money from the General Education Board and the Foundation to black institutions of higher education: various other colleges in the Atlanta university complex, Tuskegee, and others of that sort. I remember on one occasion we had a proposal in front of us for a grant to a New York group which would be used for the purpose of locating and upgrading black talent. We were attracted to this grant. Our lawyer told us, however, that he thought that such a grant would be in violation of the New York State equal opportunity legislation because it was aimed just at blacks.

We looked at that and discussed it among the trustees and asked our lawyer if we made this grant who would challenge it: The Attorney General of the State of New York which had general supervision of New York chartered foundations? Would the Attorney General of the United States? Would we be sued by anybody in court? Our lawyer said he didn't think anyone would challenge it, so we went ahead and made the grant, although in a technical sense it might have been contrary to the equal opportunity legislation in the State of New York. Over the years the Foundation had given a lot of fellowships to blacks and people of other races. We had given some money for the support of Paul Robeson, the great black singer who became very left-wing politically and helped to bring some criticism onto the Foundation.

RICHARD RUSK: What did he get involved with? Do you remember?

DEAN RUSK: No. Well, I forget the details now, but he was one of those for whom we were criticized by the [Edward H.] Rees Committee when it made its investigations. Then we gave some support money to black writers. There was no sense of prejudice in the Foundation.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you have blacks working for the Foundation at all?

DEAN RUSK: We did not have black officers at that time. We brought Ralph Bunche onto the Board of Trustees. We were rather slow in picking up black officers. In a group of that sort, and indeed in many places in government, you tend to recruit people through gossip circles: people who know whom. They had just not been involved in those circles that we were regularly dealing with when we were looking for people.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you have Ralph Bunche as a pretty close personal friend of yours? Can you volunteer some other names of blacks who you were on friendly terms with and would consider personal friends?

DEAN RUSK: Carl Rowan. Dr. Benjamin Mays, who was an early hero of mine when he was president of Morehouse College. The General Education Board, of which I was also president, was assigned the field of education within the United States, as contrasting with the Rockefeller Foundation which was more international. The General Education Board, over the years, made very substantial capital grants to college. Well, you start making capital grants and you very soon spend yourself out of business no matter how much money you had. So by the time I got there in 1950 the resources of the General Education Board were dwindling: had dwindled rather sharply. So we faced the problem as to whether we should just go ahead with a trickle of resources or spend ourselves out of business. The trustees decided that we would just spend ourselves out of business and liquidate it. In that process I came down to Atlanta and talked to Dr. Benjamin Mays and asked him, among other questions, did he think that we ought to spend our remaining funds on black colleges. He said, "No. No, I wouldn't advise that because these white boys need just as much education as the black boys."

RICHARD RUSK: Is he still alive?

DEAN RUSK: No. He died recently. A great man who lived to be about ninety I think. For years he was the elected president of the School Board for the City of Atlanta. Highly respected

both by blacks and whites. Extraordinary person--

[break in recording]

RICHARD RUSK: We're talking about my dad's efforts within the Department of State to advance blacks within the Department and more successfully integrate the Foreign Service. Pop, of your little working group there, which consisted of Carl Rowan and yourself, G. Mennen Williams, and one or two others, is there any written documentation left from that effort? Did you publish any reports?

DEAN RUSK: I don't know that we published anything. This question might have come up in Congressional testimony from time to time. Once in a while we would simply take a look at the numbers to see if we were making any impact on the numbers of blacks in the Department and the kinds of jobs they held. But I don't recall anything published on the subject. We were working quietly but actively to try to bring this about. One of the problems was that the blacks were not, themselves, turning to service in the Department of State and to Foreign Service. They have to feel that there is a future for them, that this is a place in which they would be comfortable, that things would be normal for them. We had had so few blacks in that field that it took a while for blacks to begin to think in terms of the Foreign Service.

RICHARD RUSK: It was tough to attract your better quality graduates, I guess?

DEAN RUSK: Well, you see, a black who was qualified for the Foreign Service had a good many other jobs waiting for him, particularly when things like Affirmative Action began to catch hold. So, it wasn't easy to recruit a lot of qualified blacks for that kind of service. They simply had not been drawn to the kinds of things that would have prepared them to be successful in that career. It wasn't easy. The same thing is still true today as far as law professors are concerned. Very few blacks put themselves forward as possible candidates to become law professors, and one who is truly qualified has a good many other jobs waiting for him at much higher pay than to be a law professor--

[break in recording]

DEAN RUSK: Perhaps this is a place to put in a very brief comment on Peggy's marriage. I'm not going to invade her privacy, but she and Guy [Smith] did not look upon themselves as being symbols of anything. They were just two young people who decided they wanted to get married. When, in fact, they got married, this took on a symbolic--

END OF SIDE 2