

Dean Rusk Oral History Collection

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Dean Rusk interviewed by Richard Rusk and Tom Schoenbaum.

circa 1985

SCHOENBAUM: First question: This is the only general question and then we will get into specific questions. But [John Fitzgerald] Kennedy was apparently the first president who had a conscious policy toward Africa. The first question is to what extent did you formulate that policy at the beginning? I know there was a [Adlai Ewing] Stevenson [III] report that [George Wildman] Ball worked on that had some things about Africa in it. Before the Congo crisis did you have Kennedy position papers, policy in place regarding Africa?

DEAN RUSK: Well, there were two major elements in our approach in those days: The one was that we tried to improve our relations with the so-called non-aligned countries. During the fifties when John Foster Dulles was Secretary of State, he had managed to leave the impression that he thought that neutralism, non-alignment, was simply immoral, and we took another view on that. We felt that wherever there was a country that was independent, secure and concerned about the problems of its own people and cooperating reasonably in the international scene that there was a situation in the interest of the United States. And so, we made a strong effort to improve our relations with some of the non-aligned leaders like [Kwame] Nkrumah in Ghana, [Gamal Abdel] Nasser in Egypt, [Ahmed] Ben Bella in Algeria, [Achmed] Sukarno in Indonesia and some others, and to reduce the difference between non-aligned countries and those countries with whom we were allies in our approach. Well, we made an effort, but we didn't always succeed because some of these leaders were just plain rascals and we couldn't find a way to improve our relations. So that was one broad theme.

Then, we felt also that the days of traditional European colonialism had come to an end and yet you had at the beginning of the sixties major colonial areas in Africa that presented a problem. There were the Belgians in the Congo, the Portuguese in Angola and Mozambique, two or three British territories like Rhodesia, still in a colonial status. And we felt that was simply an anachronism that was bound to come to an end in one way or another. And so we clearly were biased toward a liquidation of the colonial empires in favor of the independence of the larger colonial areas.

Now, we ran into some real problems on that because Belgium and Portugal were NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] allies so this created some problems between the Bureau of European Affairs on the one side and the African Bureau on the other, and there was a constant mediation having to go on between those two bureaus within the Department of State.

SCHOENBAUM: The first thing that happened is that right after Kennedy was inaugurated, in February of 1961, [Patrice] Lumumba started, as I understand it, certain dealings with Soviet agents and he ended up being killed in February of 1961, murdered; and certain Belgian or certain elements allied with Belgium, [Moise] Tshombe and some blacks in Katanga allied with Belgium were widely considered responsible. Was that a crisis point in the government?

when Lumumba was killed were you personally involved in that, in that crisis?

DEAN RUSK: I'm sure I was, but I don't remember the details very well. We opposed Tshombe's effort to have Katanga secede from the Congo and one of the reasons we did was that almost all of Africa was opposed to the breaking up of existing political units on a tribal, cultural or religious basis. Because if you start having areas secede on a tribal basis you would break Africa up into hundreds of little principalities. These African states, most of whom have several tribes within them, were very concerned about that. So we aligned ourselves with the overwhelming attitude of the majority of the African states against the secession of Katanga. Now, on the other hand there were those in Belgium, including the Union Minier who were very much interested in a seceded Katanga and a good deal of money was put into a pro-Katanga campaign. Some of our Senators took up the cause of a free Katanga. Union Minier had very important mining interests in Katanga. And as a matter of fact, when the Belgians finally and very quickly decided to give the Congo its independence, there were rumors at the time that the Union Miniere was behind that move--that they had in mind that the Congo would become independent, Katanga would secede and become an independent state, and the Union Miniere then would be in a dominant position in Katanga.

SCHOENBAUM: And Tshombe was their man.

DEAN RUSK: He was pretty much their man for a while. But our Assistant Secretary of State at that time was [G. Mennen] "Soapy" Williams--the soap heir, now a member of the Supreme Court of Michigan--and he was very active and concerned and energetic. But there were limits to what the United States could do in a situation of that sort. After all, it is a long way away and we had almost no presence there of any sort; we had relatively few business interests in the Congo and so there was not a great deal that we could do. We did use what little influence we had to try to bring about some kind of livable national government of the Congo.

SCHOENBAUM: George Ball talks about a split between on the one hand [Chester Bliss] Bowles and "Soapy" Williams and on the other hand Ball, himself, who I understand did a lot with respect to the Congo at that time and [Edmund Asbury] Gullion, the U.S. Ambassador to the independent Congo, I guess, at that time. Did Williams and Bowles--Were they--I take it they were not opposed to an independent Katanga, or at least thought that we should let things fall out and if an independent Katanga resulted that should be was all right with the U.S.

DEAN RUSK: I don't remember the individual views or personalities on that but, you see, this matter was before the United Nations and there the weight of African sentiment was very strongly against a secession of Katanga, as it was later with regard to the Ibos in Nigeria. So the United Nations decided to put United Nations forces in there--the largest single military force the United Nations ever put together. There were fifteen or eighteen countries contributing to that force.

SCHOENBAUM: You were in favor of that. I think you, throughout your whole career you consistently favored U.N. actions--peacemaking.

DEAN RUSK: Well, I thought this was an appropriate thing for the U.N. to do. It was pretty

costly for us because some of these countries would put forces in there only if we subsidized them and those bills got to be pretty high. We did provide a good deal of air logistic support to those U.N. forces. We didn't have troops of our own. But that force was, in effect, directed by Ralph [Johnson] Bunche. There was no General Staff; there was no logistic organization; it was sort of being run right out of Ralph Bunche's pocket up at the United Nations as Dag [Hjalmar Agne Carl] Hammarskjold's principal deputy. So there were a good many problems about managing that force in the Congo.

Then at one point the U.N. forces, Dag Hammarskjold moved the U.N. forces into Katanga. I had some misgivings about that because I wasn't at all sure that the U.N. forces had the capability of being successful in their operations in the Katanga--that they might go down there and simply get their nose bloodied. But in fact, I think the commander was an Indian, they went down there and fairly quickly broke up any of Tshombe's forces and succeeded in imposing the U.N. and the Congolese government's authority in Katanga itself and prevented the secession of Katanga.

SCHOENBAUM: That's interesting too because Ball apparently thought--he describes an argument between he, George Ball, and Stevenson--Stevenson wanted to apparently, with totally a 100% backing of the U.N. in crushing the Tshombe rebellion and George Ball describes himself as being very worried about the domestic repercussions of this and the fact that the Congress and generally sentiment in the country were not behind this U.N. operation.

DEAN RUSK: Well, Katanga had put out a good deal of propaganda in this country in this process. And there were some senators like old Senator [Thomas Joseph] Dodd of Connecticut who was very strongly pro-Katanga, pro-Tshombe man, and so we got battered pretty badly from some quarters in Congress over this whole situation. So it was controversial both at home and abroad. But I think the speed of the U.N. forces operations helped a good deal because it was soon wrapped up and the opponents were faced with a fait accompli.

SCHOENBAUM: By December 1962, U.N. forces occupied Elizabethville and crushed the rebellion in the first phase. What was your personal role in this? Were you called on? You must have been called on to mediate or smooth some disagreements between the European Bureau and the African Bureau and between some strong personalities like Ball and Stevenson. Did you play the role of peacemaker or mediator?

DEAN RUSK: Oh I think it was more a question of my keeping in touch with the President on these things and not necessarily mediating but telling them where we would come out. These are matters where when different elements of the government are opposed to each other the President and the Secretary of State have to decide and give direction. So it really wasn't so much of a negotiation as it was making decisions.

SCHOENBAUM: Were the decisions primarily made, on this one in particular, in the State Department? Did Kennedy pretty much let you run this show?

DEAN RUSK: Well, he kept in close touch with it because of the Congressional problems, but the State Department pretty much handled the Congo situation, Although we did call upon

the Defense Department for a fair amount of help in terms of transportation and supplies, and things of that sort; but on the policy side the Defense Department played a very small role.

One of the problems in the Congo was the absence of effective leadership. When the vast Congo became independent, I think there were only twelve Congolese university graduates in the entire country. Now the University at Louvain in Belgium had fortunately, contrary to the wishes of its own government, had established down there Louvain University and these Catholic priests just went down there and established a pretty good university. It was pretty high quality. I got to know it first when I was President of the [John Davison] Rockefeller Foundation, and that turned out to be a considerable asset to the independent Congo. But they were very short of trained man power in every field. So it wasn't easy to get people and to find leaders and to find administrators who could give effect to whatever policy they wanted to adopt. Of course, it is a very large, complex, diverse country right there in the heart of Africa and it seemed apparent to us that what happened in the Congo was very important to the rest of Africa because of the sheer size of the country and its weight economically and all the rest of it. So we were concerned about the Congo.

SCHOENBAUM: Was [Joseph] Kasavubu--Were you able to work with him? Did you find that he was a good person to work with or difficult to deal with?

DEAN RUSK: I don't remember these personalities very well. I remember him and I remember a few of the problems we had with him but then; but the problem was to find somebody who could effectively organize a government. That was the missing piece.

SCHOENBAUM: I know that during that time there was a lot of--

DEAN RUSK: By the way, you will find considerable congressional testimony by me on this matter in the various hearings.

SCHOENBAUM: From being in Belgium--In fact I was a student at Louvain at the time--and I know this caused a major rift between Belgium and the United States. Was a lot of your time meeting with the Belgian ambassador? Can you give an idea--

DEAN RUSK: No, I don't recall high tensions with Belgium over this matter, partly because they understood, really, whatever they felt they had to say. They understood that Belgium simply did not have the capability of hanging on to a Congo that did not wish to be under Belgian rule and that somewhere down the line the Congo was going to become an independent state. After all, other African countries were becoming independent at a rapid rate. There was an explosion of new states arising out of the western colonial empires; and I think the Belgians, whatever they said about it at the time, understood that the end result was inevitable.

RICHARD RUSK: What was Paul-Henri Spaak's role in all this? Was he Prime Minister?

DEAN RUSK: I had no hostile words with Paul-Henri Spaak on this subject. He was long time Foreign Minister, he was Prime Minister for a period, I forget whether he was Prime

Minister at this particular point.

RICHARD RUSK: You spoke earlier of your close relations with him--

DEAN RUSK: Yes, but he and I did not argue in any kind of bitter terms about the Congo. But he was a Belgian politician and he had to be aware of the political situation inside Belgium. But he was more or less independent of the Union Miniere. He did not let them dominate him personally as some others did.

SCHOENBAUM: Did Kennedy...there was...later on there was the strange spectacle-- Tshombe apparently went into exile after the agreements, after he was defeated, in effect, in Katanga, and he signed an agreement in December 1961 with [Cyrille] Adoula, the Prime Minister at that time, to end his rebellion. And then in 1962 there were some new sanctions against Katanga because there was still an insurrection; and then apparently Simba rebels arose in Katanga and endangered American and other lives, foreign missionary lives; and you at that point as I understand it, you supported this interesting mission to rescue the hostages and--

DEAN RUSK: That was up in Stanleyville, up in the northeastern Congo.

SCHOENBAUM: That's right.

DEAN RUSK: The Simbas were a rebellious group defying the government of the Congo and they were a pretty primitive bunch in terms of their methods, techniques and so forth. And they seized about 600 Caucasians, including a number of American citizens, held them hostage up there in Stanleyville and were not under the control of the Congolese government. Well, we tried with the help of President [Jomo] Kenyatta of Kenya and President [Julius K.] Nyerere of Tanzania to free these people by negotiation, but those proved futile. And so we used American planes to drop a battalion of Belgian paratroopers into Stanleyville to rescue these people, and with the full knowledge of the then Congolese government down in the capital. And that proved quite successful. Our own Consul General [Michael Hoyt], who was among those hostages, said that he thought that if the Belgian paratroopers had come in ten minutes later that most of them would have been killed because they had them all at that moment herded into the square there in Stanleyville; and these doped up Simbas were firing tommy guns all around the place and it looked like things were going to get out of control. It was a very close thing.

SCHOENBAUM: To what extent were you involved in meeting and planning that operation?

DEAN RUSK: I was very closely involved with that. As a matter of fact, I remember during the period when we were discussing this possible operation with the Belgians, Paul-Henri Spaak left a Cabinet meeting in Brussels to telephone me and he said, "I am here in a Cabinet meeting and would like to know the American view on this matter." And I said to him, "Well, we are prepared to do whatever you want to do. If you wish to commit your paratrooper battalion, we will make our planes available and do everything possible to make the operation a success; if you decide you do not wish to do so, we would understand." He paused and he

said, "Do you mean that the great United States of America is leaving this decision to Belgium?"--I said, "Yes, that is exactly the position." He said, "That's incredible. No decision affecting Belgium has ever been made in Belgium before." But they were so elated that they were the ones to make the decision.

RICHARD RUSK: You ended up going in there with American paratroopers and American planes?

DEAN RUSK: No. Belgian paratroopers and American planes. It was a very efficient operation. As soon as we got the hostages, both the planes and the paratroopers came out.

RICHARD RUSK: Any hostages killed in that situation?

DEAN RUSK: Yes, there were a few. One American missionary was killed scaling the wall. When the paratroopers appeared, the Simbas started firing all over the place and a lot of people climbed over a wall to get out of the way of the firing and one American missionary, I remember particularly, was killed climbing over the wall.

SCHOENBAUM: His name was [Paul] Carlson?

DEAN RUSK: Yes, that's right.

SCHOENBAUM: This is interesting. Did you just make that decision at that time that we would leave this to Belgium or was Kennedy involved? Did you ask Kennedy what he thought?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I was in touch with Kennedy regularly.

RICHARD RUSK: But the point of decision was made right there on the phone, with your phone call with Spaak?

DEAN RUSK: Well, he then went back to the Cabinet and they made the decision to commit the paratroopers, but we left that decision to the Belgians because after all it was their paratroopers.

SCHOENBAUM: But how did you make the decision to leave it to Belgium?

DEAN RUSK: Well, that was just my decision. I had no doubt that the President would back me up on it and--

SCHOENBAUM: I see. You didn't discuss that with Kennedy.

DEAN RUSK: I probably did not discuss that particular point with Kennedy but it was inherent in the situation. I mean, we couldn't require the Belgians to commit a battalion of their paratroopers if they didn't want to.

RICHARD RUSK: Did we have forces in the area?

DEAN RUSK: Not ground forces, but we very quickly got the aircraft in there.

SCHOENBAUM: Looking back on--We have the experience in Iran and that hostage rescue operation and the fallout from that--the political fallout and everything--Weren't you worried? Wasn't Kennedy worried? As it turned out this was a wonderful success for American and Belgian operation and for foreign policy; but if it had turned out--You didn't know how it would turn out at the time--And if it had turned out that we had the Belgian paratroopers with American planes, an American military operation, and if the mission had been botched in some way or if all the hostages had been killed then--

DEAN RUSK: Well, the situation was very different than Iran because these Simbas were not organized and well trained troops. We estimated that when the shooting started they would melt away pretty fast--And in fact they did--So that it wasn't as formidable a military problem as any kind of rescue in the heart of Tehran would have been. But, nevertheless it was chancy because the real threat was not to the Belgian paratroopers but to the hostages. Could the paratroopers get in there fast enough to keep the Simbas from shooting up a lot of these hostages?

RICHARD RUSK: And you had confidence in the ability of the Belgian forces to go in there and conduct a good operation?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah, this Belgian paratrooper outfit was first class.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you have to fight within the Administration for that position at all?

DEAN RUSK: No, no. There are times, you see, when the fellow at the top just has to decide and this is the kind of thing where that happened and whatever differing views there might be down below in the bureaucracy just weren't--didn't make much difference.

RICHARD RUSK: A real fast moving situation.

DEAN RUSK: Yes, and it had to be handled very quietly because had these Simbas gotten any kind of word through news broadcast or anything else that any such thing was being contemplated, they very likely would have liquidated the [hostages]. So we did not consult with the Congress ahead of time on this rescue operation. And we almost kept the President of the Congo down in his own capital almost under house arrest so he wouldn't tell anybody because secrecy was of the greatest importance in the success of the operation.

RICHARD RUSK: I take it this whole U.N. operation in the Congo was regarded pretty much as a successful venture--one of the U.N.'s finer moments. Can you give some of the reasons why it was that it worked out so well as a U.N. action and what are the lessons from this? If it can work here, surely we can have a greater U.N. effort in other situations where the countries of the world will allow it.

DEAN RUSK: Well, one of things that helped was that there were units in that U.N. force there from a wide variety of countries from a political point of view. There were Indians: As a matter of fact there was an Indian commander. There were Swedes, I believe Canadians; there was Ghanaians. They had pretty good troops in that operation. And so the very fact that it was a genuinely international force not based upon ideological concerns helped a great deal in making it effective and there was good political support for the operation at the United Nations itself. It had overwhelming support in the General Assembly for example. Now it was costly for the U.N. and one of the controversies we had in Washington was to get the Congress to approve a hundred million dollar loan to the U.N. to help finance the Congo operation. We got it, but it was not easy because of the pro-Katanga/pro-Tshombe forces in the Congress.

RICHARD RUSK: What percent of that operation did the Americans end up paying for?

DEAN RUSK: I would have to check on that, but we made a hundred million dollar loan to the U.N. I suppose most of that has been paid back by now. But you see these countries that furnished forces did not do so each on its own expense. They expected to be reimbursed by somebody. I remember--I am not sure you should use this without checking it; but as I remember, the Brazilians, for example, put a unit in there and expected us to pay them \$50 a day per man to help support their force.

RICHARD RUSK: It must have been very gratifying to you personally with your strong interest in the U.N. and your efforts to try to take a collective world reaction to these problems.

DEAN RUSK: Well, that was; but I think the real satisfaction came with the fact that a Congo did emerge as a unified, independent country. It's had its problems as many of them have had. It is now Zaire. But the results from our point of view were--

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DEAN RUSK: I think the critical resolutions of the U.N. to use these forces came from the General Assembly, where there was no Soviet veto. Later on the Soviets refused to pay assessment of dues to finance the Congo operation and the repayment of that hundred million dollar loan and that brought up a crisis later over the provisions of the charter that would take their vote away in the General Assembly. But that is another story. But, no, they weren't very happy; they were very unhappy about losing Lumumba because they thought they could work closely with him.

RICHARD RUSK: You say this was a costly U.N. operation. Dag Hammarskjold was killed in this thing wasn't he?

SCHOENBAUM: September, '61.

DEAN RUSK: Yes, he was killed in an airplane crash out in the area when he was trying to bring various sides together and.

SCHOENBAUM: Do you remember a personal reaction when you heard of his death?

DEAN RUSK: Well, we were all very, very distressed and saddened by his death because Dag Hammarskjold was a very strong Secretary-General. When the U.N. Charter was written, it called the Secretary-General the Chief Administrative Officer of the U.N. Well, we rather hoped that the Secretary-General would develop into more what we would call the Chief Executive of the U.N. We wanted a strong Secretary-General who would take the Charter in his hand as his Bible and fight for the Charter in whatever directions the chips might fly. We had no misgivings about that ourselves because we thought that the U.N. Charter was wholly consistent with the long-range purposes of the United States. It is not an accident because we played a major role in drafting the Charter. But Trygve Lie was a strong Secretary-General--the first one. Then Dag Hammarskjold was also a strong Secretary-General. Well, the Soviets didn't like that and so this prompted them to come up with their famous "Troika" Proposal that there be three Secretary-Generals: one from the socialist camp, one from the free world, and one from the neutralist world, and sort of divide the leadership there at the U.N. Well, we fought that successfully, but Dag Hammarskjold was--well, he would give us privately unshirted hell on anything that he didn't like that we were doing; and you need that kind of Secretary-General.

SCHOENBAUM: Privately you say.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you remember any instances of it?

DEAN RUSK: At the moment I don't; but you see he would call the disputing parties into his own office around his own coffee table--And his coffee table got to be an institution--and he would just bring the parties in there and wrestle with them and cajole and press, trying to get them to settle their disputes and he played--he was a very active Secretary-General.

RICHARD RUSK: Did he personally ever call you in or would it just be through the American ambassador?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, I saw him frequently. I don't think he ever summoned me, but had he asked me--We invited him to Washington on occasions, but he never summoned me in that sense. But I was up there quite frequently. You see, I spent the first three weeks of every U.N. General Assembly in New York having private talks with every foreign minister and prime minister who came to the General Assembly.

RICHARD RUSK: First three weeks of every year?

DEAN RUSK: Yes, first three weeks of the General Assembly in September. And I would go up there every year for that period--not to take part in the debate. Why should I speak when

we had an Adlai Stevenson there to speak? But I would spend that time simply with bilateral talks with every foreign minister. And there would be seventy-five or eighty of these every year.

RICHARD RUSK: Were you unique in doing that as Secretary of State?

DEAN RUSK: I think so.

RICHARD RUSK: Has it been done since then?

DEAN RUSK: Only in a fragmentary kind of way.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you do it consistently for eight years?

DEAN RUSK: Yes. And I would try to follow protocol. If a foreign minister was senior to me in service, I would call on him and have the talk at his place or if I were senior I would invite them over to the U.S. Delegation to meet with me in my office. Now that was a very important period for me because it was so educational because before each one of these bilateral talks, I would have to go through a big black book of briefing materials on that man and his country. And I had to know a lot about the country from which the man came who I would be talking with. And then they would tell me a good many things about their countries that I found very informative. So it was a kind of refresher course on what was going on in the world that I found invaluable. And then when an ambassador from this country would come in, the desk officer on that country would be me for the talk. Adlai Stevenson was free to sit in on any of them that he wanted to but he was busy with the General Assembly and did not sit in on most of them.

RICHARD RUSK: This is interesting--I had never heard it before. I don't think it's been reported before.

DEAN RUSK: And I would always have two discussions with [Andrei Andreevich] Gromyko: At least two at the U.N., once at my place and once at his place. And that was useful and most of the time we would invite him down to Washington to have a chat with the President and I'd give him a dinner in Washington as well in connection with his visit to the U.N.

RICHARD RUSK: You had the backing of both your presidents for the amount of time you spent in New York?

DEAN RUSK: Oh yes, sure.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you remember any little stories that might have come out of this period?

DEAN RUSK: Oh dear, I would have to think about that, Rich. But you see, when the foreign ministers of the world collect at the U.N. in September, this is in effect an annual meeting of

the trade union of foreign ministers and there does develop a kind of corporate sense among these foreign ministers under those circumstances. It was rather interesting that if a foreign minister was put down by his colleagues as a deceiver, as a no-good, that meant that his ability to represent his country effectively was considerably reduced. The reputations of each other within this group became quite important and I thought it was a very constructive thing to have happen on the international scene.

SCHOENBAUM: You really got down to substantive talks. You didn't--

DEAN RUSK: Oh yes, not just elaborate, not just--and the talks could be very frank. Now there were times when I would meet with a group of them quite apart from the bilateral talks. For example, I had luncheons with foreign ministers of Latin America. I remember I gave a luncheon or two for fifteen or so of the foreign ministers from Africa--things like that. But these personal relationships should not play that much of a role in the strict theory of diplomacy. But with these newly independent countries where politics is very personal and where personalities make an enormous difference, I thought it was very worthwhile to at least know the man that we were sending cables to and get some impressions of him, let him know me, and I think it helped.

SCHOENBAUM: Were these conversations summarized then and sent to the U.S. ambassador in that country or--

DEAN RUSK: Oh yes, we always had a note taker at these meetings and the note taker would make a memorandum of conversation. They would be sent to the Department and to our embassy overseas.

SCHOENBAUM: These must still exist then?

DEAN RUSK: I always wanted a note taker to--very often it was the interpreter we were using for different languages. But I always wanted a note taker there to make an accurate summation of the talk because if I were to do it myself, I would be subject to what the Germans call "treppengedank," that is the thoughts you have on the steps on the way out, the things that you later wished you had said. There is a temptation to put those into the memos of conversation and so the accuracy of these memos of conversation written by a professional note taker was really very high.

SCHOENBAUM: Back to the Congo: Another question occurs to me. It seems to me very interesting that this particular action by the United States--it was successful. And it strikes me as something that would have not been possible in the [Dwight David] Eisenhower Administration. It was possible in the Kennedy Administration. In fact, it was a successful thing in where we really coopted the Russians, because the Russians were all set to go in and take advantage. And we took--We didn't--under Dulles, who can say? But we might have backed the Union Miniere, in which case we would have opened the way for the Russians to make trouble. And what we did, the Russians seemed to be coopted and we were wearing the white hats. Could you comment on that?

DEAN RUSK: Well, it is hard to say what would have been in the Eisenhower/Dulles period because Dulles himself had some pretty strong feeling for the United Nations. He had had a lot of experience with it in its earlier days and so forth. But we were much more relaxed about these neutrals and nonaligned countries that just wouldn't line up with us in blasting the Russians at every turn. So that didn't bother us so much as it did during the fifties, apparently. But I think what we--we managed to finesse the Russians in the Congo. We didn't approach it from a position of direct confrontation, but we let the United Nations, United Nations forces, the Third World countries themselves take the lead in bringing about a result in the Congo that on the whole was more constructive from our point of view than the alternatives might have been.

SCHOENBAUM: And as I understand it, it should be brought out more as a success. Apparently the Russians through Egypt and Algeria were supporting the Simba rebels and hoping to [inaudible] some trouble over there.

DEAN RUSK: Well, there was that kind of reporting, but the Simbas were eventually kept in their place and that problem was finally overcome. But we had another kind of situation: had its pain and its humor. A little later after the rescue in Stanleyville, a group of 150-200 white mercenaries who had been working for the Congolese government rebelled and went over to the eastern Congo and took control of an area of the country trying to run it on their own. That created great consternation throughout the Congo and very bitter anti-white, anti-western feeling. And our ambassador down there told us that it was very important that some important white country, like the United States, make a public display of its support for the Congolese government over against these rebellious white mercenaries. Well, we delayed that a bit, but the situation in the Congo began to get worse. Then we heard that the Congolese were calling large mass meetings all over the country--anti-white, anti-western--and that part of these things was to, "Bring your machetes with you because there will be some things to do when the meeting is over." That looked like the possibility of a massacre of Europeans and Americans in the Congo.

So our ambassador suggested that we at least send three transport airplanes out there to help the government: but as a symbol--give the government a chance to say, "You see we are being supported by the United States." Well, Johnson asked me to talk to Senator Fulbright and Senator Russell about this. And we talked to them at the time that we sent these three aircraft down to Ascension Island in the Atlantic--at least to get them a little further toward the area. Both Senator Russell and Senator Fulbright were strongly opposed to it, and I reported that back to Johnson. But then our ambassador out there became increasingly insistent, so Johnson put the planes in there and the Congolese government then got on the radio and put loud speakers on the jeeps running around the cities calling attention to all of this, and the thing soon quieted down. But both Russell and Fulbright got up on the Senate floor and blasted us for having done this. Well now, that suggests a theoretical press conference had Johnson not sent those three planes down there. Question from a reporter, "Did you know that this massacre was coming, Mr. President?"

[Johnson] "Well, we had been warned that it could happen."

"What did you do about it?"

"Well we didn't do anything about it."

"Well, did anybody suggest anything to you that you ought to do about it?"

"Well our ambassador wanted us to put in three transport airplanes."

"Well, why didn't you?"

"Well, Senator Russell and Senator Fulbright didn't think it was a good idea."

Now, the immediate reaction would have been, "What in the hell is going on here? What is a President for?" But then another reaction from that was that one of our European allies--I think it was the Federal Republic of Germany--came in to see us and asked us to keep those planes there for a while because they had a good many Germans in the Congo. And I said to the ambassador, "Then why don't you put some German planes in there?" "Oh, we couldn't do that."

RICHARD RUSK: Did Russell and Fulbright ever specify exactly what their objections were to that?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, they just didn't want us to become involved with American military forces of any kind in the Congo and they might also have had some hostility toward the Congo because of the Tshombe/Katanga situation.

SCHOENBAUM: Do you remember what year that was?

DEAN RUSK: You can get that out of the Johnson Presidential Papers.

SCHOENBAUM: I wanted to ask you one more question about this rescue back in August of '64: the rescue operation in Stanleyville. A couple of days later, after the rescue operation in Stanleyville, there was another rescue operation in the Palis. And Ball, in his memoirs, talks about this second rescue operation; and he says that he and you strongly favored a second rescue operation but that you had a hard time convincing Johnson because of the political repercussions of rescue operations.

DEAN RUSK: I don't remember much about that second affair quite frankly. I just don't recall it.

SCHOENBAUM: Ultimately he says that the President was convinced by your--

DEAN RUSK: I think the second one as I remember would have involved American ground forces. The difference between that and the Belgian paratroopers was significant from a political point of view.

SCHOENBAUM: I think that is right. But it also was apparently successful as a second operation.

DEAN RUSK: Now there were a number of Caucasians who lost their lives out in the back country who were not there to be rescued. They were not in the center.

SCHOENBAUM: And then in 1965 any insurrection fell apart. There is one curious thing about the whole operation though, and that's Tshombe's role. Tshombe started out, of course, being a proponent of an independent Katanga and backed by Belgians and Union Miniere. And then after he lost the first time, after the U.N. forces went in and he was forced to capitulate and gave that up--gave up opposing a central government--then he went into exile into Spain. And then he came back from Spain and he joined--The central government formed a national government, a unity government--and started beating the drums for the central government. He totally switched sides from being a secessionist to a proponent of the central government.

DEAN RUSK: Was there not a brief time when he himself was Prime Minister, or maybe he was Deputy Prime Minister of the whole works. But that didn't work out very well.

SCHOENBAUM: Is there any explanation of why he switched--played a different tune other than just personal power?

DEAN RUSK: Well, he was a loser. If he were going to recoup any position or anything like that, he would have to work with the government that was in power. I never met him and don't really have much of an assessment of the man himself. He was a very vigorous fellow and very eloquent, persuasive to a lot of people.

SCHOENBAUM: Did you meet any of the principals involved either at that time or subsequently?

DEAN RUSK: No, only foreign ministers up at the U.N. You know there is an African cultural trait which might be worth mentioning: at least I seem to think it--And that is that despite the kinds of tribal battles they used to have historically in Africa, they really are not very attached to fighting in the modern sense. They have a strong sense of palaver. You can talk these things out and you keep talking and you keep talking--that kind of thing. So that the idea of taking up arms in the western sense is not a very attractive idea in Africa. For example, there is the problem of apartheid in South Africa. The African states combined have an overwhelming capacity to move in on South Africa and insist upon changes and they are not going to do it. I remember once at a luncheon with about twelve African foreign ministers, they were pressing me about economic sanctions on South Africa. I said, "Well, under the Charter it is assumed that if economic sanctions are applied and these sanctions fall more heavily upon some than upon others, the U.N. would make arrangements to equalize the impact of such sanctions. So let's talk about the possibility of a United Nations sanctions fund. Let's start with a hundred million dollars." I looked around the table and I said, "Now the proportionate share of each one of your countries would be the price of a Ford automobile. Would you participate in such a fund?" And they all laughed. The difference between the

rhetorical level and the level of action in Africa is a very important difference. So my hunch is that if the Americans and the Russians and the Chinese and everybody else would just keep their fingers out of Africa, the Africans would work these things out in their own African fashion.

SCHOENBAUM: Did we attempt to foster African unity during the Kennedy/Johnson years: the Organization of African States or a grand design for Africa like we did for--

DEAN RUSK: With our strong interest in decolonialism, we very much hoped that there would emerge in Africa a Federation of East Africa, a Federation of West Africa just as we hoped for a Federation of the West Indies so that you would have political units that were viable. Unhappily, such ideas came to nothing because each one of these little areas wanted to be its own independent country and Africa was broken up into fifty independent nations, some of them so small that it is just hard for them to make a living. So the result of the dissolution of colonial empires has been a very large number of small countries. Of course you've got a few big ones like India, Indonesia, places like that. But you have got a lot of countries in Africa who really can't make a go of it without some kind of federated effort with their neighbors. But that has been very hard to come by because it is very difficult for these African tribes to accept somebody from another tribe as a leader. Nkrumah was very interested in a Pan-African movement in West Africa; but since it was under his leadership, his neighbors didn't like it at all and they were very much opposed to Nkrumah's Pan-African movement.

SCHOENBAUM: It is interesting that the U.N. Charter and the fact that you personally used the United Nations Charter as a real guide to policy. I wonder--I think most people would be surprised by that. I think maybe a lot of people take a more cynical view that the Charter is there when you need it but it is not really there to follow.

DEAN RUSK: Well, you see the U.N. Charter was drafted at a time when our minds and spirits had been purged in the fires of World War II and there was a sense that we really ought to make a fresh beginning and to do it along decent lines that everybody ought to be willing to accept. So we did play a very important part in the drafting of the U.N. Charter. But if you want to find, even today, if you want to find a succinct summary of American foreign policy and our attitudes toward the rest of the world, you would do worse than having a look at Articles One and Two of the U.N. Charter. And that is the kind of world that we Americans see as a kind of world that is desirable and tolerable and so forth. Now, the U.N. is nothing but its members. There is no U.N. There is a secretariat, but there is not real U.N. without its members. And so what happens to the U.N. depends upon the attitudes of the members when they gather in the Security Council and in the General Assembly. And there has been considerable deterioration in the attitudes of members toward the kind of world that is envisaged in the U.N. Charter.

SCHOENBAUM: Did you again--what role--you did do some of the drafting work of the U.N. Charter?

DEAN RUSK: No, as a matter of fact I was in the Army at that time and during the U.N. Conference in San Francisco where the Charter was adopted. I was on leave over across the

Bay in Oakland siring Richard [Geary Rusk], and so I didn't take any part in the U.N. Conference in San Francisco. But I was directly involved immediately thereafter when George [Catlett] Marshall asked me to come over to the State Department and take charge of United Nations Affairs.

SCHOENBAUM: That was mainly collective security implementation--But at that time the Charter had been drafted.

RICHARD RUSK: I have one final question for me, and that is: You make the point that American policy objectives with regard to Africa was to respect neutralism, as you have already attested, and try to keep the Cold War politics out of that continent and let these African countries work things out for themselves. I take it we have been relatively successful on that, and yet [we have] had greater difficulty, both us and the Soviets, in doing that in other parts of the world. Why was it that we were relatively successful with respect to Africa?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I might be wrong in this, but my impression has been over the years that the black Africans have proved themselves to be quite resistant to outside ideological penetration. We found that out; the Russians found that out; the Chinese found that out. They will listen and they will smile and shrug their shoulders and then go off and do it in their own African way. And so I have not been very much concerned about Africa as a scene for the Cold War.

They just won't buy all this outside stuff. Now in doing it their own way they have got a lot of things in their own history and culture that complicate things from our point of view. After all, many of the countries of black Africa have military dictatorships. The impact of the old chief system in Africa is still very strong and you find that working itself out in Zimbabwe and in other places.

RICHARD RUSK: Not only is communism a foreign concept, but democracy itself is really struggling.

DEAN RUSK: Yes, the village elders, the chief system, things of that sort are still a very strong element there.

END OF SIDE 2