

Dean Rusk Oral History Collection

Rusk HHHH

Dean Rusk interviewed by Richard Rusk and Thomas J. Schoenbaum

1985 August 6

SCHOENBAUM: This is a tape of the role of Dean Rusk in the organization of the post-World War II world order. Present in addition to the honorable Dean Rusk are Rich Rusk and Tom Schoenbaum. August 6, 1985. This is a kind of an important day in world history. Forty years ago today the atomic bomb was first used on Japan. And maybe we could start off with just a question: the bulk of the interview won't be on this. But people have said that the two consequences of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Japan were first of all of course, the war with Japan was shortened. Second, people have pointed out that the Soviets were kept out of Japan and Mr. Rusk was not involved in those decisions. But to what extent was the second reason, keeping the Soviets out of Japan, do you think was really in the mind of President Truman?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I realize that there are those who claim that that played an important part. I personally do not believe that it played any significant role whatever. President Truman was very anxious to end the war before it became necessary to land on the main islands of Japan with the hideous casualties both in Japanese and American lives that would have been involved. After all, we had already lost more than fifty million dead in that war, and I know that General George [Catlett] Marshall's view was that we should get the war over with as quickly as possible before the very institutions of our society melted out from under us. And I just don't buy this notion that somehow we dropped these two bombs because of Russia, trying to keep them out.

SCHOENBAUM: Now, turning to the United Nations and to, first of all, to the crisis over Azerbaijan. When this issue was first presented to the United Nations if I am not mistaken, represented the first crisis that the Security Council was called upon to grapple with.

DEAN RUSK: Yes, that was the first case before the U.N. Security Council.

SCHOENBAUM: Dean Rusk at that time was an aide to Secretary of State [James Francis] Byrnes. And that crisis was successfully resolved in the sense that the Soviet troops were withdrawn from Iran, but there still is some historical dispute over why the Soviets made their move and the role that the United Nations played in resolving that crisis. Secretary Byrnes was quoted as first of all saying that this referring the case to the United Nation would prove too much for would test the strength of the fledgling United Nations. And then when it was successfully resolved, Secretary Byrnes gave full credit to the United Nations and said it was proof of the strength and influence of the United Nations. What is your view on that, and what role did you play in that crisis?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I was then Assistant Chief of the Division of International Security Affairs, which was then a part of what was called the Office of Special Political Affairs which was in fact the Office of the United Nations. And, of course, we had no military capability to

apply against the Russians at that time. We were in the process of, overnight, almost total demobilization, but, we took it to the United Nations and mobilized the governments and opinion of the world against what the Russians were doing. And we fussed, and we heckled, and we pressured, and we developed overwhelming votes in the United Nations on the subject. And I think, probably, Joseph Stalin [Iosif Vissaronovich Dzhugashvili] just reached the point where he felt that keeping his troops in Azerbaijan was not worth the general price that it would cost him in terms of propaganda. See, the Russians are very sensitive to propaganda values. So I think they reached a point where they decided that it wasn't worth the candle. The same thing happened later with the blockade of Berlin. It went on for several months with a brilliantly executed airlift by American, British, Canadian, French flyers. I think Stalin reached a point where he decided that the blockade was costing him more than it was worth, and he took advantage of some opportunities opened up by conversations between George [Frost] Kennan and Ambassador [Yakov Alexandrovitch] Jacob Malik at the United Nations and called it off. It's much more difficult these days to organize that kind of unanimity in the United Nations on any subject, but in those early days in the General Assembly we were having votes like forty-five to five or forty-six to four, that kind of thing.

RICHARD RUSK: Back in the good old days of the U.N.

DEAN RUSK: Back in the early days of the U.N. And so I think it was really the weight of international opinion that had the critical part to play in Stalin's decision to withdraw from Azerbaijan.

RICHARD RUSK: Was there resistance on the American side to take that case of Azerbaijan to the U.N.?

DEAN RUSK: No. Not really.

RICHARD RUSK: Wasn't it the Iranian President or Prime Minister who more or less decided on his own to appeal to the United Nations?

DEAN RUSK: Well, as a matter of fact, there was considerable confusion in Tehran, and there was a period there where the Iranian Ambassador to Washington, to the United Nations, was used as the spokesman for Iran on the grounds that people in Tehran were under duress. So there were times when he spoke out in the U.N. Security Council and elsewhere, in effect without any instructions from any government in Tehran, and once or twice even contrary to the instructions he had from Tehran. So, his name was Ambassador Ali Hussein Ala, very slight little man, but was a very effective instrument for the presentation of that case to the Security Council.

SCHOENBAUM: What role did you play in--let us pin you down on this. What did you do, draft speeches for our delegation, or what?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I worked very hard with others to develop positions to be taken on various matters affecting Azerbaijan and the U.N. Security Council, and I have no doubt that I was among those who worked on the speeches that, for example, Secretary of State Byrnes made in the U.N. Security Council. It was his presence there added emphasis and weight to the

seriousness in which the United States addressed this matter. See, the problem arose because during World War II, the Americans and the Russians were using Iran as a back door route to the Soviet Union to take supplies, lend-lease and other kinds of supplies, into the Soviet Union. And there were Russian forces in the northern part of Iran and American transportation and other troops in the southern part of Iran. And our understanding had been that at the end of the war both American and U.S.S.R. forces would withdraw. But the Russians tried to stay, and we felt rather strongly that if their troops stayed in Iran then they would pinch off that northwestern frontier and turn it into a Communist stronghold and that that would probably mean that the Communists would in due course take over the entire country. So, we thought it was a serious point.

RICHARD RUSK: Well, the British had troops there as well. I presume they--Not too many.

DEAN RUSK: Yeah, they had a few.

SCHOENBAUM: Okay. Following the documentary record that we have from the U.S. or from the series Foreign Relations of the United States, skipping ahead--And this is a large jump, but we'll have to skip around. Turning to the Marshall Plan: There is a memo on page 593 of the 1947 Volume I, there is a memo which was--

RICHARD RUSK: What series is this? Identify the series.

SCHOENBAUM: Well, that should be enough. Volume I of Foreign Relations of the United States. It's a memo prepared by Dean Rusk, and it is advanced to Undersecretary of State [Robert Abercrombie] Lovett, and it concerns the--it's August 7, 1947, and it concerns what the United States. Mr. Rusk is adjudicating [sic] a strong stand and new initiatives by the United States government in the fall meeting of the General Assembly and he makes several suggestions. One is a very interesting one that there is some initiative concerning the achievement of economic recovery in Europe. And of course, prior to that, I think it was August 5, if I have that date right--No, June 5, 1947--was the announcement of the Marshall Plan in a speech at Harvard by Secretary of State George Marshall. This suggestion by Mr. Rusk was discussed but in effect rejected on the grounds that the Marshall Plan not be made a part of the General Assembly's deliberations. This brings to light an interesting conflict. Multilateral versus bilateral or, in the case of the Marshall Plan, kind of a regional policy. Can you shed any light on that small policy dispute?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I'd been involved in the preparation of what came to be known as the Marshall Plan on the staff there at the State Department. But, that was not referred to the United Nations General Assembly because it seemed quite apparent upon reflection that if you put to the United Nations General Assembly a plan that involved, in effect, Western Europe alone, there would be many other members of the United Nations who would say, "Hey we want some of that pie," and that might make it very difficult to get an effective result in the United Nations. Now, this kind of a memo came from an attitude that Secretary George Marshall took. He used to tell us, "Let's not sit around in our chairs and wait for the Russians to do something. Let's let them worry about what we are doing. Let's look for initiatives which we can take that would improve the situation and perhaps even catch the Russians off guard." And so, Marshall was quite

interested in having some general theme for the United States at each meeting of the UN General Assembly, and this was a memo exploring some of those possibilities for the upcoming meeting of the U.N. General Assembly.

SCHOENBAUM: Another suggestion in the same memo made by Mr. Rusk that the policy planning staff did decide had merit was Mr. Rusk's suggestion that there be created some sort of, and I'm quoting: "some sort of standing committee of the General Assembly to which problems of international peace and security could be referred or which could at least occupy itself with the question of concealed forms of aggression." Do you remember what was in your mind at that time?

DEAN RUSK: Yes. We already were feeling the impact of a succession of Soviet vetoes in the U.N. Security Council. Now, the General Assembly has authority under the Charter to discuss any problems relating to the Charter, although they could not make decisions, so-called, they could only make recommendations in the U.N. General Assembly. And we were already beginning to give thought to a greater role for the General Assembly on issues in which the U.N. was paralyzed in the Security Council by the Soviet veto, and this was a suggestion along that line. Later, we took to the United Nations General Assembly the Uniting for Peace resolution, which directly substituted the General Assembly for the Security Council in situations where the Security Council was paralyzed by a veto.

SCHOENBAUM: So this was really the origin of an important role? This could be looked on as the seed of the origins of an important role for the General Assembly?

DEAN RUSK: Yes, you see, the U.N. Charter gives primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace to the U.N. Security Council. We and the Russians frequently disagree over whether primary means exclusive. The Russians tended to take the view that only the Security Council could deal with problems of international peace and security, whereas we felt that primary meant just what it said and that the General Assembly had a secondary role to play on such matters where the U.N. Security Council could not act. That matter has been a point of some difference between us and the Soviet Union ever since.

SCHOENBAUM: Another memorandum that was written by Mr. Dean Rusk had to do with the use of the United Nations and specifically the economic commission for Europe. At a meeting in May of 1947, which would have been just before the Marshall Plan was announced, Mr. Rusk urged that at least we consider the use of the economic commission for Europe in connection with what became the Marshall Plan. Do you remember what was in your mind then?

DEAN RUSK: Well, remember that I was in charge of United Nations affairs and the U.N. was my client, and I was looking for ways in which to build up the effectiveness of the U.N. and the use of United Nations bodies. When the Marshall Plan proposal was first made, the invitation included the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Now, if there had been communist participation in the Marshall Plan, the economic commission for Europe might have been a suitable instrument around which to organize the whole effort. But when the Russians walked out of a Paris meeting of European governments, when they put their heads together about how to reply to the American invitation, the Soviets walked out of that meeting, and when they did so,

they dragged a very reluctant Czechoslovakia and Poland along with them. So, I think that since Russia and other Eastern European countries were members of the economic commission for Europe, after the Soviets walked out, made it clear that they weren't going to play, then I think the economic commission for Europe no longer became the effective instrument and a new western group had to be established to go ahead with the Marshall Plan.

SCHOENBAUM: This is interesting because in Kennan's memoirs, he cites the Marshall Plan as one of the, what he calls, I think, a misunderstanding. He says the flaw of the Marshall Plan was that Moscow took it as the beginning of a campaign to deprive it of its victory over Germany. I take it that you would not subscribe to that view on the ground that the Russians had acted first to make it impossible for any approach.

DEAN RUSK: No, the Russians were very reluctant to become involved in anything which required them to cooperate economically with the west. For example, at the end of the war, we were discussing with the Russians major loans: at least a billion dollars, maybe more. Professor Eugene [V.] Rostow of Yale, and later Undersecretary of State, was on the negotiating team talking with the Russians about this billion dollar loan; and it was the Russians again who walked out of the discussions, because they simply would not agree to anything which called for any kind of cooperation from them in the economic field or with the West. So those were some opportunities that were lost, but lost because the Russians wouldn't play. Now, we shouldn't be sanctimonious about their refusing to participate in the Marshall Plan because had they participated as a major partner in the Marshall Plan, then I think I would have to say that we would have had great difficulty in getting the necessary appropriations from Congress. So we needn't be sanctimonious about this. But the fact is that Truman and Marshall invited the Russians to participate and they refused.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, we've been through this before, but I wonder if you would comment again, and that's on the genesis of the idea for the Marshall Plan. Where did that idea come from?

DEAN RUSK: Rich, when something develops out of a lot of group discussion, it's very hard to attribute an idea to a single individual. It emerges from the talks. If I had to specify the principal source of the Marshall Plan, it would be in the interaction between Secretary George Marshall and his own policy planning staff headed by George Kennan with Paul [H.] Nitze as his deputy and a very able small group of people on the planning staff. Marshall had established the policy planning staff, and I think it came up out of interaction between Marshall and that group.

SCHOENBAUM: And you were in that group?

DEAN RUSK: No, I was not in the policy planning staff. I was in charge of United Nations affairs. Of course I had my representative in the policy planning staff, and I saw them frequently in morning staff meetings. We were all there together, but--

RICHARD RUSK: I know you were involved in the Marshall Plan later: in its implementation, surely, and in the discussions of some of its finer points. But in the genesis of the idea, did you have input? Were you one of those who explored the question, "Should we do this at all?"

DEAN RUSK: I can't claim any authorship for the Marshall Plan as such. I was a part of the group out of which the Marshall Plan developed, but I wouldn't claim any--

SCHOENBAUM: Did it develop as a kind of a continuation? U.N.R.R.A. [United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration] was the principal focus of food and recovery for Europe and then it kind of evolved into the Marshall Plan?

DEAN RUSK: Well, then there were a couple of major loans to Britain, for example, at the end of the war. And President Truman terminated lend-lease rather quickly at the end of the war. He thought the continuation of lend-lease beyond the war itself simply would not fly in Congress. He probably was right on that. But, you see, we came out of World War II as the only principal economic power that had been unscarred by the war, and we had an economic capability which was dominant on the world scene. When we computed the ability of members of the U.N. to pay dues on a basis of comparative ability to pay, the United States would have been called upon for about fifty percent of the United Nations' budget because we had fifty percent of the going economy of the world here in the United States. And so--

RICHARD RUSK: Fifty percent of the world's gross national product was ours?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah, roughly.

RICHARD RUSK: Wasn't it closer to twenty-five percent?

DEAN RUSK: No, no. On a basis of ability to pay in terms of the formula that was used to compute that, our share would have been about forty-five to fifty percent. And we started out with over forty percent of U.N. dues, although in theory we had said from the very beginning that no single nation should pay more than twenty-five percent of the dues of the U.N. But, no, we had the capacity, and that gave us a responsibility which people like Harry Truman, George Marshall, and others saw and led us to mobilize, for those days, enormous resources with which to bind up the wounds of war and get the world's economy started again.

SCHOENBAUM: We can now turn to Greece and Turkey, but mainly Greece because Greece was--on December 3, 1946, Athens complained to the Secretary General about the Greek guerillas which were operating in the mountains of northern Greece. And the Security Council set up a committee of investigation to travel there in 1947, and as usual the Security Council deadlocked. Are we right in presuming that this crisis, the Greek crisis is so important because it seems to have directly led to both the Truman Doctrine and to the Doctrine of Containment. Of course, that's perhaps been overblown, as it was voiced in the *Foreign Affairs* article by X, George Kennan, in 1947. Is the Greek guerilla crisis that important? Did it actually kind of galvanize and form American policy?

DEAN RUSK: Well, yes and no. As you know, we became involved in the Greek problem when the British decided that they could no longer carry on their responsibilities in Greece, and they simply, on very short notice, told us they were getting out and that we would have to do what had to be done. Well, so that the Greek guerilla problem engaged the United States to take an active part on the world scene at a time when we were demobilizing and more or less headed

toward withdrawal into an isolationist America. So, that was an act of will in which we decided that we had to do something about Greece. But, again, we had no military forces with which to reinforce Greece with our own troops. We gave the Greeks themselves a lot of aid and helped the Greeks to resolve that problem inside Greece with an assist by Yugoslavia's defection from the Soviet camp during that affair.

RICHARD RUSK: Could you elaborate on that?

DEAN RUSK: Yes. See, the Greek guerillas had been using bases and sanctuaries in Albania, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria, and in the immediate postwar period, Yugoslavia was looked upon as a part of the Soviet camp. But then, Marshall [Josip Broz] Tito decided in [what was it?]'48 to withdraw from the Soviet camp and not be a part of the Warsaw Pact group and what came to be the Warsaw Pact group or take his leave from Moscow. One small incident in which I probably stumped my toe: I was then in charge of U.N. affairs in the State Department. I was at a dinner in New York, I think given by the U.N. Secretary General, where Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet permanent representative to the U.N. was present. And during dinner I remarked to him that we ought somehow to put our heads together and resolve this wretched problem in Greece. And he came up like a trout after a hook, and we had at least one further discussion about it, just the two of us. Well, he probably knew, and I did not, that Yugoslavia was about to defect. And he was interested in seeing what the Soviets might be able to retrieve out of the Greek guerilla business through some kind of a discussion with us. Fortunately those talks didn't go anywhere, and I was saved the embarrassment of a diplomatic error on my part.

SCHOENBAUM: Well, that's very interesting because the memorandum of your conversation with Gromyko--the first one and the second one, also--is in the Foreign Relations series verbatim. It's in Volume 6 of 1949, page 303.

DEAN RUSK: That was an unauthorized conversation as far as I was concerned. I had no instructions on that final.

RICHARD RUSK: In any case, it found its way into the official series.

SCHOENBAUM: The record seems to make this perhaps a more important diplomatic conversation than you portray it in terms of what happened. It's a memorandum of conversation. And Hector McNeil was there also. And it seems to have been the first indication that the United States government had that the Soviets were changing their policy on infiltration and on the guerilla activity in Greece. And you reported that he was suddenly flexible and in an exchange that was positive, and this was brought to the attention of even to President Truman at the time. And it's so stated on May 5, 1949 that Truman saw this memorandum of conversation which you had at Trygve Lie's dinner party. Can you give us--Obviously your next conversation--You had conversations with British Minister of State, Hector--

END OF SIDE 1

BEGINNING OF SIDE 2

SCHOENBAUM: Can you give us some--Obviously you're being too modest about--If I may say so, you're being quite modest about your role.

DEAN RUSK: I don't even remember everything that's in the memos much less being able to add to what's in the memos. There is one very important point about your earlier reference to the Truman Doctrine. I personally think that a rather large misconception exists in many minds about what came to be known as the Truman Doctrine. When President Truman decided that we had to assist Greece and Turkey faced with communist pressure, the guerillas in Greece and Soviet demands for two eastern provinces of Turkey, Kars and Ardahan or something like that, in his speech in support of Greek and Turkish aid, he used language which appeared to be universal in character: "We will help countries anywhere who are being threatened by communist aggression." And that came to be known as the Truman Doctrine. Well, I'm certain in my own mind that President Truman did not have in mind that this was a policy that had world-wide application that we would be the world's policeman wherever problems of this sort developed. It was a part of the rhetoric of getting Congressional support and public support for aid to Greece and Turkey. You see, in those days, getting such money was not an easy job in Congress. You remember when the Marshall Plan discussions came up, Senator Arthur [Hendrick] Vandenberg told us that if you want to get that kind of money out of Congress, you'll have to scare the hell out of them. And so we had to fight for money for such purposes as aid to Greece and Turkey, and some of the votes were very narrow, very close. I remember over one weekend the Greek guerillas came to our assistance. At the end of one week we knew that we were in deep trouble in the vote in Congress on Greek-Turkish aid, and then over the weekend the guerillas in Greece launched a major offensive. And then on Monday or Tuesday they withdrew. Well, that offensive was enough to get us the critical votes the following Monday. And so, in that sense they came to our help. But the rhetoric of the Truman Doctrine was really aimed at getting support for Greece and Turkey. It was not aimed at making us a world's policeman wherever this sort of a thing arose.

RICHARD RUSK: Although there were people within the Department, particularly George Kennan, who saw the potential universal application of the language of the Truman Doctrine as being very troubling.

DEAN RUSK: That's right.

RICHARD RUSK: And argued within the Department that--

DEAN RUSK: Yeah, well,--

RICHARD RUSK: In other words, not all of you were in accord that this was strictly language for the Congress.

DEAN RUSK: Well, the exact language that was used was a matter of some difference of view down below.

SCHOENBAUM: Did you see that language before?

DEAN RUSK: I probably did. But when a President sits down to make a speech he makes the kind of speech he wants to make with his own speech writers and often doesn't give a damn about what the bureaucrats in the State Department think about it. As a matter of fact, that's how point four was born: technical assistance was born. President Truman was about to make a major speech and he wanted to put a little more jazz in it. He wanted to perk it up a bit. And so he and some of his staff in the White House came up with this idea of technical assistance to the developing countries, which was point four in his speech. Well, he made this speech and then we had to scurry around trying to put arms and legs on the idea and see what the dickens he was talking about and what could be done in the direction in which he had started simply by putting it into a speech.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, getting back to this memo conversation with Gromyko and that dinner. Your remark to Gromyko was strictly on your own initiative? You weren't there for the purpose of exploring soviet attitudes on the Greek problem?

DEAN RUSK: I had no instructions from Washington when I went to that dinner at Trygve Lie's house with, among others, Gromyko. And I remember that at the dinner itself Trygve Lie was sitting at the end of the table, Gromyko was sitting on his right, and I was sitting on Trygve Lie's left. So, we had easy access for conversation directly across the table during that dinner. And it was during that dinner that I made the casual remark that we ought somehow to put our heads together and find a solution to this Greek problem. And he obviously was very interested. In retrospect, I think he knew that the Yugoslavs were about defect and he was interested in seeing what could be retrieved from the situation from the Soviet point of view.

[break in recording]

SCHOENBAUM: Didn't that memorandum form a central basis for what happened? The Russians for whatever reason, whether it was Yugoslavia defecting, decided to withdraw.

DEAN RUSK: Not to pursue the matter in Greece. Yeah, they pulled back on it.

SCHOENBAUM: That was the first break in the Greek crisis, in effect, and you handled it.

DEAN RUSK: I'm not sure that my remark had anything whatever to do with what the Russians thought and did. I think they were very much concerned about the defection of Yugoslavia from the Soviet camp. But, the guerilla affair dragged on for a while after that. But the Greeks were able to pull their socks up and deal with the guerillas in Greece, and finally the guerillas more or less gave up. A good many of them were killed and captured. But again there was strong support for the Greeks, or Greece, at the United Nations in those days.

SCHOENBAUM: Going back to the original Greek problem, as a result of Truman's speech on March 5, 1947, there was some feeling that he went too far in dismissing the U.N. and the U.N. role. Did you share that view? And the record shows that you went ahead and recommended and

did ultimately see the creation of a U.N. special committee on the Balkans that worked quite effectively as a, in fact, a landmark in the General Assembly to create a special committee to deal with indirect aggression. That was your brainchild, wasn't it?

DEAN RUSK: This was an important matter for us because in Article 2.4 of the United Nations Charter, indeed, in Article 1 of the United Nations Charter, the Charter had concentrated on the term "armed attack" in terms of aggressive war. And of course, most people were thinking about the circumstances that launched World War II: the actual invasion by divisions of regular forces which happened in Manchuria, Ethiopia, the Rhineland and so forth, Czechoslovakia and Poland. But it soon became clear that there was a form of aggression less than armed attack by organized divisions using guerilla techniques. And we thought that this, what was then called indirect aggression, perhaps was a greater threat in terms of what might be expected to happen in the world. And so, we continuously tried to close the gap between indirect aggression on the one side and aggression by regular armies on the other so that both would become recognized as being beyond the pale of international law and the standards of the Charter. And the Greek guerillas were the first major evidence of that kind of indirect aggression, as it was then called. Many years later when, in 1973, the U.N. General Assembly adopted its own definition of aggression without a dissenting vote, this distinction between armed attack and guerilla and other forms of aggression simply disappeared. Both were recognized as aggressive in character.

SCHOENBAUM: On March 18, 1947, there's another memo written by you to Undersecretary of State [Dean Gooderham] Acheson, in which you presented in very logical fashion the arguments for and against sending a letter from the President--President Truman--to the United Nations concerning the proposed action by the United States in Greece and Turkey: in other words, the March 5th announcement. And you concluded on the basis of balancing the arguments that the President should send a letter to the United Nations. And, as I understand it, our representative [Warren Robinson] Austin did explain the situation and this led to a U.N. role in Greece and Turkey. Is that--

DEAN RUSK: Well I think that's--yes. But you see, in those days--

RICHARD RUSK: Although that letter was never sent. The President never did send that letter to the Secretary General.

DEAN RUSK: I'm not sure. I think the United States sent a letter to the Secretary General, now, who signed it, whether it was the Secretary of State or our permanent delegate to the U.N., I'm not certain.

SCHOENBAUM: I think it was Austin.

DEAN RUSK: Yeah, you'd have to look that up. But, see, in those days we had the idea that it was the business of the Security Council to take a look at anything that seemed to threaten international peace and security. The guerrillas in Greece clearly seemed to us to threaten international peace and security. And that we should keep the Security Council informed of anything which we did in such circumstances. Those two things were sort of implicit in our approach to the United Nations in those days, and those attitudes seemed to us to be implicit in

the Charter itself. And so it would have been natural for us to refer this question to the United Nations and to inform them as to what we, ourselves, were doing with respect to it.

SCHOENBAUM: There's a mention in this memorandum that Senator Vandenberg had suggested relating this matter to the United Nations and that you had some contact with him, and your argument was that this favor of sending this letter would provide an opportunity for meeting with Senator Vandenberg's views. Did you have--

DEAN RUSK: Yes, well, you see, by that time Senator Vandenberg had abandoned his position of isolation and had become a strong supporter of the United Nations. And he, for example, when later NATO was formed, he went to very special pains to try to make it clear that NATO was not to be a substitute for the United Nations. I remember we once went to see Vandenberg about the complicated Palestine question to see if he had any suggestions. And I remember the suggestion he made. He said, "Look, you people ought to get out the United Nations Charter. You look at Article 1 and see if it has any bearing on this question. If not, look at Article 2, Article 3. Go right through the Charter to see what relevance the U.N. Charter has with respect to these issues." Not bad advice, actually. But, Vandenberg became a very strong proponent of the United Nations. He was on the original delegation that drafted the U.N. Charter, and he and his Democratic colleague, [Thomas Terry] Tom Connally, were on our delegations to some of the original meetings of the U.N. General Assembly. So he was a giant in support of the United Nations in those days.

SCHOENBAUM: Were you in personal touch with him at this time over--

DEAN RUSK: Oh, yes, we kept in touch; we kept him fully informed.

RICHARD RUSK: You had quite a job to do combatting the influence of people like Kennan and some of the Europeanists regarding the role of the U.N.

DEAN RUSK: Yes, there were those who were pretty skeptical about the United Nations: people in our Bureau of European Affairs, and some of the other sort of old-time diplomats. I think I mentioned this elsewhere, but some of our NATO members tended to look upon the United Nations as just a babbling Babel tower: many tongues and ineffectiveness. I've always felt that that was a mistake because our combined influence in the United Nations could be very great if we pulled together in that forum.

RICHARD RUSK: Well, you pointed all that out, that we really should take these matters to the U.N., particularly with relation to Greece and Turkey. And the administration more or less handled that bilaterally, at least far more than you wanted them to do. And yet there was a considerable reaction in this country to the idea that we'd gone ahead unilaterally and bilaterally without using the U.N.

DEAN RUSK: Well, it was in the U.N., although we did not rely upon the U.N. as an operational agency that could really deal with the question.

RICHARD RUSK: But didn't that really strengthen your hand within the Department: the fact that we had gone ahead without nearly as much U.N. help as you would have liked to have seen? And was this reaction and--

DEAN RUSK: Well, you see, most people have forgotten Article 33 of the U.N. Charter. In that Article it states in effect that matters should not be referred to the U.N. until all other means have been exhausted: negotiation, arbitration, and adjudication, and so forth, use of regional agencies. The referral of a question to the United Nations, under the original U.N. Charter, was looked upon as a drastic step. It was almost the last step before people started shooting each other. Debate in the U.N. was looked upon as something of a drastic measure because the prospects were that debate would simply inflame the situation rather than pacify it. So, but most people had forgotten Article 33, and then there were those who were so strong U.N. buffs in those days that if you did not refer questions immediately to the U.N. they would accuse you of bypassing the U.N. Well, the U.N. Charter calls for bypassing in effect, with this exhaustion of other remedies section in it. So, there was always a problem about that. But the U.N. was not an operating agency which could have organized assistance for Greece and so forth. The U.N. Commission for Greece did a good job, and they clarified the issues for the world and helped build up support in the U.N. for Greece. But, the communist side would not have anything to do with this U.N. Commission for Greece during that period. And that helped to strengthen the attitudes in the General Assembly in support of Greece.

SCHOENBAUM: This is fascinating on all these famous doctrines and events were taking place almost at the same time. The containment policy, you've already spoken to that, that this was not supposed to be a general doctrine. But did you know that Kennan was working on his article for *Foreign Affairs*?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I had seen his long telegrams from Moscow: brilliant telegrams in which he set forth the views that later were translated into that article by Mr. X for the *Foreign Affairs Quarterly*. And they were thoughtful and imaginative and so forth. But, this word containment got to be a kind of catchword and slogan on which people built a lot of things that weren't necessarily there. I myself took a much more pragmatic view. I've already put on other tapes reference to our overnight and almost total demobilization at the end of World War II. Well, during that period of American and western disarmament, Joseph Stalin tried to keep Azerbaijan; he demanded two eastern provinces of Turkey; he supported the guerrillas going after Greece; he had a hand in the communist coup d'état in Czechoslovakia; he blockaded Berlin; he was soon to give the green light to the North Koreans to go after the South Koreans. Now, these were the things which if allowed to proceed in an orderly fashion, would have suffocated the west and would have produced World War III. And so trying to stop those kinds of adventures seemed to be necessary. Now to debate the word "containment" seemed to me a little beside the point, because there were some very practical problems to deal with. And if you wanted to summarize that under the word "containment" all right. I don't object. But when you adopt a slogan, then you pay the price of all sorts of irrelevancies that gather around such a slogan.

SCHOENBAUM: Wasn't it John Foster Dulles that really turned containment into a kind of a universal rigid ideological doctrine?

DEAN RUSK: Well, again, not universal as far as action was concerned. I think his contribution was to translate that into the idea that somehow we could roll back communism in Eastern Europe. And that, for instance, stiffened the spine of the Russians and caused them to be much more difficult. But Foster Dulles had the idea that somehow the free world could roll back communism by doing something about liberating Eastern Europe. That was not on.

SCHOENBAUM: Do you find it ironic George Kennan--is it a change in views that in his memoirs now he's so adamant about saying that the post-World War II period was a period of lost opportunity, that the United States should have refrained from some of these actions? He even alludes to NATO and the development of the hydrogen bomb that if the United States had done less of these actions that there might have been negotiations and a true peace in Europe.

DEAN RUSK: Well, I think George, as he grew older, had to eat a good many of the things that he said in his famous telegrams, and even the Mr. X article. And he's trying to reinterpret some of those things to fit his later views. There was one point that George Kennan put forward that I could not agree with him on. We had quite a good deal of tussling over it. George Kennan took the view that the assertion of a demand by the Soviet Union was a fact which we had to take into account. We had to deal with it as a part of the real world. My view was that if the Soviets came up with a demand that was utterly outrageous, we should simply reject it out of hand. Because George thought that whatever the Soviets demanded we ought somehow to try to negotiate some compromise on it. Well, that would open the way for the Soviets to nibble us to death like ducks and put a premium on outrageous demands: outrageous demands of the sort that we ourselves were not prepared to make. Now that would create a major imbalance in the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. So I've had my share of disputes with George over that particular issue.

RICHARD RUSK: Over what particular policy? Do you recall?

DEAN RUSK: That if the Soviets put forward a demand--

RICHARD RUSK: No, I got that. I got that. But, can you tie that in--

DEAN RUSK: No, I--

SCHOENBAUM: Let me try a few examples: Perhaps the Italian peace treaty and Trieste?

DEAN RUSK: Berlin, Trieste, questions of that sort. And, well as a matter of fact, I think this was part of the reason for the break between George Kennan and Dean Acheson.

SCHOENBAUM: Again, George Kennan, in his memoirs, says that the most important memo he ever wrote was a memo written in early 1950 to Dean Acheson that argued that the United States should not develop the hydrogen bomb.

DEAN RUSK: Yes. Well, I was on the other side on that issue; because it was clear to me, on the basis of what we knew, that the Russians were working like mad on the hydrogen bomb, and that if we did not offset that with a demonstrated capability of hydrogen weapons ourselves that

the Russians would consider themselves to have a major military advantage and might engage in adventures which could lead to general war. I didn't agree with George on that.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you ever write a letter signed by an X? Did you ever feel compelled to float something in public like that?

DEAN RUSK: No, I did most of my arguing within the government.

RICHARD RUSK: What kind of an impression did that make when Kennan came out with that public article?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, it was quite a sensational article because of its sheer brilliance, and extraordinarily well written.

RICHARD RUSK: Did people know who had written it? Did he own up to its authorship?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, I think it very soon came to be, almost immediately came to be known that it was George Kennan who had written it. I don't know whether he ever really thought that a Mr. X article in *Foreign Affairs* could remain anonymous.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, we started this thing with Azerbaijan. There have been some references in various literature that President Truman had threatened the use of atomic weapons.

DEAN RUSK: That's not true. That's not true.

RICHARD RUSK: Were you sitting in a place to actually know that with certainty?

DEAN RUSK: Oh yes, sure. Sure. Among other things, in those days we only had a handful of A-bombs in our inventory.

RICHARD RUSK: It only takes a handful.

DEAN RUSK: Well, not with a country like Russia. You see, when we dropped the second bomb on Nagasaki that was the only one we had in stock at that moment. And we learned later that through espionage Joseph Stalin had learned how many of these things we did not have. And so he was in no sense intimidated during that period of so-called American monopoly.

RICHARD RUSK: Would you necessarily have known if Truman had issued a threat?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, I think so, sure. But I remember on one occasion that I was in the room when President Truman was meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff about something. I forget now exactly the particular trouble spot. And, we were talking about various contingencies as to what might happen down the road. And at one point one of the Joint Chiefs said, "Well, of course that will mean the use of nuclear weapons." And Harry Truman almost came up out of his chair. And he turned to the general and he said, "Who told you that?" And the general said "Well, that's a part of our strategic doctrine." And Truman said, "You go back and get yourself some more

strategic doctrine; you're not going to be putting me in that position." And I have no doubt whatever that Harry Truman never gave any serious thought to the use of nuclear weapons. At one point, during the Korean War, he was told by some of his military advisors that the only targets in China that could affect the situation in Korea would be the mass destruction of Chinese cities with nuclear weapons, and he just kicked that out the window.

SCHOENBAUM: Getting back to one more question about Greece. In the Foreign Relations series, Volume 5, page 212, of 1947, there's a memorandum by the coordinator for aid to Greece and Turkey, [George Crews] McGhee, to the Undersecretary Lovett, July 7, 1947. And the gist of it is that he, McGhee, says that Dean Rusk should be present to brief Governor [Dwight Palmer] Griswold on his mission to Greece: that Governor Griswold was the head of an aid mission to Greece and that you be present. You were obviously central to that process. You were looked on as one of the central members of government on the Greek problem.

DEAN RUSK: Yeah, it was an issue before the United Nations. And since I was in charge of the U.N. affairs I was very much involved in that. And I'd been partly responsible for naming George McGhee as the coordinator for aid to Greece and Turkey. By the way, he's recently come out with a book in which he goes into these things in great detail.

RICHARD RUSK: Is that book out? McGee's book?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. You might want to see that. I have a copy here somewhere.

SCHOENBAUM: And there's another interesting telegram by Foy [D.] Kohler, May 25, 1949, and he refers to the Rusk-McNeil-Gromyko talks as if they're big diplomatic talks. He says they clearly tabled the discussion publicly as a great power issue: the Greek problem. But Kohler says that "any settlement would be temporary detente, as Soviet objectives of ultimate control of Greece would remain unchanged. Present open hostilities in mountains would simply be transformed into classic internal political struggle. Central decision for us would be whether the Greek government with reduced foreign aid and no foreign troops would be able to maintain sufficient political stability and economic health to win this struggle." Does that reflect, basically, what happened?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. You see, one of the problems we had during this Greek affair was a harbinger of what we were later drawn into in Vietnam, and that is that there were frequent changes in the Greek government during this process. One government after another would fall and they would establish another one. And so there was always the problem of what there was in Greece to support, who among the Greeks would in fact take the measures necessary to deal with the guerilla problem. But, finally it was worked out. Again, with major help from Yugoslavia deflection.

SCHOENBAUM: So you don't think that the Russians were just being suddenly very flexible, but that it was very realistic political judgment on their part.

DEAN RUSK: Yeah, further effort would not be fruitful.

SCHOENBAUM: It's interesting the record also shows that--This is another meeting on Volume 5, 1947, Foreign Relations of the United States--Dean Rusk present on July 9, 1947, and the idea of United Nations participation was explained by Mr. Rusk as basically essential because to get the facts out to the public. "And we had undertaken to do everything feasible to permit United Nations the observation of our activities in Greece and our records should be therefore designed to avoid charges of imperialism. On the other hand, the Security Council was seized with the Greek problem and we should remember that our case rested on the proven activities that Greece's northern neighbors, in assisting the Communist movement in Greece." In retrospect, did the special committee on the Balkans play a leading role in this element of the Greek problem?

DEAN RUSK: Well, it didn't play a leading role in the settlement, but it did focus international attention on the problem and had a lot to do with the building of United Nations opinion. Governments and--If one wants to refer to anything like world opinion, world opinion in support of Greece over against what these guerillas were trying to do operating out of Albania, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria.

SCHOENBAUM: Well, maybe we can move on to another subject.

END OF SIDE 2

