

Dean Rusk Oral History Collection
Rusk KKK KKK: Part 2 of 2
Dean Rusk interviewed by Richard Rusk and Thomas J. Schoenbaum
1986 April

The complete interview also includes Rusk JJJ JJJ: Part 1.

DEAN RUSK: Well, sometimes temper was put into his mind in situations where the reports are inaccurate. For example, it is commonly reported that John F. Kennedy was angry that the missiles had not been taken out of Turkey before the Cuban Missile Crisis. Well, now--

RICHARD RUSK: That we have.

DEAN RUSK: You have that in detail on other tapes. Okay. Well, now Kennedy was not furious about that because he knew the entire background. He knew the story. I had kept him informed. Some of these other guys around him had not been informed because my talks with the Turks on that were extremely confidential. But I think there were times when he was supposed to be angry when he wasn't all that angry.

RICHARD RUSK: You tell a cute little anecdote about Caroline [Bouvier Kennedy]. She asked you about the situation in Yemen as a five-year-old.

DEAN RUSK: Well, I went in to see the President one morning. And the President apparently had not finished his breakfast and dressing. And as I was sitting there waiting, little Caroline came out from behind the screen at the end of the room and came up to me and said, "Mr. Secretary, what is the situation in the Yemen today?" And--

RICHARD RUSK: Caroline was five.

DEAN RUSK: She was about five or four. Then I heard a little tittering behind the screen and John F. Kennedy was back there. He had put her up to it. (laughter)

RICHARD RUSK: That's funny.

SCHOENBAUM: Yeah.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you have any other family stories involving the children or the Kennedy clan?

DEAN RUSK: No, I saw many evidences of his affection for his wife and children. He was very proud of Jacqueline [Bouvier Kennedy] and thoroughly enjoyed his children. They were in and out of the Oval Office quite frequently. And there are some wonderful pictures of little John [Fitzgerald Kennedy, Jr.] hiding under Kennedy's desk. No, that was--

SCHOENBAUM: And those were genuine. Those weren't just staged pictures for PR [Public Relations] purposes?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, no, no, no, no. Sometimes the White House photographer would catch some of these informal kinds of situations. But, Kennedy himself was not personally interested in the arts. But he was very proud of Jacqueline and pleased with her interests in the arts. And he was very proud of the job she did in leading a television crew around for a tour of the White House. Jacqueline explained what the White House was all about, talking in an interesting fashion about the different rooms, some of the paintings and things of that sort.

SCHOENBAUM: But he was not interested in the arts?

DEAN RUSK: I remember once I had to see him urgently. And I went over there. And he was over in the mansion. So I had to call for him to come to the office so we could talk about whatever it was. And when he came into the Oval Office he said, "Thanks for calling me. I was up to here [drawing his hand across his throat] in art!" Oh, dear.

RICHARD RUSK: Let me read you a little comment from--

DEAN RUSK: Well, Luther [Hartwell] Hodges [Jr.] had been governor of North Carolina I believe. And let's see. Orville [Lothrop] Freeman had been governor of Minnesota. So there were some in the Cabinet who had had that kind of electoral, political experience. The interesting thing to me is that so many of Kennedy's Cabinet were strangers to him.

RICHARD RUSK: That's right.

DEAN RUSK: He had not really known several of us before he had asked us to serve. And that was a result of a systematic, so-called talent search that President-elect Kennedy laid on, with [Robert] Sargent Shriver sort of heading the talent search team. But he didn't fill his Cabinets with old cronies. Now this may surprise you. Kennedy spoke to me about whether or not he should name Bobby [Robert Francis Kennedy] as Attorney General. And I told him that he should be relaxed about making that appointment, one way or the other. That being President was a very lonely job. And that if he wanted somebody in his official family whom he really knew and could trust and rely upon and so forth, that if he wanted his brother as Attorney General, he should go ahead and name him. But there are others who claim that they opposed Bobby Kennedy's nomination. And--

RICHARD RUSK: In later years you probably wished that you had opposed it.

DEAN RUSK: But John F. Kennedy did speak to me about it. And I tried to relax him on the point one way or the other.

RICHARD RUSK: Right. Did that Kennedy team deserve the high reputation they had as being all that sharp and brilliant? Were they any better as a group than the group with Harry Truman?

DEAN RUSK: Well, this notion that [David] Halberstam put forward, the "best and the brightest," was not the way we looked upon our situation at the time. We thought we did have a good team. And we did have a good team. But the Kennedy years were years of crisis. There was nothing about Camelot during those years. And Kennedy would have been the first to kick the sentiment of Camelot right out of the window. He had his feet on the ground. He was skeptical about such sentimentality. So a lot of that Camelot literature, then later the anti-Camelot literature just didn't have much to do with the man I knew as John F. Kennedy. Those were years of crisis. Those were serious years, after all: the Bay of Pigs, the Berlin Crisis, the Cuban Missile Crisis, things like that. We didn't look upon ourselves in any sense as the "best and the brightest".

SCHOENBAUM: Right. From 1961 on it's amazing when you look at the rat-a-tat-tat of crisis, one right after another. In the first few months of '61 makes periods like today seem really quiet.

DEAN RUSK: Well, I've said to a number of young people when they have expressed their concerns about problems in the world today, I remind them of a little story about George [Catlett] Marshall during the Berlin blockade of 1948, which was one heck of a crisis itself. One of his colleagues said to Marshall, "Mr. Secretary, how can you be so calm in the midst of so serious a crisis?" And he said, "I've seen it worse." Now, when one looks around the world today, I just have to say that I have seen it worse. Because we have had some very serious and dangerous crises in the past that do not have a counterpart in the world scene at the moment. And hopefully it can stay that way.

SCHOENBAUM: This isn't really about Kennedy, but about Dean Rusk. The story about after you came here to Georgia when Georgians would call you Mr. Secretary you deflected that remark.

DEAN RUSK: Yes, I've asked my friends here in Georgia not to call me Mr. Secretary because that makes me feel that I'm out on parole. I attach great importance to being a private citizen again. I'm not out on parole to anybody: the Senate Foreign Relations Committee or anybody else. I greatly value recapturing all of my first amendment rights, including the right of silence. So, well, there's such exhilaration about getting away from that kind of responsibility. I told you about the Nixon inauguration.

RICHARD RUSK: That's right.

DEAN RUSK: Now there may be some people who are trying desperately to hang on to such jobs. But that has not been my experience. The relief of responsibility is for most people a very welcomed change in their lives.

RICHARD RUSK: Yes, but is it not true that John Kennedy enjoyed being President? He seemed as vital and as vigorous in '63 as he did in '61. It seemed like he enjoyed himself. You didn't hear Kennedy talk about the burdens of the White House.

DEAN RUSK: Oh, I think that he enjoyed it. But also he was not a complainer. He wouldn't indulge in self-pity on a job like that. He was not a man to hold his head in his hands publicly

and say, "Oh, my God. 'Isn't this awful.'" That was not his sense of what was required of a President.

SCHOENBAUM: One of the things about Kennedy is that he markedly grew in the office. And I don't think that's been true of some of our Presidents. I don't have a sense that, to give you a few examples, certainly [James Earl] Carter [Jr.] and Nixon did not grow in office. But Kennedy had a sense that if he was inexperienced in the beginning, and he had some flaws, that he really just blossomed to the day of final tragedy. Did you see that in him too?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I happen to believe that the office itself tends to do that to people. I start from the assumption that no one begins by being fully qualified to be President. The question is whether they have the material to let the office make a good President out of them. This is dramatically demonstrated by Harry [S] Truman. And I think Kennedy was one of those who grew with the office.

RICHARD RUSK: You saw changes in him, say, from '63 as contrasted with '61?

DEAN RUSK: Well, it's hard to spell those out quite frankly. You can't push me too far on that. But you see, one thing that a President has to get used to is the utter complexity of the problems that come to his desk. A President almost never gets a question which has a good answer, an easy answer. Those are all taken care of down the line. The President typically only gets those questions which do not have a good answer. And he is having to decide which among the less desirable answers he should embrace. And that puts a very heavy burden on a President.

SCHOENBAUM: Was he more decisive, more confident in 1963? Did he run better meetings?

DEAN RUSK: In '63 than he had been in '61? Oh, I think so. I think so. Well, he got to know members of the administration. We learned how to work together as a team. There was very little feuding among members of the Cabinet during his administration, and so I think he developed momentum. Had he lived and run again in '64 I think he would have been elected by a substantial majority and might have had something close to what he would think of as a mandate after '64.

SCHOENBAUM: At any time before he was assassinated, were you rethinking your agreement with him to get out? Did it cross your mind that, "Well, maybe I will stay another few months or few years into the new term if he wants me?"

DEAN RUSK: No, not really. As a matter of fact, in '63 I went to him and told him that if he would like to get a fresh start on my job in preparation for the election of '64 he should feel free to do so. And he told me not to bring that up again.

SCHOENBAUM: Is that when he said, "I like your guts."?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, I think you yourself said that John Kennedy was a supremely confident man. There weren't any raging insecurities that he had to contend with. Do you care to elaborate on that?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I don't think that he had the kind of personal sense of insecurity that would lead him to irrational thought or conduct. He didn't have to compensate for any private sense of insecurity. But you know when most decisions in the foreign policy field have to be made in the conditional mood, perhaps, if we are fortunate, if things work out the way we hope. You can never be absolutely certain that the results will be as you expect them or hope that they would be. And therefore a President has to recognize that the world is not his oyster, that these funny foreigners just won't act as he would hope they would act many times and that elements of disappointment and frustration are built into the very structure of our relations with other nations because none of them simply snap their heels and salute when we speak. And a President has to accustom himself to that. I think that is one point on which new Presidents have to learn, of the enormous resources that he has at his disposal in the professional Foreign Service. Because at the beginning a new President, and people around him, will be pretty skeptical about these professionals, Foreign Service officers. But the more experienced a President gets the more appreciation he has for this professional Foreign Service. Kennedy came over from the White House once to meet with the officers of the Department of State to make a speech to them about his appreciation of their service. And I remember one phrase he used, "I love you," that kind of thing, because there had been gossip about his derogatory remarks about the State Department. And so he came over and made a special visit with the office of the Department of State to express his appreciation.

SCHOENBAUM: What date would that have been?

DEAN RUSK: That would have been in early '63, I think. You see, he used to hold his press conferences in the Department of State. He'd drive into the basement and there would usually be a group of State Department people down there who could watch him come in and applaud when he came in. And then he'd go up to a little room adjacent to the auditorium where the press conferences are held and sit there and comb his hair and get ready for the appearance. And then sometimes after the press conference he would drop by my office and we'd talk about various things.

SCHOENBAUM: The televised conferences were held there?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. But typically he would hold his press conferences in the Department of State. That changed to the White House later on, but we had the auditorium and facilities and so forth.

RICHARD RUSK: People have called John Kennedy a pragmatist and people around him as being pragmatists. Some have wondered whether or not he really had an overall framework. Chester [Bliss] Bowles wrote a very interesting memo, in page 69 of another favorite of your books. This is Halberstam's. Let me just read from it for a minute. Warren [L.] Cohen also made the comment in his biography of you, Pop, called *Dean Rusk*, that you at times were a bit

uncomfortable with this sort of hard-headed, cold, pragmatic attitude of some of Kennedy's people.

SCHOENBAUM: "Without morality" is the accusation.

RICHARD RUSK: Well, he just wonders: a bit too pragmatic. Do you have anything to say along those lines? Was that a problem?

DEAN RUSK: Well I think it's fair to say that John F. Kennedy was skeptical about sweeping generalizations. For example, during the [Dwight David] Eisenhower administration they had produced a very thick book on American National Security Laws.

RICHARD RUSK: That we have. That we have.

DEAN RUSK: All right. Well now, Kennedy did not approve the revision of that that was prepared for him, nor did I. Because he wanted to know what these generalizations meant tomorrow morning at nine o'clock in terms of actual decisions. I personally believe that moral considerations are necessarily a part of public life and political decisions. When I went to the Department of State, I didn't find in my desk drawer or in the clothes closet something called the "state" that I was supposed to be secretary of. To me the concept of the state is a necessary legal fiction. I found individuals who had been set aside by the Constitution and our laws to act for all of us in certain respects. And those individuals, as far as I'm concerned, are subject to basic moral considerations. Now they don't express them very often because they don't wear these things on their sleeves. And I'm glad that that is so, because you'd soon get into a lot of pretense, and I don't care for that. But I think Kennedy had his own sense of moral values as far as public policy is concerned. But he also understood that in a nation of more than 160 nations, in a community of more than 160 nations, those are not necessarily shared by everybody. The problem is to work out relations with those who have quite different moral values. For example, if you take a look at [Karl] Marxist- [Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov] Leninism you get the sense that within that system anything that supports the world revolution is moral; anyone who tries to stand in the way of the world revolution is an aggressor. And so there you have a wholly different set of moral assumptions on which people operate. And Kennedy was very much aware of these differences and these distinctions and recognized that at the end of the day you've still got to find a way to live with people who have very different views on such questions.

RICHARD RUSK: Yeah. If he was a very skeptical man, if you're skeptical about too many things, if you don't necessarily believe anything, is it not true that you'd have a hard time defining what you believe in? Is it not true that you had some trouble getting across to the members of that administration the importance of such concepts as international law, the role of the United Nations, the role of diplomacy? Is it not true that Cohen was right when he suggested you were uncomfortable at times with what he called the "cool pragmatism of the Kennedy administration"?

DEAN RUSK: Well there were times when there--of course there was a kind of educational job that I had to take on with some of the people around Kennedy.

RICHARD RUSK: What about John Kennedy himself?

DEAN RUSK: But--and perhaps--any Secretary of State has got a bit of a job in helping to educate a new President. Because, you see, a President is faced with things that he hasn't had to face before, and some learning on the job is a part of it. You see, Kennedy had around him people that for the most part had never negotiated anything with a foreign government that had never made a decision involving foreign affairs, who had never held their feet to the fire of responsibility and taken their lumps for the results. And I at least had had a good deal of experience with negotiation, with decisions, and with the importance of public decisions because of their effect on so many other people. And so there was a period in which I had some educating to do, particularly in terms of people around Kennedy. Now, McGeorge Bundy understood these things because he had studied them very carefully and had thought a lot about them. And that was not a problem there, but there were some others who had to be educated.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you care to flesh that out with either names or issues of policy?

DEAN RUSK: Well, for example, Arthur [Meier] Schlesinger [Jr.] got a bee in his bonnet about the need for the Italian government to make a move to the left.

RICHARD RUSK: That we have.

DEAN RUSK: Well there's a--

RICHARD RUSK: He's over in the East Wing anyway, so it didn't matter!

DEAN RUSK: That was a good example. My view was that the Italians were grown men and women and that they could make such decisions for themselves and we shouldn't try to put pressure on them to do something when the issues were clearly before the Italians and they could make their own decisions on that.

RICHARD RUSK: Did Bowles' memo raise a relevant point? How could a man with a basic moral reference point have allowed the Bay of Pigs to go ahead?

DEAN RUSK: Well we learned a lot in the Bay of Pigs. Kennedy did himself. For example, any consideration of international law was just brushed aside. Had Kennedy looked hard at the international law implications of the Bay of Pigs, it might have caused him to be more cautious about it.

SCHOENBAUM: Did you tell him? Did you speak those words to Kennedy?

DEAN RUSK: I talked to Kennedy about the international law problems that were involved.

SCHOENBAUM: After the fact?

DEAN RUSK: No before the fact.

SCHOENBAUM: Before the fact? But he brushed those aside?

DEAN RUSK: But they were just more or less brushed aside. You see, one thing that was very much in Kennedy's mind about this Cuban brigade that had been training in Central America was if you did not let them go ashore in Cuba, what in the dickens would you do with the brigade? If you disbanded it you would have several thousand angry dissident Cubans wandering around beating your brains out. Kennedy--that was a problem that was very much on Kennedy's mind.

SCHOENBAUM: So that was in a private conversation that you brought up these international law points?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. Right. I've never made fully public my own personal conversations with Kennedy on that subject.

SCHOENBAUM: Yeah.

RICHARD RUSK: And you're not about to do so now, I suppose.

DEAN RUSK: Well I've told you the incident with [Harold] MacMillan at the airport in England. I'm not sure you ought to use that.

SCHOENBAUM: Do we have that on tape?

RICHARD RUSK: Yeah. That's on tape. Pop, isn't it true that John Kennedy was far more interested and paid a lot more attention to foreign affairs than he did domestic?

DEAN RUSK: I suppose that one could make that judgment looking back over the Kennedy administration. But he had no choice. After all, [Nikita Sergeevich] Khrushchev threw a harsh ultimatum at him on Berlin in June 1961 at the very beginning of the Kennedy administration. And then came the Cuban Missile Crisis and our attempt to improve our relations with the nonaligned countries and things like that, so that the world situation required that Kennedy pay a lot of attention to foreign policy. And I think his interest in domestic policy, in effect, took second place to his concern about foreign affairs. He did put in a tax cut in his administration, for example, and we did have the very important trade bill, and some other things. But he was a little cautious on things like civil rights, although we started the civil rights legislation, particularly in public accommodations and things of that sort. But it was not until Lyndon [Baines] Johnson arrived on the scene that we put real drive behind those legislations.

RICHARD RUSK: Right. Which relates to the question about Kennedy's popularity? And we tend to overlook the fact that by the fall of 1963 he was not really riding high in the public opinion polls. A lot of his programs had sort of bogged down in the Congress. He wasn't regarded as a very successful President with the Congress. He valued your relationships with the Congress, however.

DEAN RUSK: Well we got from the Congress the support we needed in foreign affairs. We were pretty much on our own as far as getting foreign aid legislation through the Congress. Both

President Kennedy and President Johnson were a little careful about expending their political capital in support of foreign aid.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you ever counsel or advise Kennedy on how he should operate with the Congress, either in a general way or on specific legislation?

DEAN RUSK: Not really, because he himself had been a Congressman and a Senator and it was really not up to me to try to teach him how to suck eggs on things like that. So I didn't try to lecture him on that. And on the whole he had pretty good relations with the Congress.

RICHARD RUSK: He did?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. The Congressmen liked him; the Senators liked him. I mean, we had some Republican Senators in foreign affairs at the White House who found that that was their first experience in being in the White House. They had not been invited during the Eisenhower Administration, the Republican Eisenhower Administration. And I found that somewhat amusing that some of the Republican senators came to the White House for the first time during the Kennedy years.

SCHOENBAUM: Do we have on tape that story about MacMillan that you brought up?

DEAN RUSK: Well I could repeat it here. Having to do with the Bay of Pigs, Kennedy was on the visit to London. Before departing we had dinner out at Checkers, the Prime Minister's country place. We drove from there to the London airport. By the time we got to the airport, Mr. MacMillan was about three sheets to the wind with highballs. And at the airport he came up to me and put his arm around me and said, "Rusk, I've got to know you better. Jack tells me that you were opposed to the Bay of Pigs, but that when it happened you acted as though you'd done it yourself." He said, "I've got to know you better." (laughter)

SCHOENBAUM: That's a great story.

DEAN RUSK: So apparently Kennedy had told MacMillan that I had opposed the Bay of Pigs privately. But I never expressed my differences with Kennedy on the Bay of Pigs publicly because I thought a President is entitled to have the support of his own administration.

RICHARD RUSK: Your security agent. Gus [P.] Peleuses, volunteered the comment that he thought you were far more influential with President Kennedy than many of these historic accounts have given you credit for, in the sense that Gus, as your agent, would notice that it was always you that Kennedy was pulling aside, talking with privately, whether it be at social gatherings or dinners at the White House. It wasn't George [Wildman] Ball; it wasn't this person or that person; it was you that he seemed to spend more time with, often in little ways. i

DEAN RUSK: Well I think there's something to that. Also I had another habit: When there were meetings of the Cabinet or the National Security Council with thirty people sitting around the wall, I would not debate the President because I knew I'd read about that in the *Washington Post* or the *New York Times* the next morning. So what I would often do would be to talk to the

President ahead of time or pass him a little note saying, "Please don't decide this now. Let me talk to you about it in the Oval Office." And so, I would typically have my debates with him privately rather than with a lot of people listening in.

SCHOENBAUM: There were some debates, then, between Dean Rusk and JFK?

DEAN RUSK: Oh sure. Oh sure.

RICHARD RUSK: You don't care to get into any of those?

SCHOENBAUM: Any others besides the Bay of Pigs that maybe you swung him around on?

DEAN RUSK: Well I had remembered from the Bay of Pigs that I perhaps had not met my full obligation to him by developing a consensus among his senior advisers, such as the Secretary of Defense, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, McGeorge Bundy, about the Bay of Pigs. So during the Cuban Missile Crisis, I worked actively to build up a consensus to use the quarantine method rather than striking Cuba or to do nothing. And that consensus included Bob [Robert Strange] McNamara and Bobby Kennedy, and to some extent John F. Kennedy himself. But when we went into that final Saturday morning meeting when he had to decide what he was going to do, we were able to present him a consensus, which he already, I think, had known about and was ready to accept.

SCHOENBAUM: And you went over this privately with him, just one on one?

DEAN RUSK: But rather briefly because I didn't think it was up to me privately to try to preempt his judgment. He ought to hear from anybody else around the table. But I remember on that Saturday morning he looked across the table to Lyndon Johnson and said, "Mr. Vice President, do you have any comments on this?" And he said, "Mr. President, you have the advice of your Secretary of State and your Secretary of Defense. I would take it." And that was about all that Lyndon Johnson said.

SCHOENBAUM: He ignored international law, as well as your advice, with respect to the Bay of Pigs. Was he more attuned after that to international law? Did he learn his lesson?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, international law played a major part in the Cuban Missile Crisis.

SCHOENBAUM: Yeah. We have that. But was Kennedy--

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SCHOENBAUM: After the Bay of Pigs, when he had ignored international law, or advice based on international law, did he in subsequent discussions pay more attention to international law?

DEAN RUSK: Well after the Bay of Pigs, Kennedy was much more receptive to considerations of international law, because I think he recognized that the United States has a major national interest in a world of law because of our interests all over the world and our presence in so many parts of the world, that that is one of the fundamental national interests that need to be taken carefully into account when we decide what to do. So I think he was more receptive for the rest of his administration to considerations of international law. Also he came to recognize that international law plays a major part in framing the attitude of other governments toward what we have in mind to do. One of the mistakes that the British, the French, and the Israelis made in the Suez affair in the mid-fifties was that they did not present a theory of the case to the world which one could support. And so I think Kennedy came to appreciate the role of international law.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, I'm all done on questions. Is there anything else you want to say about John Kennedy? Some final comments about him?

DEAN RUSK: Well maybe I've already referred to this, but one of the reasons why John F. Kennedy was very effective on televised news conferences was that he worked on it. He would have serious sessions with half a dozen of us and we'd spend up to three hours ahead of time trying to anticipate what the questions might be. And Pierre [Emil George] Salinger, roaming around among the press corps, could pick up a good many questions that the reporters had on their minds. And so we would go over these anticipated questions and talk with him briefly about what kind of reply he should make. Now, in that regard by the way, my colleagues in the State Department, in preparing a briefing book for me on these issues, would very often recommend that the President simply say, "No comment." And I remember the President, when he heard a few of these things, said, "Now wait a minute. Wait a minute. I've got a press conference. I'm going to get questions. I've got to have some answers. I can't just stand there and say, 'No comment' to a lot of questions." And he helped teach the State Department a lesson on that kind of thing. But he was loaded for bear when he went into a press conference. Very rarely did he get a question at a press conference that we had not anticipated, that he did not have a chance to think about. I don't know to what extent other Presidents have done that. Lyndon Johnson did some of that, but not as intensively as John F. Kennedy did.

RICHARD RUSK: Who was the funniest President you ever served? Would that have been Kennedy?

DEAN RUSK: The most amusing?

RICHARD RUSK: Yeah.

DEAN RUSK: I think of the three Presidents I've served under, Kennedy was perhaps the most amusing, with his sardonic wit and his off-hand remarks. He--I think I've told you that when we met on that Saturday morning prior to his television speech to make the final decision on what action we would take on the Cuban Missiles, he came in and joined us. We all rose. And then he

looked around the table and said, "Well gentlemen, today we're going to earn our pay." (laughter)
And he was constantly making little remarks that tended to relax the atmosphere a bit.

SCHOENBAUM: Do you want to put on tape your story about the Nixon inauguration?

DEAN RUSK: I think I've put that on another tape. But, Virginia [Foisie Rusk] and I were invited to the Nixon inauguration, but we'd been through that drill before and we had decided to stay at home and watch it on television. And I recall very vividly that the moment Richard Nixon finished his oath of office, I just floated like a balloon. It wasn't my baby anymore. If the world burned up, it wasn't my fault anymore. And that sense of exhilaration at not having that responsibility is hard to describe. Though some months later I mentioned that to Lady Bird [Claudia Alta Taylor] Johnson, and she said, "That's very interesting, because I was sitting next to Lyndon there on the platform. At that same moment he audibly groaned with relief." But to shed that kind of responsibility is itself a very special experience.

SCHOENBAUM: Great tape. Great tape.

END OF SIDE 2

