

Dean Rusk Oral History Collection

Rusk JJJJ: Part 1 of 2

Dean Rusk interviewed by Richard Rusk and Thomas J. Schoenbaum

1984 August 12

The complete interview also includes Rusk KKKK: Part 2.

SCHOENBAUM: This is a tape with the Honorable Mr. Dean Rusk about the postwar world order and the Truman years. The interviewers are Rich Rusk and Tom Schoenbaum. This is August 12, 1985. The first question in this basic interview has to do with the United Nations and its organization and Mr. Rusk's role. First question has to do with the Security Council and the fact that in 1947, there is a memo in the Foreign Relations of the United States series by Herschel [V.] Johnson to Dean Rusk involving a proposal to create a Security Council committee to implement Article 43 of the United Nations charter. And at that time, of course, the Security Council contained eleven members, five permanent members, and a major issue was the implementation of the collective security system and an important element of that was the international security force. Was the purpose of this Security Council--Well, let me ask, what was the purpose of this Security Council committee that was proposed and was this an idea that you had to, because of Russian intransigence, try to create the military force in a way that would circumvent the Russians' opposition at that time?

DEAN RUSK: Well the charter itself anticipated that there would be military forces designated by members to be available to the U.N. Security Council upon the call of the Security Council. These forces would be provided under agreements with each particular state. And then these U.N. forces would be under the direction of a military staff committee drawn from the five permanent members and they would be the military arm of the Security Council. The charter itself anticipated the possibility of the use of force by the U.N. for the maintenance of international peace and security. And these forces were to be the heart of any such force. Well, we had some discussions with the Russians at the beginning and we came upon a snag, part of which was probably our fault. We had come out of the war with much larger sea and air forces than had the Russians. They had an abundance of ground forces. And so our people, particularly the Joint Chiefs of Staff, wanted our contribution to the U.N. forces to be over weighted in the direction of air and sea forces and let the Russians put up a disproportionate share of the ground forces. But when we put this to the Russians they categorically rejected any kind of imbalance in such forces. They wanted to be sure that everything was on a basis of absolute equality: gun for gun, man for man, plane for plane, ship for ship. And the negotiations more or less broke down on that point. I think, in retrospect, that perhaps the United States was overreaching a bit. However, the failure of the U.N. Security Council to organize forces from among the big five, the five permanent members, probably was not as significant as we thought it was at the time. Because with the veto of the permanent members in the Security Council, it would have been most unlikely that these forces would have been used because there almost certainly would have been a veto by one of the five permanent members on almost anything that came up. So as a result, the U.N. moved toward volunteer forces from middle-sized countries: countries like Canada, Sweden, Ireland, Nigeria, and others. And my own hunch is that that is the better way to

do it. That is, to let countries who are not feared in the world, countries who are known not to have any external ambitions for territory or anything of that sort, let them put up these forces as being more or less internationally neutral. So my guess is that we will never see the precise kind of military forces anticipated in the U.N. charter. The military staff committee continues to meet. And their meetings usually take less than five minutes because there's nothing on the agenda, there's nothing to discuss. They simply come together and meet, adjourn, and wait for the next month. As a matter of fact, it was somewhat convenient for our permanent delegate representatives to the United Nations to have an admiral or a general there on his staff partly because these flag-rank officers usually had at their disposal a launch and we could use that launch to take delegates on a little trip around the island or for social purposes. It was rather convenient. But for all practical purposes, that portion of the charter has dissolved by nonuse.

SCHOENBAUM: Was this idea of having medium or small-sized countries contribute the Security Forces--was that idea around in the late forties or is that a later development?

DEAN RUSK: No, not really. That was a later development, as problems like the Congo and other problems arose and it seemed necessary for the U.N. to put some forces in there. But you see, the Secretary-General of the U.N. has no military staff. When we had large numbers of U.N. forces in the Congo, those forces were being handled by Ralph [Johnson] Bunche out of his vest pocket. He had no general staff, and very often logistics for such forces became very important. Although the United States did not contribute forces directly to these various U.N. forces, we did provide a good deal of logistic support to it by means of airlift and air transportation and things of that sort.

RICHARD RUSK: And administrative support for Ralph Bunche?

DEAN RUSK: Not specifically. No, not for him as far as the United States government is concerned. He might have had two or three people working for him directly on the staff of the Secretariat in New York. But his role as chief is that of determining policy and from time to time helping the Secretary-General issue directives to these U.N. forces. There was normally in each case a U.N. force commander on the spot. In the Congo it was an Indian gentleman. But in the absence of the arrangements contemplated by the charter the Secretary-General has very, very thin capability in handling or managing U.N. forces.

RICHARD RUSK: How did Ralph Bunche like being a commander-in-chief? (laughter)

DEAN RUSK: Oh, he took it in stride and actually did a pretty good job under all the circumstances.

SCHOENBAUM: Another document in the file on Foreign Relations in the United States series: On July 30, 1947 there is a letter from you to John Foster Dulles basically congratulating him on being appointed representative of the United States delegation to the United Nations. Were you instrumental in making that appointment? You sounded very pleased that he was going to be your representative. Can you tell us more about that incident?

DEAN RUSK: Well John Foster Dulles was one of the contributors to bipartisan foreign policy in this postwar period. He had been on U.N. delegations before, as I recall, before this particular letter. And he had strongly supported the U.N. Charter when he came up for advice and consent in the Senate. He was looked upon as the foreign policy spokesman for the eastern wing of the Republican Party. He was very close to Senator Arthur [Hendrick] Vandenberg, who played a major role in the Senate in working out bipartisanship in things like the United Nations, the Marshall Plan, and NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization]. So it was natural to include him on the delegation. He had had long experience in diplomacy in one way or another at the Paris Peace Conference, [Thomas] Woodrow Wilson's delegation. His first chore as a diplomat occurred when he was an undergraduate at Princeton at the second Hague Peace Conference. Foster Dulles' grandfather was a member of the Chinese delegation at that conference. And when the conference met they got into a great tangle about in what order the delegates were to call on each other. It was then assumed that when an international conference met, each delegation would pay a courtesy call on every other delegation. They couldn't resolve that. And so they finally agreed that on a given day, each delegation would leave off its card at every other delegation and that would take the place of official calls. So Foster Dulles, I think, got in a horse and carriage and went around The Hague dropping off cards for the Chinese delegation to every other delegation at the conference. That was when he was a student at Princeton: his first diplomatic chore.

SCHOENBAUM: Somehow I got the impression that maybe, in some conversation, that you worked very hard to get him appointed because of your belief in a bipartisan foreign policy.

DEAN RUSK: I think that probably is true. I don't remember the details. But you see, at San Francisco we had Senator Vandenberg and Tom [Thomas Terry] Connally and two congressmen, one from each house, on the delegation. That established congressional participation in the U.S. delegation to each meeting of the U.N. General Assembly. We rotate each year between the Senate and the House. And there will be two members of Congress on each delegation: one Democrat, one Republican. And that had, I think, enormous advantage over the years because it meant that there would be someone in each house who had actually experienced the problems and the debates and the thoughts that went into what happened at the United Nations. Now a senator or congressman on that delegation is not subject to instruction from the President in the usual sense. And so the head of our delegation--Sometimes it was the Secretary of State, but very soon it came to be our permanent representative at the United Nations--the head of the delegation would discuss with each senator or congressman the items which that senator or congressman might wish to handle in the General Assembly, and they would work it out so that the senator or congressman would handle only those questions on which he agreed with the administration. But there was a little constitutional question there that was soon resolved.

SCHOENBAUM: Getting back to John Foster Dulles, do you remember your first meeting with John Foster Dulles? Was it just shortly before this time or did you know him--

DEAN RUSK: I had not known him until after the war. I had no contact with him during the war or before the war. But later on I got to know him very well.

SCHOENBAUM: After he was appointed as one of our representatives?

DEAN RUSK: Well you see, in the spring of 1950, President [Harry S] Truman took three important personnel steps. First, he asked me to serve as Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs. And Dean [Gooderham] Acheson discusses that in his book. Second, he asked John Foster Dulles to rejoin the administration to work on bipartisan foreign policy regarding the Far East. And third, he asked Ambassador Philip Jessup to come back as Ambassador at Large to more or less work on all sorts of trouble-shooting jobs. Well, when Dean Acheson put John Foster Dulles' name over to Mr. Truman, some of the squirts in the White House said to the President, "Mr. President, you can't bring Foster Dulles into your administration. Look at that mean, dirty campaign he ran against Senator [Herbert Henry] Lehman in New York." And Truman laughed at them apparently, and said, "Look, you fellows just don't understand politics. Of course every two years John Foster Dulles is going to take time out to be a Republican because he is a Republican. But in between times we want to work with him if he'll work with us." And that showed some of the sophistication of Harry Truman with regard to partisanship and so forth.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, let me ask one question about Foster Dulles. You were a supporter of his and a believer in him and I think you helped bring him into the administration. Did he disappoint you in later years? The historians have criticized him for his policy of brinkmanship and perhaps excessive moralizing in terms of American foreign affairs.

DEAN RUSK: Well that was after I had worked closely with him and when he became Secretary of State. I found relations with him very good. You see I was the principal backstop in the State Department for the negotiation of the Japanese Peace Treaty. When Dulles came back in the spring of 1950 he did do some work with the Republican senators to see what the basis might be for a bipartisan foreign policy and we made good headway on that in all aspects of the situation in the far east with the exception of China. And it just did not appear that there was any basis for bipartisanship on China. The Republicans had a good thing going for them and they weren't going to turn it loose. So then President Truman asked John Foster Dulles, on my recommendation and Dean Acheson's, that we assign John Foster Dulles the task of negotiating the Japanese Peace Treaty. And he did a brilliant job. The conference that met in 1951 in San Francisco to sign the Japanese Peace Treaty was not really the place where the treaty was put together. The real negotiations came through John Foster Dulles with his briefcase in his hands going all over the world, negotiating out in advance the actual text of the Japanese Peace Treaty. Now when John Foster Dulles took on that assignment, the government had stacks of memoranda on points that ought to go into the Japanese Peace Treaty: just almost a bale of them. Well Harry Truman just brushed all that aside and he wrote John Foster Dulles a very short letter, a page or two, telling John Foster Dulles what kind of Japanese Peace Treaty Truman wanted. And he then, in effect, gave John Foster Dulles a free hand to go out and negotiate that kind of treaty. And Truman wanted a non-punitive peace treaty, a peaceful reconciliation. He did not want the kind of problem in Japan that we had run into in Germany. And of course we had not given the Russians an occupation zone in any part of Japan. And so, John Foster Dulles really put that peace treaty together: short, relatively short as peace treaties go. And he got the support of everybody who was to turn up at the San Francisco conference except the Russians and their block. He did try to discuss these matters with the Russians, but it was clear that they were not going to get any agreement. And so their part of the negotiations was rather small. But,

you see, during the negotiation of the Japanese Peace Treaty, Secretary of State Dean [Gooderham] Acheson and John Foster Dulles as the President's personal representative worked very closely and well together. Even though later they had a good many personal difficulties, they were a beautiful team in negotiating the Japanese Peace Treaty.

SCHOENBAUM: Did you help work on a letter that Truman sent to John Foster Dulles?

DEAN RUSK: Yes. Yes I did, but I was one of several who gave some thought to that. That letter was approved by Dean Acheson, and it turned out to be the best way to handle a very complex and difficult situation.

RICHARD RUSK: You had a good experience with Dulles at that time. But later, when he became Secretary for the [Dwight David] Eisenhower administration, were you disappointed in him for the same reasons that these historians have criticized him for: brinkmanship, excessive moralizing, and posturing?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I remained his friend through that period and wished him well, but he did do some things that I thought he could have avoided. For example, John Foster Dulles was a fellow who seemed to be interested in slogans. And during that period they came up with the Doctrine of Massive Retaliation: That is, that in future disputes we would not have to rely upon American ground forces; we would use massive power, meaning nuclear weapons, air power, and sea power, to handle any situation that might come up. Well now, massive retaliation, in a sense, was a theory which defended shortcuts in the defense budget. [Dwight David] Eisenhower did not want to build up our armed forces in any major way and massive retaliation was a doctrine that would let us do it on the cheap. But then, beginning with Eisenhower's second term, a new situation came into being which caused massive retaliation to gently flow out the window. In the mid-fifties the Soviets achieved an operational capability for a massive strike on the United States. That had as much to do with burying massive retaliation as anything else. And then Foster Dulles did tend to moralize about a good many questions. One of the most important ones was his attitude toward nonalignment and neutral nations. He seemed to leave the impression that he thought that neutrality was immoral. Well, under the United Nations Charter there are commitments which do throw some question upon the value of neutrality among members of the United Nations, which was responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. But there were a lot of new countries entering the world scene, countries emerging out of former colonial empires. And they had not had the responsibility and experience of those years which produced World War II and were not as seized with the issues of general international peace and security as were some of those who had been through the bitterness of World War II. And so many of these newly independent nations did not feel that general international security was their baby. And this sometimes irritated John Foster Dulles.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you ever bring any of those tendencies of his to his attention, or did you two discuss that at all?

DEAN RUSK: No. I don't think I ever did. I don't think I would have lectured him for moralizing about things. I did, by the way--have I talked about that letter I wrote on the hundredth day?

RICHARD RUSK: That's right. That's right.

DEAN RUSK: I've done that?

SCHOENBAUM: Yeah.

DEAN RUSK: Well that might be worth taking a look at because that was the candid remarks of a friend in whose friendship he had no doubt. And some of it had some critical overtones about how he had done in his first hundred days.

SCHOENBAUM: Where can we get a copy of that letter?

RICHARD RUSK: We have it.

SCHOENBAUM: Turning to another subject, on September 18, 1947 there was a telegram that [George Catlett] Marshall sent to [Robert Abercrombie] Lovett. I guess Lovett was acting Secretary then and Marshall was ill in September of '47?

DEAN RUSK: Might have been out of the country somewhere.

RICHARD RUSK: September 23?

SCHOENBAUM: September 18, 1947. And it's in these materials. In the telegram to Lovett, Marshall expresses concern about the strength and size of the force that we proposed under Article 43. And he recommends that it be reconsidered, the strength and size of it. Do you remember that? Was there a--Must have been a difference of opinion in terms of the force?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. I don't remember the details of that.

SCHOENBAUM: Marshall said it was three times as large as anyone else's proposed contribution, and basically the tone of Marshall's comment was that we should rethink this and scale it down.

DEAN RUSK: Right. Right.

SCHOENBAUM: But I got the impression that you were on the side that proposed the larger force.

DEAN RUSK: Well in those days we were still trying to fill out the charter and get some real muscle in behind the United Nations. And it might well have been that I was in favor of the larger force that had been proposed in joint sessions between the State Department and the Pentagon. But that's all shadow boxing, because no such forces would ever have been used, in my judgment.

SCHOENBAUM: Yeah. Yeah. Do you remember--Some of these memos are signed by Eric Stein, who was a friend of mine.

DEAN RUSK: He was in my office at the time. I helped to train him as a pup before he became a professor of international law. He was a very able fellow.

SCHOENBAUM: He was my professor at Michigan.

DEAN RUSK: Oh yeah. Well he's an extraordinarily able fellow. He's retired now.

SCHOENBAUM: We're planning on asking him down here this spring to lecture.

DEAN RUSK: That would be great.

SCHOENBAUM: His role was--he was on your staff to--when the implementation occurred?

DEAN RUSK: Yes. I think he was working on political and security questions. But there are large forces which were originally thought of in discussions between the Joint Chiefs in the State Department. I suspect it was influenced by the thought of the Joint Chiefs that U.N. forces could be a basis on which they could maintain larger U.S. military forces than they thought the Congress was going to give them. Because we had gone through this precipitous post- World War II demobilization and so I think the Joint Chiefs were, in effect, reaching for this idea as a basis for larger military forces. And Marshall, I think, saw through that and thought these forces were much too large, as of course they probably were in terms of any U.N. action.

RICHARD RUSK: Although the Joint Chiefs wouldn't have had any unilateral control over these forces.

DEAN RUSK: In effect. The United States would have had, because I think there's no way in which forces earmarked for the U.N. would somehow escape the chain of command to their own national authorities. So that those forces would have remained under American command even though they were theoretically under U.N. command.

SCHOENBAUM: Looking at this, wasn't there something to the Russians' belief that the Americans were trying to use the U.N. basically as an anti-Russian restraint? (laughter)

DEAN RUSK: Oh, I think not so much anti-Russian; but I think that the Russians clearly thought that we were overreaching, as indeed we were in my retrospective judgment. And they were very sensitive about the idea of equality in those days. They didn't want to be treated like a second-class power in any way, shape, or form. And they did not want to accept any inferiority to the United States in any of these contingency forces for the U.N.

SCHOENBAUM: Our overreaching was in turn related to their use of covert forces in Greece and Turkey and in their--

DEAN RUSK: Possibly. Although this argument started well before those incidents arose. It came up as soon as we began to talk with the Russians about these Article 43 forces. One consequence of the breakdown of these military arrangements outlined in the Charter is that, I think it's fair to say that the United Nations as such will never be able to fight a war. The use of the U.N. flag in Korea was an accident because the Soviets were not present when the Security Council exercised their veto. But I think the military role of the United Nations is pretty well limited to peacekeeping roles, observation forces, to interpose themselves between potential fighting forces, but not to wage a war in the usual sense. To begin with, the U.N. probably could not finance any such operations. When they had substantial forces in the Congo the U.N. quickly ran into financial problems and we had the difficult business of getting the Congress to make a \$100 million loan to the U.N. for the support of these forces in the Congo. And that took a good deal of doing.

SCHOENBAUM: In the 1940s too, there was a Russian Warmongering Resolution, basically, I guess without naming names, accusing some states of fomenting warlike noises. And the documents show that Rusk and Lovett wanted to get some amendments, but that the U.S. could support, with amendments, [Andrei Y.] Yvshinsky's Warmongering Resolution. Do you remember that controversy over that?

DEAN RUSK: No. Quite frankly I don't remember that.

SCHOENBAUM: Another part was that Mrs. Roosevelt was one of our representatives at that time. Was that when you first met Mrs. Roosevelt?

DEAN RUSK: Yes. Yes. I first met her in connection with her work with the United Nations. She had the complete respect of Harry Truman. Partly as a simple political matter Harry Truman was going to do all he could to make a role for Eleanor Roosevelt. He had great admiration for her. And she was a member of some of our U.N. delegations and also became head of the United Nations Human Rights Commission. Did a brilliant job there in, for example, producing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But Eleanor Roosevelt was literally indefatigable: one of the hardest workers I ever saw. She would begin in the morning having some delegate to breakfast to talk over something. She'd go right through the day until about midnight. Then she would come home and dictate her column, "My Day."

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DEAN RUSK: --a staff officer to each member of our delegation at the General Assembly. But in Eleanor Roosevelt's case we had to assign two staff officers because one staff officer couldn't possibly keep up with her. It would kill them off. And so we had two staff officers serving with Mrs. Roosevelt.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you get to know her fairly well? You worked closely with her while you were at the United Nations desk?

DEAN RUSK: I would say I got to know her very well on official matters. My relationship to her was never personal in any sense, but I had a great regard for her. She and I disagreed on one or two things along the way, such as the handling of the Palestine question. But she was an eloquent and effective spokesman in the whole field of human rights. When she took the Russian delegate over her lap and gave them a spanking, everybody enjoyed it including the Russians. She soon became the grandmother of the U.N.; the first press lady of the U.N. And people just adored her. Well she obviously was the kind of person she appeared to be: very sincere, very dedicated, very earnest about her interest in things like human rights, and was very admired up there. She and John Foster Dulles were the two best vote getters we ever had at the U.N. General Assembly. They would work on every delegate individually. They'd find a way to see them during the day and discuss things. So people like that could produce, in those days, majorities of forty-five to six, or that kind of a thing, in almost anything we wanted to do in the U.N. General Assembly. That's all changed now.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you have dealings with her after this period? Did you remain friends through the years?

DEAN RUSK: I think we remained friends, but we did not--No, I think that my contacts with her pretty much disappeared when both of us left public office in the Truman administration.

SCHOENBAUM: Around this time also you were named a member or an alternate member of our United Nations delegation. You went from advisor to our alternate.

DEAN RUSK: Well I typically, since I was head of the office of the United Nations Affairs and department, I was usually what might be called the chief of staff of the U.S. delegation. And I was not normally on the list of those who were officially members of the delegation. There might have been one year, I don't know, when I was named as an alternate. But typically that was not my role. I was the chief of staff for all the delegates and for all the business before the assembly.

SCHOENBAUM: I see. I see. Yeah, there's a letter in the file that on the recommendation of Alger Hiss you were named an alternate. (laughter)

DEAN RUSK: I don't remember that.

SCHOENBAUM: There's a letter that

RICHARD RUSK: In our file there?

SCHOENBAUM: Yeah. Somewhere. I guess it was when you were--You didn't work for Alger Hiss did you?

DEAN RUSK: Yes. For a period of months when I was first demobilized from the Army in early 1946. I went over to the State Department to serve for a few months as assistant chief of the

Division of International Security Affairs. And that division reported to the office of which Alger Hiss was director, so he was my boss there for a period of months. Then I went back across the Pentagon to become a special assistant to Secretary of War, Robert [Porter] Patterson. And then in early '47, then-Secretary of State George Marshall asked me to come over to take charge of United Nations Affairs as the successor to Alger Hiss.

SCHOENBAUM: What was it like to work for Alger Hiss?

DEAN RUSK: Well, Alger Hiss was obviously a very intelligent, able fellow. I must say that my recollections of him were that he was very agreeable to people of his own rank and people above his own rank, but he was a sort of a cold fish toward those who worked under him. I don't know--I don't have incidents which would actually explain that. But he did not have easy empathy with his subordinates. He was very genial upstairs, but not necessarily down below. Let me say one thing about Alger Hiss, whatever one thinks about that long complicated story: When Secretary Marshall asked me to come over to take over the, then called the Office of Special Political Affairs, the United Nations Office, I had heard some rumors about Alger Hiss in my own government experience, both in the Pentagon and earlier in the State Department. And so when I took over that office there were about 225 or 30 people in it. Like an old company commander in the Army, I wanted to know what I was taking over; I wanted an inventory. And so I asked the Security Office of the State Department to give me a rundown on the members of that office. And that report came back and they all checked out, from a loyalty and security point of view, completely clean.

RICHARD RUSK: Did they have little dossiers already put together or did they do that at your request?

DEAN RUSK: Well they probably had some dossiers on some of them. But in any event, they--

RICHARD RUSK: That must have made you real popular with those 225 people. (laughter)

DEAN RUSK: They didn't know about it. But the key thing to me is that none of those who were in that office then or later got into any problems over loyalty and security. So whatever the story might have been about Alger Hiss, it was clear to me that he did not stack the State Department with a lot of questionable characters in the office of which he was director. That tends to cause me to think that although he might have been involved with the communists in the early thirties when our own system seemed to be collapsing and there were a lot of people looking at alternatives, that at some point he made a clean break with them, maybe at the time of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, and from that time on had nothing to do with them. But then when later his past overtook him he elected to bluff it out rather than to say, "Oh yeah, sure. I was playing around with such things in the thirties like a lot of other people." And he got caught, in effect, in trying to bluff it out.

RICHARD RUSK: In instituting those security checks, were you seriously concerned there might have been security risks in that group? Were you more or less trying to defend yourself against possible charges that you were lax on security?

DEAN RUSK: No. I just wanted to know what I was taking over, what kind of people I had under me. I had 225 or so. And again I had heard some of these rumors about Alger Hiss, particularly over in the Pentagon. So I just took that precaution so that I myself would be alerted in case there were any problems about any of those people.

SCHOENBAUM: So there were rumors about his loyalty?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, there had been earlier rumors about it. Yeah.

SCHOENBAUM: Back to the machinery. This machinery of the United Nations, this is perhaps of historical interest only. You seem to have been very much concerned with the actual machinery and the intricate workings of the clockwork, like the workings of a clock, of the United Nations. At one point there was an interim committee for the General Assembly proposed to do work between the sessions, particularly on Korea and on Austria. Was this a suggestion that came out of your office?

DEAN RUSK: Yes, I think so. I think the idea there was that since the Security Council was very likely to be paralyzed by veto that there should be some other U.N. agency which could have a look at problems that arose during the long periods when the General Assembly was not in session. And that interim committee was looked upon as an arm of the General Assembly to be used in between formal meetings in the General Assembly. The Soviets didn't like that very much because they tried to downplay the role of the General Assembly in the interest of protecting their veto in the Security Council.

SCHOENBAUM: And that was never in fact used, was it?

DEAN RUSK: I don't think it was.

SCHOENBAUM: The interim committee.

DEAN RUSK: You see, today that idea is more or less useless because with most members maintaining permanent delegates at the U.N. you can call a meeting of the General Assembly overnight if you want to and you don't need an interim committee.

SCHOENBAUM: In the fall of 1948 there was an interesting session of the United Nations, a third session was held in Paris. And apparently you stayed along with our other members of our delegation at the hotel Jena in Paris?

DEAN RUSK: Yes.

SCHOENBAUM: Well. That must have been an interesting session. Why was it held in Paris?

DEAN RUSK: Well, we moved the General Assembly and the Security Council to Paris while the new U.N. headquarters in New York was being completed. And so we simply took both bodies over to Paris in the fall of 1948. Secretary Marshall was the head of our delegation; Mr. Dulles was on the delegation. And when Secretary Marshall had to come home for health

reasons, he named John Foster Dulles as the acting head of our delegation. But that was an interesting session in Paris because the Berlin blockade was very much in front of us at that time and the Security Council had some public meetings in Paris on the Berlin blockade with a huge audience in attendance. There were some very dramatic scenes during that period. Philip [Caryl] Jessup came to be our principal spokesman in the Security Council. Just to remind you that there are human elements to all these things, during one of these debates in the Security Council with Philip Jessup representing us, his dear wife, lovely wife, Lois [Walcott Jessup], was in the audience. And while Jessup was speaking, she began to knit. And a French usher came down the aisle, very sternly looked across at her, and said, "You must not knit. It is disrespectful to the speaker." And she said, "The speaker is my husband." And he straightened up and went back up the aisle, and a few moments later he came down the aisle and looked at her and said, "You are to knit." (laughter) But Secretary Marshall spoke at a luncheon club. I think it was a press club there in Paris. At that point he expressed his--the gratitude of the United States that we had a man like Philip Jessup to handle so important a question in the Security Council for us. While we were over there in Paris, a little later on in that same session, Warren [Robinson] Austin, our permanent representative to the U.N., became ill and then Philip Jessup got pneumonia. And so we had no one who was technically qualified to represent us in the Security Council because we have only two representatives to the Security Council approved by the Senate. And with the Secretary of State not able to do it, we were stripped there temporarily. I remember going to Mr. [Andrei Andreevich] Gromyko to ask for a postponement of a Security Council meeting. I explained that we had two delegates authorized to speak in the Security Council for us, and he said, "Ah, yes. So they can watch each other." Well that was a rather startling idea, but nevertheless, Philip Jessup was sent to one of the leading French hospitals there in Paris and they started treating his pneumonia with leeches. In 1948! So we got him out of there and got him over to a military hospital in, I think, Frankfurt, somewhere in Germany, and had him treated there, (laughter) But the idea that we have two representatives in the Security Council so they can watch each other was a rather novel one for us.

SCHOENBAUM: There's a letter that in May 1948 you, in fact, proposed Jessup as Austin's deputy. Do you remember that?

DEAN RUSK: I think I might well have. And he became Austin's deputy.

SCHOENBAUM: And where did you know Jessup from originally? How did you happen to propose him?

DEAN RUSK: Well first I had known him as a student of international law, as one of the leading professors of international law in the country. He, oddly enough in terms of his later history, before World War II had been a member of the America First Committee. And he wrote a major four-volume work on the international law of neutrality. And that was sort of an isolationist approach. But he, like Arthur Vandenberg came to a complete change of mind, and became one of the strongest supporters of the U.N. we have ever had.

SCHOENBAUM: You referred a minute ago to some dramatic scenes in Paris. Do you have any recollections of any particular scenes that were dramatic?

DEAN RUSK: Well it was a pretty stormy session and there was a lot of drama in it on all sorts of issues. But our delegation was housed in a little hotel that was fairly near the meeting grounds of the General Assembly, but it had been completely stripped by the Germans--stripped of all of its metal and all sorts of things. And so the facilities were pretty crude. I remember that Secretary Marshall's office was in a corner room which one could only enter by going through one of two bathrooms. And it was all beaten up. There was no rug on the floor, nothing hanging on the walls, a very severe desk behind which he would sit, and two or three straight chairs in the room. I remember once I said to him, "Mr. Secretary, it seems to me we ought to find more adequate office space for you." He said, "Oh, no. When some foreign minister wants to come over from the Ritz or the George Cinq to borrow a billion dollars, let him see how I live." (laughter)

SCHOENBAUM: Do you remember where the meetings were held, the General Assembly debates that were held at that time?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, we'll have to look this up, but near the Eiffel Tower. There was a big hall I there that--

RICHARD RUSK: Someone once called Philip Jessup your intellectual backstop, Pop. Was it [David] Halberstam who made that crack?

SCHOENBAUM: I think it may have been Halberstam.

RICHARD RUSK: Were you heavily involved with him? Was he fairly influential in terms of your thinking and your career?

DEAN RUSK: I think we were perhaps each other's intellectual backstop.

RICHARD RUSK: Well someone else made the point that you didn't need a backstop.

DEAN RUSK: I had great confidence in Philip Jessup and we became very close friends and have been ever since. But he was willing to look at ideas that were off the beaten track and that's extraordinarily valuable to have someone like that in government. He could cut through a lot of the fluff and puff of diplomatic exchanges and keep his eye on the main ball. He had an agreeable personality which helped out in his relations with other delegates including delegates of the opposition. He was respected among the delegates of the U.N. and that counts for a lot. You see, one doesn't really understand the U.N. until you sit there at one of those big tables and all the other delegates go quiet and they turn to you to express the views of the United States of America. If you've ever carried that responsibility, even once, you begin to understand what the U.N. is like. It's a serious business. I remember we had one Republican congressman on our delegation during the Truman administration and he had been pretty hostile, negative, toward the U.N. and toward the U.N. budget when it came up for consideration. Well, he became our representative on the U.N.'s fifth committee, the budget committee. And on one or two occasions he found himself all isolated in a minority of one. And he came back to Washington saying, "Hey, this is serious business up there." He said, "This is serious business." And he made one of the best speeches ever made in support of the United Nations following his experience up there

as our representative sitting at that table with all those other delegates. So you do go through a process of learning when you sit in a chair like that.

RICHARD RUSK: Did Philip Jessup advise you at all during the '60s? He was more or less a retired FSO [Foreign Service Officer].

DEAN RUSK: I saw him from time to time. He was getting old and was in uncertain health during those years so that he didn't play as active a part as I would have been glad to see him play had he been several years younger.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you recall what the sickness was?

DEAN RUSK: No, I don't remember. I don't remember.

SCHOENBAUM: He didn't hold any jobs in the sixties under [John Fitzgerald] Kennedy or [Lyndon Baines] Johnson then, did he? Was he retired at that time?

DEAN RUSK: I don't think he did. I'd have to be reminded. He might have been on a commission or two here and there, but he worked on the Law of the Sea question with both Democrat and Republican administrations.

SCHOENBAUM: In 1948 there were some of the issues in addition to Berlin. There was the issue of the credentials of the permanent representative of Czechoslovakia. I guess [Vladimir] Houdek was replacing [Jan] Papanek. That must have been after the communists took over and there was a row about seating Houdek.

RICHARD RUSK: How do you spell that?

SCHOENBAUM: H-O-U-D-E-K and Papanek is P-A-P-A-N-E-K. Do you remember any specifics on that? Would that--

DEAN RUSK: No, not really. When the communist coup d'état occurred in Czechoslovakia there was a question as to whether that should be put before the United Nations. And we looked at it and we did not find a genuine basis for taking it to the United Nations. For example, we could not find evidence that any Czech pulled a knife out of his sleeve and went to work on anybody trying to prevent this communist coup d'état. And so we were not inclined to toss it to the United Nations. But then, I think it was the representative of Chile, of all places, who decided to put that case before the U.N. Security Council. And so we knew that no result would come out of the Security Council discussion of it, but we made a few statements decrying what had happened there, particularly the defenestration of the foreign minister of Czechoslovakia who either jumped from a window or was pushed from a window.

SCHOENBAUM: Jan Masaryk?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah.

SCHOENBAUM: Then there were some other issues that were, at that time, what you called the slates question, and various memos about membership in various U.N. organs: the Security Council, the Economic and Social Committee. The Russians wanted a list and we objected to it and there were some trade-offs there. Did you negotiate with the Russians on those slates questions?

DEAN RUSK: On occasion. But on the whole we were inclined to respect the views of various regions as to which of them would be on the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. We more or less let the Latin Americans choose the Latin American members of the U.N. Security Council. There usually were two, for example. And we conceded another eastern European as appropriate for the U.N. Security Council in addition to the Russians, who were permanent members. The same thing was true with Asia, and so forth. But there were times when some of these slates questions became rather sharp because there was a good deal of contention and controversy within the General Assembly on who was going to be elected to what. But that pretty well settled down over the years and is now pretty well based on regional selection.

SCHOENBAUM: Another question: In 1949--this is interesting in the light of the fact and your comments about the thirties and Manchuria. Wellington Koo, the representative from China, asked you about bringing before the U.N. the violation by the Soviets of Chinese sovereignty in Manchuria, and specifically the treaty between China and the Soviet Union in 1945. There's a memo in the file that you dictated. You were very cautious about bringing that violation or thinking that violation should be brought before, or if it was a violation, should be brought before the U.N. And there's a memo by Jessup who said that the U.S. could not support that because of the Czarist rights in Manchuria and that we recognize the rights of Czars in Manchuria, and the Soviets were exercising those rights. Why were we so cautious about jumping in on that one?

DEAN RUSK: Well, you know, during the war, before the war was over, the Soviet Union and the nationalist government of China entered into an agreement under which the Soviet Union would continue to recognize and deal with the national government of China as the government of China at the end of the war.

RICHARD RUSK: What year? When did they make that agreement?

DEAN RUSK: I think it was '45. It might have been '44.

SCHOENBAUM: '45. Yeah.

DEAN RUSK: Well now, when the war ended, the Chinese communists built up considerable momentum up in north China. The Russians, in fact, turned over to them the weapons that they had taken from the surrendering Japanese forces; and then the Chinese communists began to make real headway in overtaking all of China. I think perhaps the Russians might have been caught a little by surprise by the unexpected strength of the Chinese communist effort. But in any event, they felt they had to go along with the Chinese communists and, in effect, repudiated this agreement they had had with the nationalist government of China. Well that's one of those agreements that simply is overwhelmed by facts, and we saw no way to recreate that treaty.

SCHOENBAUM: That was in '49, a few months--At that time, we must have known--

DEAN RUSK: By that time the communists had seized all of the mainland and--

SCHOENBAUM: We saw the writing on the wall?

DEAN RUSK: Well I think the Russians did too. But there just didn't seem to be--Well, once in a very joking way, [Anatoly F.] Dobrynin said that they might repudiate the treaty under which they sold us Alaska, and we both had a good chuckle at that idea. But there are times when things like treaties are simply overwhelmed by the factual situation. There's no way to, no way to--

SCHOENBAUM: Yeah. There's also an interesting document in here. I think I can find it. I'm not sure what it's about; it's very cryptic. But in 1949 on October 10 there was a resolution to condemn the Soviets about something. You made a speech in Boston about the issue and then there's--Apparently that speech was controversial because then there's a memo that somebody wrote that your Boston speech was not the State Department's policy. Do you remember that?

DEAN RUSK: I don't remember a Boston speech. I made a speech in New York once that involved that kind of--

SCHOENBAUM: Oh, here it is. Are you talking about the Slavic-Manchukuo speech or--?

DEAN RUSK: No, I--

SCHOENBAUM: Well this is a--It says, yeah McNeil--Let's see. It's a memorandum of a meeting held in Ambassador Austin's office October 10, 1949 and Hector McNeil was there on behalf of the United Kingdom. And its subject is the Soviet proposal and there's a statement made that "The summary of Mr. Rusk's remark made in Boston had been read during the conversation. Mr. McNeil observed without any offense that the State Department was not following the same policy on this matter as Mr. Rusk." I don't know what it is. We can look it up. It's in the State Department Bulletin, October 24. Your speech in Boston was on October 24, 1949.

DEAN RUSK: What was the subject matter of that speech?

SCHOENBAUM: That's what this excerpt that I have doesn't really say.

RICHARD RUSK: That speech itself should be in the Foreign Relations series, wouldn't it?

SCHOENBAUM: No. It's not. The speech is not in the Foreign Relations series. It's a Russian resolution on--"Ambassador Austin felt it absolutely essential that, in light of the fact the U.S. and U.K. were the chief targets of the Russian resolution, that we reach agreement on the text of the resolution tactics." Something--it's a Russian resolution on something.

DEAN RUSK: I simply don't recall that.

SCHOENBAUM: Okay. It doesn't tell what it's about.

DEAN RUSK: One other speech I made--

SCHOENBAUM: I wanted to ask about some of your activities in connection with arms control at that time. There were two tracks of arms control or arms regulation at that time: One was through the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission on atomic arms, and that was the [Bernard M.] Baruch Proposal (unintelligible) on our side.

DEAN RUSK: Right. Right.

SCHOENBAUM: Then there was the Committee on Conventional Disarmament track. And you had to do with both of those. With the Baruch Proposal, there's a statement by [Warren I.] Cohen in his biography that you argued very hard and won Marshall's support for internationalization and doing away with nuclear weapons. And apparently the Baruch Proposal, which was a proposal to give all the weapons to an international agency and adopt sanctions--There was apparently some opposition to you in the Department and you won Marshall's support on that one. Do you recall I that controversy? Was that over the Baruch proposal?

DEAN RUSK: There was some discussion within the government, some controversy within the government on the Baruch Proposals. You see, the Baruch Proposals really were based on the Acheson-[David E.] Lilienthal Report, which came out right after the war, which made the point that nature will not yield up its secrets on the basis of political favoritism; that the know-how with regard to nuclear weapons would soon become general, universal; that therefore one must anticipate a nuclear arms race unless something be done at the very beginning to prevent one. And our thought was that if we could get a plan under which all fissionable materials, not nuclear weapons, all fissionable materials, would be turned over to the United Nations to be used solely for peaceful purposes, and there would be no nuclear weapons in the hands of any nation, including ourselves, it seemed to be a way to go. As a matter of fact, that kind of a proposal might well have come out of a political task force had one been organized in the Manhattan Project from the very beginning, but there was no such task force in the Manhattan Project. We were trying to get this nuclear beast in its cage before it began to growl, and the Baruch Proposals represented that. But the problem was that we had demonstrated that we had the know-how. And I think, in retrospect, it was asking too much of the Russians for them to accept the Baruch Proposals before they themselves had achieved the know-how because they would have known that we knew how to make these things. And whether we turned all I the fissionable materials over to the U.N. or not was more or less beside the point, that we had the know-how and they did not at that moment. And so I think that our hopes for--

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