

Dean Rusk Oral History Collection

Rusk KKK: Part 1 of 2

Walt Whitman Rostow interviewed by Richard Rusk and Thomas Schoenbaum

1985 January

The complete interview also includes Rusk LLL: Part 2.

ROSTOW: No, no, no. I understand the rhythm of these things. I just think that I'll be more relaxed in the use of language if I'm confident that I will have a chance--

RICHARD RUSK: That's fine. We'll promise to do that and I just now turned the recorder on, so let's make a note right now on the machine that the transcript of this interview with Professor Walt Rostow is to be sent to him for editing purposes. And let me just introduce the tape here. This interview is with Dr. Walter Rostow who is now at the University of Texas. He was Special Assistant to President Lyndon Johnson for National Security Affairs, 1966-69, many years in the Foreign Service, and a long distinguished academic career.

ROSTOW: Incidentally, my meeting with Dean Rusk, however, goes back to the Kennedy period. I was in government from the first Kennedy day to the last Johnson day.

RICHARD RUSK: Okay. We will want you to spell that out. I have a question that takes us back even further. And I understand from *Who's Who* that you're a Rhodes Scholar. You went through Oxford after my father. Did you ever hear of a Dean Rusk at Oxford? Did he make that kind of splash back there at Oxford in those days?

ROSTOW: I didn't really hear of his name until later. I heard it at the time after the war. He was in the State Department. And especially around the Korean War time I saw his name often in the papers. And I didn't meet Dean Rusk, except briefly when I was working with Nelson [Aldrich] Rockefeller and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund Panels. And if I remember correctly, Dean Rusk was the chairman of one of those panels.

RICHARD RUSK: That's right.

ROSTOW: And we had a meeting. I was not on that panel. I was on one on the domestic side, chaired by I don't know who, actually. We had a meeting of the chairmen of all the panels and tried to get some more integration between the various components of it. And it was at some such meeting that I met him briefly. But I really did not get to know him at all until after Mr. Kennedy was elected, but before he was sworn in.

RICHARD RUSK: Let me ask you a personal question about Oxford. Did it have as decisive an effect upon your later career as it indeed had for my father?

ROSTOW: It had a really extremely important effect. I wouldn't say it was decisive because, through an accident of intellectual history, I had decided what I was going to do academically

when I was a sophomore at Yale, of all things. I've been doing that ever since. I describe--I won't in this transcript, this piece of autobiography--but this is not relevant--in a recently published book by the World Bank, called *Pioneers in Development*. About ten of us who have made some sort of contributions, in the judgment of the World Bank, have written essays. In one of those essays I describe how I got into economics, which is rather amusing. But in any case, I carried forward my work at Oxford along the lines that I had generated in undergraduate at Yale, and had a marvelous time and made life-long friends, and have no doubt that that experience was powerful and abiding, but it didn't shape my career.

RICHARD RUSK: Neither Tom nor I have been over there yet. We might go later this spring. Are you familiar with any secondary materials or books on Oxford that might help describe and understand my dad's experience back there in the mid-1930s?

ROSTOW: That's a good question. There are books. I want to talk with my wife about that, and I'll drop you a note. I think that there's one particular, extremely evocative account of Oxford, as I recall, in that inter-war period. It was an extraordinary period, a transitional period in many ways, at Oxford because still there were marks of the pre-1914 Oxford. And in a sense, because cost of living was so low in that period, the resources of the Oxford colleges could buy a lot. They weren't under a great pressure from inflation or anything, but quite on the contrary. They were comfortable financially. The British society, however, was--it was a period where between 1921 and 1939 there was only one year when unemployment was under ten percent, and then it was only slightly under ten percent. So it was a very strong strand of pathology. In terms of the history of universities, they were moving slowly, but actually moving towards more scholarship students. It was somewhere between the sort of postwar Oxford, where you got in on merit, and the prewar Oxford, where it was very much the preserve of hunting-fishing-shooting types who were the upper-middle classes.

RICHARD RUSK: Do make a mental note to send us some suggestions for reading material if you can think of anything that would help us.

ROSTOW: That would evoke that period?

RICHARD RUSK: Yes. Okay, my second question leads into what you were beginning to discuss, and that is any knowledge of or experience with Dean Rusk prior to his appointment as John Kennedy's Secretary of State.

SCHOENBAUM: Would you please describe your impressions on meeting Dean Rusk and how he handled the conduct of those panels?

ROSTOW: I was not on his panel. But the one meeting that I can recall where he was present, I got the impression of an extraordinarily skillful chairman. I would say that of the chairmen that I have dealt with in my time, I would say that he ranks very close to the very top. I'd put Oliver [Shewell] Franks, Dean Rusk, Richard [Melvin] Bissell [Jr.], Edward [Archibald] Mason; I think those are the four best chairmen that I've dealt with.

RICHARD RUSK: Why specifically was he so effective as a chairman?

ROSTOW: Because he was capable of listening very carefully, had a high sense of relevance, and had no great compulsion to intervene until he was ready to say something that had great specific gravity. And when he did, there was a sense of--well, that's pretty close to the right judgment. What emerged after a period when he was chairman of the meeting, was a sense that this is a person of integrity, judgment, intelligence, and where he comes out is about where we should come out. It's a rare quality. It's a combination of things: qualities of character, judgment and intelligence.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you have enough of an impression about my father to have had a reaction to his appointment by John Kennedy?

ROSTOW: Kennedy had spoken to me the day he was making the appointment, because I was very close to Kennedy. He had three characters. I now ask you, can I be candid and keep part of this closed?

RICHARD RUSK: I can shut this machine off if you prefer.

SCHOENBAUM: The library will close anything that you request. [Interruption] Do you know what went on between Kennedy and Rusk at their first meeting in Washington?

ROSTOW: One other thing I remember about it: he had said he had been very much drawn to the article written by Dean Rusk in *Foreign Affairs* in which he counseled against excessive travel by the Secretary of State and to be careful about Summit meetings, but it was very sensible and decent. He liked it. So I can't take you beyond that because undoubtedly he was asking a great many people whose opinions he might want to hear before he made a decision. I knew he was going down to Palm Beach and he was going to announce from Palm Beach. He did not indicate to me which way he was moving.

RICHARD RUSK: Did he drop any additional comments about my father in your conversation with him, other than the article?

ROSTOW: No, except that he liked the article. I think he'd met him for the first time the day before. He said he had just met him for the first time, and he was thinking it over. But I didn't ask him. All I did was to make the point, which I do feel very deeply, that the relationship and the comfort of the President and the Secretary of State is really the most important criterion. I still hold that to be true. But I did not try to go beyond my very limited knowledge.

RICHARD RUSK: Tom, why don't you go ahead and ask a few of your questions and I'll get mine in as you're discussing them.

SCHOENBAUM: Okay. Professor Rostow, in *The Diffusion of Power*, you state that [Robert Strange] McNamara and Rusk had an extraordinarily close relationship and also that McNamara deferred to Rusk whenever Rusk took a firm position. Can you give any examples of this and why?

ROSTOW: No. I wasn't privy, really, to their private relationship. I knew exactly when this position crystallized in my mind and it was on--I can give you the spot when it was. I was in the State Department then as a planner, and I was invited down to the ranch. It was my first trip to the ranch. On the plane were a group going down to talk about Vietnam, or something, with McNamara, Rusk, and Mac [McGeorge] Bundy. Also on the plane, in the crowded little Lear jet, was, I think, John Gardner, (unintelligible) Macy, me. I think that's right. And we went to the President's birthplace--that was the first use of it--for a meeting on the LBJ School. That was the first meeting. This was 1965, I believe. We could find the date. We met the Chancellor of the University, etc., and the President of the University, and talked about the LBJ School of Public Affairs, while these fellows were working on foreign policy. And on the way back, McNamara (and I was sitting and talking to them) said (they were in a cheerful mood) and he said, "You know, Dean," (Mac Bundy was present and I was present.) he said, "I am a man who makes this government run because I deeply believe that military policy should be the servant of foreign policy. And that's why in a pinch I will always defer to you." Then we got into a general discussion about the relationship of military and civil policy and the relationship between the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense. I found it most engaging that Bob was comfortable enough to chat about this on the plane going back. And I think they pretty well lived by this. Now, there were certain issues, I think, in which they differed.

SCHOENBAUM: Can you be specific on that?

ROSTOW: Yes. I think--I am putting aside whatever Bob McNamara's views may have become on Vietnam--a story which I really don't know enough about and whatever I do know is rather complex. I'm not going to get into that. And he did obviously, as he has now said, change his views in the course of time. But there were certain NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] issues. For example, at one time when we had difficulties with the offsetting of our balance-of-payments pressures arising from the U.S. forces in Germany, Bob was more willing to pull forces out than the Secretary of State was. And the President ultimately got in John McCloy. And this impulse in the Pentagon to pull some forces out was tamed, and the Secretary of State was very much behind it. I think that on the issue of the multilateral nuclear force the Secretary of State was not passionately for it, but he was more for it, let's say, than McNamara. That also got complicated. That changed. People's positions changed through time. But they had certain differences. But on the whole, I thought, down to the time that Bob left and perhaps in the latter part of it, he was ambivalent in difficulties about his views on Vietnam. I don't know.

RICHARD RUSK: I remember my dad's comment when Bob McNamara left government was--to me, he said he felt like he had lost his own right arm. They were that close.

ROSTOW: I really do believe that they had worked. It was really as good, if not better, than the Lovett-Acheson relationship.

RICHARD RUSK: Tom, let me interject an additional question here. Professor Rostow, in your book you made the comment that Lyndon Johnson was primarily advised by Dean Rusk, Robert McNamara, and McGeorge Bundy, at least in that period.

RICHARD RUSK: In that period. And of the three my dad was "first among equals." Do you recall that?

ROSTOW: I finished the book in '72 and have written about ten books since.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you recall why you saw it that way and on what grounds did you make that judgment?

ROSTOW: Well, I just think that President Johnson had an enormous respect, and I may add love, for your father. He really did. When he was up there, he suffered for him when he had to go before the Senate committees and he understood the pain he took in supporting his, President Johnson's, policies. I can't tell you strongly enough how deep that tie and sense of gratitude for his loyalty, integrity, and strength, and wisdom went. I saw a lot of it. But I must report in all candor there was one thing about Dean Rusk that baffled him a little. This would be incomplete if I didn't put it in. That is to say, I believe that Dean Rusk was the only man who quite systematically would hang up before the President of the United States finished a conversation with him. He's so cryptic on the phone. As I say, he felt, I think, as great affection and warmth as any President's ever felt for a Secretary of State. But several time he called me up and he'd say, "He's done it again!"

RICHARD RUSK: I love to hear it. I would call him all the way from Alaska, five thousand miles away. And if I could hold my dad on there for longer than thirty seconds, I was lucky. He just doesn't see the telephone as a tool for communication.

ROSTOW: In any case, he--once or twice he would tell me, "I don't want to call him back and bother him. This is what I wanted to complete. Would you find an occasion to chat about this with him without telling him that--" He didn't want--

RICHARD RUSK: That's a riot! I love to hear that. Incidentally, I want to say two things, just editorial comments. One is, because I am his son, please be as candid with me as you would with anyone. You know, we've come through a lot all these years, and there's nothing that you or anyone else could say that could possibly affect the way that I feel about my father. So please just be as candid as you can. The other thing is--

ROSTOW: I will be.

RICHARD RUSK: The other thing is, we are very much interested in the little anecdotes and the little personal stories. I am especially interested in that in writing a personal biography about my father. So be leisurely about all this and whenever you remember these little things be sure to read them into the tape. That's interesting. Tom, one more follow-up here. And that is, while we're talking about Lyndon Johnson and his relationship with my father, do you recall any of the comments that President Johnson may have made about my dad or any of his personal opinions other than the fact that they had a very close relationship?

ROSTOW: I worked day after day with President Johnson through that period, just as I had worked very closely with President Kennedy in the year I was in the White House with him. I

don't recall any--I know that after he was President Johnson never lost the sense that Dean Rusk had taken great pain and suffering and loss from having stayed with and been so loyal to President Johnson. He was terribly concerned, and I believe took some actions--I don't know what they were--to try to get Dean Rusk back to Georgia and in that post, because there was some trouble there.

RICHARD RUSK: You don't know any of the specifics about that, do you?

ROSTOW: No, I don't know what he did. I knew that he made some telephone calls to people that he knew. But whatever little political capital he had in Georgia, I think he used. But I don't know who the calls were to. I don't want to go an inch beyond what I can vouch for. But I know that he always felt real concerned. And as I have watched the reemergence of your father in the years since President Johnson's death, I have felt that--you know, the ease with which he moves around the country and has gathered respect and all of that--I can tell you that Lyndon Johnson would have been very happy to see that happen.

RICHARD RUSK: I hope you went through that same process.

ROSTOW: Well, you know, in a funny way I had it easier in those days because I went directly back to academic life and began teaching. I began writing books, and so on, and your father had that year in Washington which couldn't have been a very easy year. I mean the year after he was Secretary of State. I think a lot about him because I came to admire him and love him very dearly out of the work together. You work side by side with somebody for eight years, it's like camping out. I don't know whether you fellows do any camping out, but you learn more in ten days camping out than you do in ten years with a fellow who lives next door to you. We were camping out for eight years. So there's really not much anyone could tell me about what John Kennedy was like, or what Dean Rusk was like, or Johnson. You see every side of a man's character under every kind of strain and pressure, etc.

SCHOENBAUM: Can you describe the Kennedy-Rusk relationship, and is there any truth, as far as you know, in [Arthur Meier] Schlesinger's [Jr.] story that Kennedy was going to ask Rusk to resign?

ROSTOW: I have no knowledge of that, but I do have some knowledge of the Kennedy-Rusk relationship, and it's about the following: as you know, Rusk took the view that, as I say somewhere in the book I believe, he had no ego and had total discipline. One the other hand, he was a successor to Thomas Jefferson. He also took the view that the first duty of the Secretary of State was to advise the President. And third, he took the view that it was simply wrong for the post of Secretary of State to sit around the Cabinet table and argue and debate with President's aides. He took the view the President should seek advice from anyone, as wide as he could go: his butler, the fellow shining his shoes. He was very honest about that. But he said, "In the end the Secretary of State should give his advice to the President in private." I can vouch for this. This does not appear in any of the books of [Theodore Chaikin] Sorenson or Schlesinger. Kennedy understood and respected this. And what happened time after time is that we'd have a big meeting and he would say, "Dean, would you stay behind?" I'm not sure he called him Dean. I think he called him Mr. Secretary. Mr. Secretary, yes. He was very formal with him. And I

think he felt that this way--he understood, incidentally. He gave a lot of thought to Dean Rusk, and he understood Dean Rusk's kind of sense that George Marshall should be a kind of model public servant. And he understood the desire of Marshall to keep a sense of distance between himself and the President: not in any question of loyalty or anything like that, but that it should not be a first-name kind of thing. He was very sensitive of this. Kennedy had a--this isn't a sexist phrase--feminine perception of other people's situations, which has not come out in a lot of the writings about him. He sought and got advice of the Secretary of State privately. This I don't think was fully understood. I saw enough of it to know this.

SCHOENBAUM: Were you present at those meetings, or was this alone?

ROSTOW: This was one on one. And that is when the Secretary of State--but when Mac Bundy and I set up the shop, you know, we recommended the President dismantle the whole complicated [Dwight David] Eisenhower machinery and set up this small operation. He told us in the presence of McNamara and [Eugene Victor] Rostow, "Now look, I'm setting this up not to have an alternative to the Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense. I will make no decision without hearing your reviews and giving them great weight. On the other hand, I want to make sure that the options that come to me are not limited to those that are generated by the bureaucracy. And that's the fundamental purpose of the staff: to follow issues through, make sure that I know what the bureaucracy may have decided to wash out, and make sure that the options before me are the widest possible when I make a major decision. But I'll never make a decision with-out--" And then he explicitly said, "I do not want to have this town run the way Franklin [Delano] Roosevelt ran it with overlapping and competing bureaucracies and Cabinet members fighting for the President's ear." And Lyndon Johnson took exactly the same view. In fact, their methods of administration, Kennedy and Johnson, were much closer than anyone's ever really written about.

END OF SIDE 1

BEGINNING OF SIDE 2

SCHOENBAUM: I might ask another question related to that and the bureaucracy. What were the planning meetings of the senior aides in State like? At that time you were, as I remember, Assistant Secretary for Policy Planning at State.

ROSTOW: I was a member of the Policy Planning Council and Counselor in the State Department. Yes. That is a job at the Assistant Secretary level. That's right. Well, that was very nice. Because I don't know whether it started in my time or it started in George [Crews] McGhee's time, but it was a side of Dean Rusk that is not generally understood. He said, "Now I'm going to let you call a planning meeting any time you feel you've got something you'd like to lay before all the chief operating officers of the Department of State, including me." He said, "I

will guarantee at the first meeting that all the Under-secretary level people will come, and the Assistant Secretary level people will be there."

RICHARD RUSK: How big of a group would that be?

ROSTOW: Well, as I think of the table, it may have been, what, eighteen? Twenty? Something like that. There weren't people sitting against the wall, but you pretty well filled up the Secretary of State's conference room, which is big enough to take those people for a morning meeting, essentially the same people. It was a full house. He said, "I'll stick with it." Then he started these things. And I think we picked pretty good ones. I think the first one was based on the Sino-Soviet split. Shortly after I came in we got the full transcript of the meeting in 1960 in Rumania or something, or Bucharest, in which [Nikita Sergeevich] Khrushchev and the Chinese delegate gave three-hour vituperative speeches against one another. It leaked out through some eastern European communist party.

RICHARD RUSK: Would that be a classified piece of information there, in terms of this oral history?

ROSTOW: No, you can use it. It's no big deal. We knew that the split was on. Mose [Lofley] Harvey--I think I even maybe put this in the book--my fellow on my staff for the Soviet Union, eastern Europe, we both knew the split was existing, but we never expected to live long enough to read stuff like this. And we held a meeting on it so that every serious member of the Department got the full flavor of it. And we did others. But what Dean Rusk said, which is what this is about, was "I want these meetings to be meetings in which you forget what the policy of the United States is at this moment, which you must remember every time you draft a cable and talk to the Ambassador, and think unthinkable thoughts. I want this to be a case where we really take up anything that comes to our mind." He gave examples. "Should we recognize China? Should we go for total disarmament? And there must be no leak out of here. But unless we are prepared to let our minds open as wide as they can, there's no point in having a planning process." He encouraged me to do that. So, these were extraordinarily interesting meetings. And we had one very important one that I'm really pleased with, before the Cuban Missile Crisis, in which I presented a paper on--I have the dates in my book. It was called *Khrushchev at Bay*. I developed in the Planning Council the sense we were about to see the biggest act of risk-taking since the War, and described where I thought it would come, etc. In any case, I think it did help prepare the minds of the Department for the Missile Crisis.

RICHARD RUSK: When my dad participated in these open-ended planning meetings and he encouraged you and the other people to be as wide-ranging as possible and think the unthinkable thoughts, did he himself express these unthinkable thoughts and really let his mind range?

ROSTOW: Oh yeah, it would range. But he would do it, not in the form of a sort of a, "Say, I think we ought to do this." He would say, "Now what about this question? What about that question? Is this something we should be thinking about?"

RICHARD RUSK: So he was not as secretive in those meetings as he might have been with other gatherings, huh?

ROSTOW: That's right. He was always highly self-disciplined. And as I think I wrote out at a certain point in the book, he had a clear notion of the priorities of his task, in the first, as the adviser and confidantes of the President. And he felt that in that function, he could not fully inform the whole Department. There had to be some limit. Because he felt the Department leaked and he had to be very careful as the confidante and adviser to the President. He also felt that if people felt they were flying blind because they didn't know everything that was in the Secretary of State's mind, that officers should have no morale problems, only troops in the lines should have morale problems. That's what you're paid to do is to take it on faith that you're going to follow instructions. You may not know all the considerations that the President and Secretary of State have in mind. But in this business he was very open. And I would add, because it is personal and I treasure in it, that when I was a planner in the State Department I felt that one of the things that was very important was that if I ever was going to get anything translated from policy planning into action it had to be done with a policy planner with a very low profile so that the operations people who accepted it would feel they weren't dealing with competitors. But if an idea came out and they carried it out, it was their operation, which is as it should be, incidentally. Similarly, if I had any occasions to talk with the Secretary of State, I felt that the operating member of the Department should not really feel anxiety that the Secretary of State and I were talking about things in their domain. And I think that this is why Dean Rusk did what he did. What he did was, on Saturday afternoons when we would both usually be working--it was the one day of the week we didn't have to get into a dark suit and a white shirt, black shoes, and so on. We'd come in in slacks. Now if I didn't ask to see him on something--I knew how hard pressed he was and I was (unintelligible). He'd ask me to come down, usually late in the afternoon. And we'd have a scotch and talk about things on his mind. I was never under the illusion that he was sharing all his thoughts and everything he discussed with the President. But he knew that he could talk with me in this relaxed way on a Saturday afternoon and it would not stir up sense in the Department that he was getting a planner whispering in the ear things that would affect DOR or NEA [Near Eastern Affairs] or whatever, and it wasn't going to leak anywhere. So I really did serve, to a degree, as a counselor in that role. And I reassured it and hoped it was useful to him.

RICHARD RUSK: If you served in that role as a counselor--and I wasn't aware of that degree of closeness that early in the Department--did he ever really confide in you with his innermost thoughts on any question, not simply policy or detail? My dad, of course, has many friends. But quite a number have said that, yes, they knew Dean Rusk as a friend, and he is a friend, but they really don't know him as a person.

ROSTOW: Well, I felt I came to know him. No, no. I didn't know him at first and he didn't know me at first. And that's one reason why Kennedy wanted me to be the planner at the beginning. But he wanted, wholly understandably, someone he knew well, like George McGhee. Because most of the other offices in the Department were people that Kennedy put there. But we did get to know one another in that first year when I was in the White House. We went through crises together and all that kind of thing. And I think by the end of the year I came over and afterwards--no, I felt that I--I wasn't very old when I was in government in the sixties, but I'd kind of had a wide experience in the war and grew up in a tough school yard and played semi-pro ball, and met all sorts of people. And I'd met people before, and liked them, and had come to

know them, who had a reticence and reserve. And what I found in dealing and watching Dean Rusk in times of strain and crises was that this was a man of very deep, solid motivation and with a lot of understanding of other people's human problems. I just liked him. No, no. It's not that I would claim--you never know another human being fully, of course. But I didn't--

RICHARD RUSK: He was not as private a person as some of his critics alleged him to be.

ROSTOW: No, no, no, no, no. He was a highly disciplined man in a post involving very many complex dimensions. And he was the first officer of the Cabinet and the President's adviser on foreign policy at a very difficult time. There was a lot that came through that we should talk about. We'd talk quite often about the strains in our society generated by the problems of Vietnam and why we, both of us, stood by the positions we did. We'd talk about a lot of things. I remember once he, when after President Kennedy's assassination and there was a problem of Bobby [Robert Francis Kennedy] going--oh, I thought it was Bobby wanting to go, and offered to take over the ambassadorship in Saigon, and so on. And he and I talked about how he mustn't do this. It would be a very great shock for the country and for the family if Bobby were killed. We worried, actually, a good deal about security when he went down to Latin America. There were many, many things, and many human things. But we also had business to contract and we would do it in as businesslike way as we could. But I never felt that I was dealing with a man who was at all mysterious. In fact, one of the first things I ever talked personally to him, after I came over to the State Department in December of '61--we went down in early '62 to the Punte del Este conference. That's a long flight, I can tell you. There I thought that I had really lost any claim initially on my friendship with the Secretary of State. Because he got on the plane. It was a long flight. And he said, "Come on over Walt, we're going to play bridge." And I said, "Mr. Secretary, I don't know how to play bridge." I said, "I was brought up in a home that was--it was a cheerful home--but we didn't play cards. It wasn't the thing to do. We'd better read the Encyclopedia Britannica or go out and play ball." And he said, "Well, you surely can play poker." I never played poker. Maybe I learned blackjack or something, but I--and he took a look at me and I thought, "He's ready to wash me out and get rid of me." In any case on the way down we were working on a speech. We finished that and we were sitting around, not playing cards. We were having a drink. He got to talking about his boyhood in Georgia and the fact that, if I remember correctly--I haven't told this story or thought of it for a long time. If I don't have it right, you correct me. He was delivered by a veterinarian.

RICHARD RUSK: He thought he was, but we got that story straight just this year. It turns out he was not delivered by a veterinarian.

ROSTOW: Well, he thought so anyway. He was describing what it was like down there in the country. I've never been there, so I don't know. He was awful poor when he was a boy. And the changes that have taken place in his own lifetime! And I said to him--and he was just so open and vivid. Well, you know his style when he get rolling on something like that. It's excellent English prose, but it's also colorful. He may pick out a colorful detail, not many. He won't overload it with adjectives or color, but it was extraordinarily vivid evocation of that. And I said, "Mr. Secretary, I think you ought to put that in your speech because nothing is going to make you come alive in your caring about the Alliance for Progress than if you say, 'Now look, this is what I've seen in my lifetime and this is what we all can see--the sort of changes we can see in

Latin America if we all work together.'" And he did that. Did you ever check on the speech he gave at the Second Punte del Este?

RICHARD RUSK: I haven't looked up the text of it, but I understand that he did that and it made quite an impression on the delegates down there.

ROSTOW: It really did. And it was the beginning of, I think, a very close relationship. You've got to understand something. This is very serious, what I'm about to say. The two Presidents, Kennedy and Johnson, were the only two Presidents in the postwar, I think, who viscerally, seriously understood the importance of the developing countries, not merely when there was a crisis where something might happen, or a Grenada, or a Nicaragua, or an Iranian oil crisis or something, but everyday. And Dean Rusk also, out of his history had the same thing. So these two men had a Secretary of State who deeply understood that the world was more than Europe and NATO. They respected what sustained it, but they knew the strategic importance for the U.S. interest, in the narrower sense, of the new economic interest of Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East, and Asia. Now, one effect of that was that I believe that Dean Rusk honestly dealt with his colleagues--what he used to call the foreign minister's trade union--in Latin America in exactly the same way he dealt with foreign ministers in Europe. And he did the same even for poor African countries. This respect for them and their importance to the United States and the world was a very powerful instrument in U.S. foreign policy. It really was. Just as the authenticity of President Johnson's and President Kennedy's day-by-day concern with what happened there as part of the U.S. interest. And I really do think that this is the only Secretary of State we've had since the war. And I've known and liked others. Dean Acheson didn't have it really. He began to get some in the fifties when, after he was out of office and he backed (inaudible) and money proposals, and so on, and foreign aid. But basically he was a man of the Atlantic and Russia with the Japanese kind of honoree, or Europeans as they got richer. George [Wildman] Ball was like that. But Dean Rusk was different. I don't know where it comes from in his history, whether his experience in the CBI [China-Burma-India Theatre] in the second World War, or certainly his Rockefeller Foundation experience would have reinforced it. But I would guess without any knowledge at all that it must have come earlier. But where it comes from--

RICHARD RUSK: The Oxford experience had an effect on him that way. Both his parents were very liberal-minded type of people for Southerners back in those days. And that definitely had an influence.

ROSTOW: Oh, I want to say something about that too. One of the really deep ties between Lyndon Johnson and--or two deep ties between Lyndon Johnson and Dean Rusk are the following. One, they had both seen their part of the country poor and kind of backwaters and then seen them come up in the world. And they knew what it was to feel that they came from part of the world that was a sort of underdog within our continental society. Someone who was in here yesterday wanting a book on the Middle East was telling me that a very good friend of President Johnson's said that he used to lump together Negroes, Texans, and Jews as you know, people who were the underdogs. And certainly, there is no doubt in my mind that this sense of being a friend of the underdog was fundamental as to any understanding of Lyndon Johnson. But, in any case, they had seen that in their own region. They had seen the progress that was possible. The other thing is that they both deeply felt that the nation's requirement--not only the

nation's requirement to face up to the civil rights issue, which they both felt morally, deeply, religiously, whatever. They also felt that it was fundamental for the future of the South, that the civil rights problem had been a great burden on the South.

SCHOENBAUM: I might mention that I have to leave in a minute. But I wanted to ask you one more question. Rich can continue.

ROSTOW: Sure.

SCHOENBAUM: You have a very poignant episode in your book about the only time you saw Dean Rusk, in a big meeting, get emotional. And that was after the Bay of Pigs.

ROSTOW: Bay of Pigs when he pounded on the chair.

SCHOENBAUM: Can you describe that maybe more fully, and what lead up to that, and what the impression of people in the room was when he did that?

ROSTOW: I'll tell you. As I describe in there, Mac Bundy and I split up the crises, so I wasn't involved in Cuba. I was called to a meeting on a lovely April morning in which, I guess, the President's aide, [Chester Victor] Clifton [Jr.], and Mac Bundy, and I were there. And then there was Allen [Welsh] Dulles, Dick Bissell, and [Charles] Pearre Cabell at the end, and the President--and they pulled them, I think, from sailing on the beaches. These three guys down at the end were all good friends of mine from different parts of my life. And I didn't know how these pals of mine had gotten into such a mess and gotten the President--and I didn't have any sense of higher virtue, but I didn't have any sense of guilt or anything. And I volunteered to help in the mop-up, and I guess that's why Kennedy brought me into the meeting. But in any case, the next day, when I had had one day of helping the mop-up, it really had failed. And we were all sitting around to what to do. And I can't describe to you the sense of misery and (inaudible). People had been up all night and they felt guilty at having gotten the President into this, or whatever, and didn't know where to go. My heart went out to everybody. It was really a very difficult moment for the President, too, to have his Cabinet in this kind of situation. But the President was called out. You could check when it was. There was some kind of African president visiting and so he had an appointment. And so he left his group in the office and he went out to talk to this African. Just suddenly, Dean Rusk--he was sitting on the President's right, and so he pounded with his left hand on the President's chair and he said, "We must all focus our minds on this man. How can we help him?" It was just a physical explosion, and emotional explosion, which I never saw before or since out of him. And that lead to another episode which I think I may have described there, which was that when Bobby Kennedy then followed this by saying, "All you bright fellows are the best people in the country and you've gotten the President into this and if we don't do something we'll be regarded as a paper tiger by the Russians." And they all looked up at Bobby and he looked at them. And it was just about as emotional a mess as you could imagine. And I took my life into the Kennedys' hands. Because, as I say, I hadn't--I was in better shape than my pals were. And I said, "Bobby, will you step outside?" And I wanted to tell you this story exactly with the language I used, which I have never done before. I got Bobby outside in the edge of the Rose Garden in the colonnade. I said, "Bobby, when you're knocked on your ass in a schoolyard fight, you don't come up swinging wild. That's when you

really get hurt. You've got to dance 'em round until your head clears. We're going to have plenty of chance to prove we've got hair on our chest. In Berlin, in Southeast Asia, in a lot of other place we're in trouble. But we must not come out and do something wild and make things a lot worse than they are now. Now cool it." And he looked up with those blue eyes. I didn't know what he was going to do: slug me, or what. But, you know, I just felt I was the one fellow around who could do this. He said, "That's constructive." (laughter)

RICHARD RUSK: Well, that was the right language to use with Bobby Kennedy in particular I think.

ROSTOW: I wasn't brought up in a monastery. And this guy was getting out of hand. I had to get him in line. And no one else was in a mood to and felt comfortable doing it, in any case.

SCHOENBAUM: Were Rusk's comments directed toward Bobby primarily too?

ROSTOW: No. No, no, no. I don't think so. It was for all of us. I think he was talking to all his colleagues. Then, when Bobby spoke no one replied. I got him out of the room. And then we came back in and then the next day he said, "I remember what you said yesterday. Now you've got to come up with a--you had some ideas in the campaign, what should our policy towards Cuba be? And at the end of that week--we were taken off the front pages for a day or so by [Charles Andre Joseph Mario] de Gaulle and those fellows in Algeria that were going to land in Paris, and the women came up to the--and all that kind of stuff. And President Kennedy sent me into the White House to monitor out on Sunday night, I guess, when he was out at Glenora and there was nothing much doing. So I wrote out my outline of an overt, explicit, legal Cuba policy as what we could do from A to Z, including, incidentally, offensive missiles. And I called up Bobby and said, "Okay I got it." And we went around the next Monday morning, and I stayed in the shelter that night and played it out for him and then typed it up and circulated it. In any case, I said too much about me and not enough about Dean Rusk.

RICHARD RUSK: No, no. This is all excellent. The point of this oral history project is not only to focus on Dean Rusk, but whatever you fellows can volunteer in terms of our general knowledge.

SCHOENBAUM: I have a meeting to go to. But it's been nice and very helpful. I enjoyed talking to you and I hope to meet you, perhaps next fall when I'm at the LBJ Library, Professor Rostow. It would be a real pleasure to continue this next fall if you have a half hour to spare. I'll contact you, of course, in plenty of time.

ROSTOW: Tom, one of the things I think about what I said--you'll make your own judgments. But I think this business of Dean Rusk as being the only postwar Secretary of State who in his guts sensed the importance to the U.S. interest to the developing world every day--although, you know he was a Rhodes Scholar and proud of his--and understood the European dimensions, etc. That is a major strand in your story.

SCHOENBAUM: Yes. That corroborates what we know of him here. I've just known him for the last two years. but that's a very distinct element even now in his character. Well, thank you very much. Rich will continue. Thank you very much.

ROSTOW: I look forward to seeing you in Austin.

RICHARD RUSK: Professor Rostow, to back up just briefly on a minor point: you were at Punta del Este with my dad. Do you specifically recall what the reaction was when he gave his speech and did bring in these stories and anecdotes about his boyhood in Georgia and having seen that part of the world change in the fashion that it did?

ROSTOW: I don't think the foreign ministers of Latin America up to that point had a very good fix on Dean Rusk. I think they didn't know who he was and dealt with them correctly. I guess he'd been to the first Punta del Este meeting also. Although Doug [Clarence Douglas] Dillon, I think, probably was the leading oar then. I wasn't even at it, so I don't know.

RICHARD RUSK: You missed the first meeting?

ROSTOW: He was not at the first one? That's a question I'm asking, not a statement.

RICHARD RUSK: My dad? I think he went to both meetings, but I'm not sure.

ROSTOW: Well, I would have thought so, but in any case I think that the economic stuff--I think this was going to be a tougher meeting, in a sense, because it wasn't a question of U.S. money, it was a question of throwing Cuba out of the club and taking some action of collective security in the hemisphere that would involve, for these foreign ministers, some rather difficult domestic political problems. I think that they probably saw Rusk as the voice of the United States who might be putting some propositions to them that they'd have to cope with which weren't going to be all that much fun in their domestic politics. Because most of them had volatile left wings and throwing Cuba out, and so on, was difficult, etc. And then to have him suddenly come through with this thing with absolute authenticity, it carried. It wasn't at all a piece of cosmetic rhetoric. I think they looked at him for the first time as a human being and in a totally new way. Now I think he always did have, from that time forward, a great deal of respect and friendship, authentic friendship, with the foreign ministers of Latin America. I think it began at that time. That leads me to a nice anecdote.

I went to another conference with him at Rio. I guess this was of the foreign ministers (unintelligible) for the inter-American ECOSOC [Economic and Social Council] meeting, or whatever. And we went to a soccer game together. It was a Soviet team and a Brazilian team. I think Pele [Edson Arantes do Nascimento] played for the Brazilians and this dynamo was on the Soviet team. And it was one of the quickest stand-up comic remarks I've ever heard made by a public figure. The Brazilian goaltender kicked the ball on a penalty. He had a penalty kick. He would kick it away without everyone crowding in around him. The Soviet fellow for them lined up some distance from the goal and he was going to kick it out. And he kicked it as hard as he could but it didn't--

END OF SIDE 2

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