SCHOENBAUM: --About the fifties and Korea and the Korean War. But, I wanted to ask you first of all about something I should have asked last time about, the so-called Manchukuo speech that caused quite a stir in the 1950s.

DEAN RUSK: Yes. I spoke to a dinner meeting in New York at the top of the Waldorf. There were about 400 people there. I think the chairman of the dinner was Henry [Robinson] Luce. Senator Paul [Howard] Douglas was also on the program. And at that dinner I retaliated a bit for some of the very bad language which the Chinese had been using against us. And that reference to The People's Republic as being a Chinese Manchukuo was more or less as a taunt. It was not a statement of what I thought the real facts were. This was a part of the rhetorical exchanges going on chiefly by Peking because when they seized power they seemed to select the United States to be Enemy Number One. They were very harsh on Americans in China. They seized some of our consular officers--beat one of them up, Anhus [Lorin] Ward, pretty badly. Then they set out to erase any traces of the century of friendship between the American and Chinese people. For example, they charged that the Peking Union Medical College, a fine medical center built there by the Rockefeller Foundation, was simply a device to permit American doctors to practice vivisection on Chinese. So they pursued that very hostile anti-American line, and once in a blue moon, we would simply talk back to them and that is about what that was. It was rhetorical fluff rather than a factual analysis of the situation.

SCHOENBAUM: But people thought it was a signal of a basic change in our policy?

DEAN RUSK: Well, there was that thought expressed at that time by some of the news media and some others. But all I did was to say in short words and short sentences what we had been saying in much longer and convoluted sentences before that. Dean [Goooderham] Acheson and I went over my speech afterwards and he fully agreed that what I had said was what we had been saying in somewhat less direct fashion all along. But the timing was unfortunate because he was coming up for testimony before the [Douglas] MacArthur hearings, and my speech probably added some additional questions to what he would be heckled with. But it had some amusing aspects. Friends told me that David Lawrence and Arthur Krock were having lunch the next day at the Metropolitan Club, and they began to talk about my speech, and they got mad at each other and actually rose there at the table with their fists balled up and friends had to come over and calm them down. Well when each one of them went back to write his piece about the speech, did they attack each other? Not at all. Each one attacked me from the opposite direction. And that is the way that works, you see.

There was another little aspect of it, that is that this was looked upon by some of the people around Harry Truman as a political embarrassment, and so somebody over in the White House sent over a thing saying that my speeches thereafter would have to be cleared by White House
staff. Well, I took the view that as Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, I was the clearance officer. And so I just stopped making speeches for a while because I wasn't going to send my stuff over for some White House staff person to look at something he didn't know anything about.

SCHOENBAUM: As Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs at that time, you didn't have to clear anything with the Secretary?

DEAN RUSK: No, there was a delegation still in operation in those days, and if anybody wanted to clear something with the Secretary about Far Eastern matters, he would send it to me for clearance.

SCHOENBAUM: Did Secretary Acheson get some hostile questions or did he remark?

DEAN RUSK: I don't think so. It really blew over very fast. But there was enough in the paper about it so that my older son David [Patrick Rusk], who was very young in those days, said to me one evening when I came home, "Pop, are you going to get fired?"

SCHOENBAUM: Let's turn to the Korean War. I understand that you were one of the first officials--first high officials anyway--to get the news that the North had invaded the South.

DEAN RUSK: Well actually, on the evening in which the invasion started, my wife [Virginia Foisie Rusk] and I were having dinner at Joe [Joseph Wright] Alsop's house; and present there were Justice Felix Frankfurter and Frank [C.] Pace, Secretary of the Army, and his wife [Margaret Morris Janney]. During dinner a message came in to me from the State Department that we had had a telegram in from our ambassador out there saying that the North Koreans were invading South Korea on a broad front. And so, Frank Pace and I left the dinner to go back to our offices to see what was going on and to do what seemed to be necessary, leaving the other guests there at the dinner to speculate rather wildly on what was happening and why we had left. But I think our ambassador out there, [John J. Muccio], rendered a great service by properly appreciating the situation immediately and informing Washington, whereas some others were inclined to look upon this as just some more border incidents. Mr. John Foster Dulles was in Tokyo at that time; and he came back after a few days sort of shaking his head because the attack occurred on a Sunday and it was not until the following Tuesday that MacArthur's headquarters accepted it as anything other than border incidents.

SCHOENBAUM: MacArthur was still in Tokyo at that time?

DEAN RUSK: Right.

SCHOENBAUM: So the original notification came in the form of a cable from our Embassy in Seoul?

DEAN RUSK: From our ambassador in Seoul. Well then I, of course, notified Dean Acheson and he notified President Truman. But it was agreed immediately that we would call an emergency meeting of the U.N. [United Nations] Security Council. That meeting occurred on the
Sunday, and the Security Council passed a resolution calling on the two sides to stop the fighting and so forth. But that made no difference to the North Koreans. Then, I think the following day, the Security Council passed a resolution asking member of the U.N. to give help to the Republic of Korea, and that was a very important resolution. Now the Soviets were not in the Security Council at that moment. They had withdrawn earlier over the issue of the Chinese seat. And somewhat to our surprise, the Soviet Ambassador did not come back into the Security Council so that he could veto those resolutions on Korea. So then, in a sense, the U.N. flag that flew over the allied effort in Korea was an accident. Many years later I spoke to a high ranking Soviet official about why it was that their ambassador, even without instructions, did not go back into the Security Council to exercise the veto. And the next time I saw this man he said he had looked it up and found that Joseph [Iosif Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili] Stalin personally had telephoned his ambassador to the United Nations and told him not to return to the Security Council; that the Chinese was [sic] apparently more important to Stalin than whatever might happen in the Security Council about Korea.

Then when President Truman decided to put some troops in there, there was a considerable feeling of elation around the United Nations, and indeed cross the country here. People at the United Nations seemed to feel, "Well at last the U.N. has demonstrated that it is going to amount to something. This is great stuff." At the beginning, the decision to put American troops in to oppose the North Koreans was very well received and very popular.

Now I was with President Truman when he met with Congressional leaders on this matter, about a day after the attack had begun. And they met at the White House--about 25 or 30 of them--and there was unanimous support for what Truman was doing. Also, there was full agreement that the President should proceed on the basis of his Presidential powers, reinforced by the resolutions of the U.N. Security Council, and should not take the time to come to Congress for a resolution. Well, a few days later Senator Robert [Alphonso] Taft, who had not been present at that meeting with Truman, got up in the Senate and said, "I support what the President is doing, but I strongly object to his doing it without coming to Congress." So, many years later, Lyndon [Baines] Johnson remembered that; and as soon as he became President told us that if we stayed in Vietnam or had to do more in Vietnam, we would have to go to Congress. And that was the real origin of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution.

But anyhow, there was agreement with the Congressional leaders at the outbreak of the Korean War that Truman would proceed on the basis of Presidential powers, reinforced by the U.N. Security Council resolutions. At the beginning, President Truman's first decision was to employ U.S. Air Force to try to intercept some of these North Koreans coming down the trail. But that didn't work and it soon became apparent that ground forces would be needed. I remember there was a column of about eighty tanks coming down from North Korea toward Seoul, the capital of South Korea, and one high ranking Air Force officer said, "Turn the Air Force loose and we will stop those tanks." Well, I think we did, and I think they got one of them. I think the rest of them rolled into Seoul. But MacArthur soon appreciated that you couldn't stop it with just air and naval action, that you would have to put some ground troops in. So on about the third day, President Truman authorized the intrusion of ground forces on to the Korean peninsula. And so we sent some poor devils who had been on garrison duty in Japan without hard field training and that sort of thing -- just simply quickly flew them over and put them onto the battlefield.
Then a very fortunate thing occurred from our point of view. When a relative handful of American forces turned up on the battlefield, the North Koreans halted for a period of about ten days, presumably I suppose to go back to Pyongyang and Moscow and maybe Peking to consult about the meaning of this and what they should do about it. Well, during that pause it became possible for us to reinforce further. If the North Koreans had just kept coming, they would have occupied the entire peninsula. We could not have gotten enough over there in time to stop the onslaught. You see, the South Korean forces had not completed their training and equipment cycle at the time of the attack. A decision had been made to build up the South Korean forces significantly because of the withdrawal of the last regimental combat team in 1949. But they were going through individual, and company, and maybe battalion training, but they had not reached the stage of regimental or division training nor did they have such things as divisional artillery and things of that sort. So they were very lightly equipped at the time of the outbreak of the Korean War. So any idea, as some revisionist historians have, that somehow the South attacked the North is just utter nonsense.

This caught us by surprise, quite frankly. Now, after the Korean attack occurred, the people in the intelligence community went around and started combing through thousands of bits of intelligence and came up with a half dozen or so that might have pointed toward an attack as a sort of an attempt to say, "Well, we told you about it." But nobody picked up the phone from the intelligence community and called the Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs or anybody else and said, "We think the North Koreans are going to attack." Indeed I was out having dinner that night and MacArthur's G-2 was on leave. Truman was in Independence.

SCHOENBAUM: Acheson was on his farm in Virginia.

DEAN RUSK: Right. So, it came as a surprise.

SCHOENBAUM: Can you tell me what you personally were involved in? You, as I understand it, went to the State Department and you called Acheson. And did you call Truman directly?

DEAN RUSK: No, Acheson called Truman. And the first thing I suggested to Acheson was that we get an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council. You see, I had been the Assistant Secretary for U.N. Affairs before that and I had a feeling, the belief that whatever one does--use of force or anything else--your first obligation is to get it to the U.N. Security Council.

SCHOENBAUM: Did he basically agree and say that he would talk to Truman about it?

DEAN RUSK: Yes, that's right. And Truman agreed immediately. We got Ernest [Arnold] Gross, our Deputy. Representative on the Security Council in New York, waked him up that night, and got him in touch with the U.N. Secretary General and arranged for an emergency meeting of the Security Council.

SCHOENBAUM: Were you then involved in the preparation for that meeting, and did you attend the meeting?
DEAN RUSK: I didn't attend the Security Council meeting but I was much involved in the staff work and basic cable of instruction to our representative on the Security Council: Gross.

SCHOENBAUM: It must have been a shock to be faced with this? Did the decision to resist—Was the decision to resist with American Air Force and later ground troops, was that immediately clear? Was that an easy decision to make or was that a difficult decision to make? Did you go through a lot of options first?

DEAN RUSK: Well, there is a little background here. Back along 1947, early '48, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had come up with a paper on the strategic importance of Korea in which they said that, since in a general war we would not wish to deploy our forces on the Korean peninsula, we should withdraw such forces from Korea as we had at that time. The State Department opposed that and succeeded in delaying any action on that attitude of the Joint Chiefs until 1949. Finally, President Truman agreed with the Joint Chiefs and ordered the withdrawal of the final regimental combat team. Now what that paper of the Joint Chiefs did not deal with was the question as to what the situation would be if Korea itself became the locus of aggression. Now when the North Korean forces went in there, then this seemed to be a direct challenge and threat to the entire concept of collective security at the end of World War II. My generation of young people had been led into the catastrophe of a World War II, which could have been prevented, and we came out of the war thinking that collective security was the key to the prevention of World War III. It was written very simply and strongly into Article 1 of the United Nations Charter and reinforced by certain security treaties. Now it is true that we did not have a security treaty with Korea at that time, but that had been our area of occupation at the end of the war. We had received the surrender of the Japanese forces in South Korea. We had conducted an occupation there for a period of about four years, and we felt that there was a very special United States interest and responsibility in what happened in South Korea. Further, in those days the Korean peninsula was looked upon as a dagger pointed at the heart of Japan.

SCHOENBAUM: Yes, I remember that phrase was used at the Democratic Convention.

DEAN RUSK: Yes, and we were much concerned about what the impact upon Japan would be if the North Koreans got away with this. And so, President Truman, I think, was very clear about it. He made this basic decision over at the Blair House, where he was living at that time, while they were remodeling the White House. And when he got back from Independence, he called a meeting of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, Joint Chiefs, and certain staff people, including myself, and he went right around the table asking each one. As I remember he started with the junior people, working up to the senior people. That is an old military habit.

SCHOENBAUM: So you were asked before Acheson?

DEAN RUSK: I was asked to comment. I did, very briefly, because Acheson was there and could speak. But the State Department, the Defense Department people felt that we simply had to do something to try to throw this thing back or we would very likely see that kind of chain of aggression which had produced World War II.

SCHOENBAUM: That was basically what you said?
DEAN RUSK: Right. But our armed forces were in very pitiful shape at that time. We had demobilized almost completely after World War II, and so we were very shorthanded, not only in personnel but in war material. You see, just after the war there was a scramble to bring all of our troops home, and most of those with any kind of war experience had been replaced by young, beardless new draftees. And our defense budget just after the war came down so low that we didn't even have the money to bring home any significant quantity of the vast war supplies that we had distributed all over the world during World War II. And so, we were simply short of arms as well as short of people. But President Truman made that decision and at the time that he made it had very strong support among the public, in the Congress and internationally.

SCHOENBAUM: The concept of collective security and Korea, were you originally--this is a little bit off the subject--but were you originally responsible for this in Article 1 of the United Nations Charter?

DEAN RUSK: No. I was in the Army and I did not participate in the actual drafting of the Charter. But that seemed to be pretty clear to everybody because it was felt that the failure of collective security--when the Japanese seized Manchuria and attacked China, when Mussolini seized Ethiopia, when Hitler went into the Rhineland, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and the Poland--that the failure of collective security had been a very heavy cause of World War II. I mean, we learned that, for example, when Hitler ordered his troops into the Rhineland, in his orders was the statement that if the French showed resistance, the German forces were to turn around and come back home. But the French didn't show any resistance. And so this idea that aggression feeds upon itself and is insatiable was very strong in everybody's mind at that time.

SCHOENBAUM: The other doctrine--just to talk in a theoretical basis for a minute--the other doctrine that was very important at that time and is still important today really evolved out of the post-World War II development, is containment. I guess that came from George [Frost] Kennan's article in Foreign Affairs. And I wonder, was that part and parcel of--was this kind of the twin of collective security idea?

DEAN RUSK: It is simply one phase of it. You see, at a time when we in the West were almost completely demobilized, Joseph Stalin tried to keep the northwest province of Iran: the first case before the U.N. Security Council. He demanded the two eastern provinces of Turkey, Kars and Ardahan. He had a share in the control of the straits leading into the Black Sea. He disregarded some of the wartime agreements about giving the people of Eastern Europe some say in their political future. He supported the guerrillas going after Greece using bases and sanctuaries in places like Albania, and Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria. He had a hand in the communist coup d'état in Czechoslovakia. He had blockaded Berlin. Then he apparently gave the green light to the North Koreans to go after South Korea. So this idea of containment was simply a way of looking at collective security from a slightly different vantage point.

SCHOENBAUM: Now George Kennan has since commented that his idea of containment was not clearly understood or that he didn't mean military containment. Well, he said two things, as I understand it, about containment. He said it was misunderstood because it, first of all, didn't
mean military containment and, second of all, it didn't mean universal containment. Is this a kind of post--?

DEAN RUSK: Part of it is eating his own words later to some extent. But also I would agree with him on the universality of the containment doctrine. Now at the time of the Greek guerrilla affair, Harry Truman in getting support for aid to Greece and Turkey, used language which had a universal ring to it. And this came to be known as the Truman Doctrine. But at the time, this was not looked upon at all as a universal proposition. This was, as far as I am concerned, part of the rhetoric of getting support for Greek and Turkish aid. We were not supposing that we, the United States, were responsible for collective security in every corner of the earth. And so, there was a Universalist ring to the rhetoric in those days, but that was really not an accurate reflection of actual policy.

SCHOENBAUM: And later on during the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations this was not in your mind or other people's mind--the universality of containment?

DEAN RUSK: No, actually in terms of Southeast Asia we had a treaty commitment which was part of the law of the land. The treaty concluded during the mid-1950s during Eisenhower administration. No, we didn't--as a matter of fact, just before I left office my staff took a little survey for me and found that there had been something over 400 situations of violence somewhere in the world since 1945 and the U.S. had been directly involved in only about seven of them. We didn't look upon ourselves as the world's policeman, that whatever happened in the world it was our job to put it right and that kind of thing.

But, nevertheless the phenomenon of aggression was a serious matter in our minds in those days. Now, when the North Koreans first attacked, we did not know immediately what else might be involved: whether this was simply the opening shots in a much broader communist offensive in Asia. So we took certain other steps trying to deter the idea of expanding the Korean conflict into other parts of Asia by two major steps. One, President Truman inserted the Seventh Fleet between Taiwan and the Mainland and said there would be no operations back and forth between those two, because we didn't know whether the Korean attack meant that the Chinese were about to attack Taiwan. We also stepped up substantially the assistance we were giving to the French in Indochina, because we didn't know whether the Chinese might be thinking about moving south, you see. But, fortunately, for whatever reason, that did not occur. The intrusion of the Seventh Fleet between the Mainland and Taiwan was something of a bluff in one sense. We could count thousands and thousands of wooden junks along the coast of China there within reach of Taiwan. And we took one of these wooden junks out to sea and shot at it to see what it would take to sink it one of these things. And it is a heck of a problem to sink a wooden junk. And we did not have in our Seventh--

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DEAN RUSK: We did not have in the Seventh Fleet at that time one shell for each junk and if the Chinese had launched several thousand of those junks simultaneously at dusk some afternoon and turned up the next morning on the coast of Taiwan, that would have been a heck of a situation. But fortunately, they did not do that.

SCHOENBAUM: Did you suggest those moves to President Truman? How were those decisions made? Were there meetings about what's the real purpose, what's going to happen? You were the Assistant Secretary for the Far East at that time.

DEAN RUSK: We knew at the time the immediate attack occurred that we did not know all of the ramifications that this might have in terms of what might be in the minds of Moscow and Peking, as well as in Pyongyang in North Korea. So we were trying to prevent something that might otherwise have occurred. Now maybe it would not have occurred, I don't know. But those were simply precautionary steps we took because we did not want a wider war with China.

SCHOENBAUM: Did you initiate those?

DEAN RUSK: Well, when you have group discussions, the question of exactly who initiated particular ideas is a little elusive, a little hard to come by. But I was a part of the discussion which...

SCHOENBAUM: Who were the main people involved at that time besides yourself, Secretary Acheson, and of course, Truman?

DEAN RUSK: At my age, I am not very good at names.

SCHOENBAUM: George Kennan?

DEAN RUSK: George Kennan was, I think, in Moscow at the time.

SCHOENBAUM: Was he ambassador?

DEAN RUSK: Yes. Now, we put seven divisions into Korea and told MacArthur that was all he was going to get. Now, we did one thing in Korea which helped us greatly which we did not do in Vietnam, even though I raised the question a number of times during Vietnam. We put a great many Koreans into our own armed forces right down to the rifle squad; at all levels we included Koreans in our own armed forces. I remember one report that indicated that one of our American divisions had 7,000 Koreans in it. We called these the Katusas. There were two major advantages in that. One was that we fleshed out our own units in manpower. But secondly, we were able to leave behind at the end of the Korean War a large number of Koreans who had had a lot of combat experience and were able to put together a pretty good army at the end of the Korean struggle. But we were never able to get our military to go that way in Vietnam.

SCHOENBAUM: Who had the idea for that? That does sound like an ingenious idea.
DEAN RUSK: Well, again--where does an idea come from?

SCHOENBAUM: What did you do with barriers of language and things like that? That worked out well?

DEAN RUSK: Yes, yes. There were a good many Americans who spoke Korean and a large of Koreans who spoke English. You see, English had been their second language.

SCHOENBAUM: And where was the resistance to that in the Vietnam War? That sounds like it.

DEAN RUSK: Well, our own military resisted the idea in Vietnam. I think part of it was possibly the idea that the Viet Cong had infiltrated the South Vietnamese units to a considerable extent and therefore security reasons would militate against that. We did not have much of a problem of that sort in Korea. We did not have dissidents in the countryside that caused us problems. There were no guerrillas behind our lines in Korea; and of course at one point there were no lines behind which the guerrillas could operate. At one point we were compressed into a very small perimeter right around Pusan, the southern port, and things looked very glum. But we broke out of that due to the remarkably successful Inchon landing that General MacArthur laid on.

SCHOENBAUM: What about the--how would you--of course you were not in office at the end of the Korean War and neither was Truman. And those decisions were not made by Truman. Did you think that this was basically the same kind of settlement that you--Did you see this kind of settlement on the horizon?

DEAN RUSK: The truce talks started while I was still there under the Truman Administration. They were not concluded until during the Eisenhower Administration. But there is an interesting little story about the way these truce talks got started. George Kennan, at our suggestion, went up to New York and had some very discreet talks with Ambassador [Yakov Alexandrovich] Malik, the Soviet representative to the U.N. And the theme of Kennan's talk was that we should conclude this on the basis of the status quo ante. And then apparently this, at some point, hit a spark in Moscow and it was Malik who took the initiative to make the possibility of such talks public even though Kennan had been the one who had actually taken the initiative. But when we actually got into the talks, President Truman made two decisions which may have served to prolong the talks for some time. First, our own military wanted not to just go back to the strict 38th parallel, but to retain certain high ground that they had in some places just north of the 38th parallel. They wanted the, then, front line as the basis for the settlements. Secondly, President Truman decided that he was not going to repatriate North Korean prisoners against their will. He had seen some very unhappy experiences with that in returning prisoners to the Soviets in World War II. Well now, neither one of these points had been mentioned in Kennan's talk with Malik up at the United Nations. These were two somewhat new points; and they were not easy for the North Koreans, particularly the matter of not returning North Korean prisoners who did not want to go back. And it is entirely possible that those two points succeeded in delaying the outcome of the talks for some time. But the talks had started during the Truman Administration.
SCHOENBAUM: Were you involved in those two points? How were you involved in formulating those two points? Were those points that you suggested or that came from the White House?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I forget now my own personal participation. But on the question of the prisoners, we had a potentially very troublesome problem because President Syngman Rhee of Korea simply was not going to return these North Koreans who did not want to go back. And at one point, he said he would just open the prison doors and let all these people go free. So handling President Syngman Rhee on that point would have been very difficult anyhow. But we had had suicide among Soviet prisoners in Western Europe who were not going to go back, who would kill themselves before they would go back. As a matter of fact, it was our impression that when these prisoners got back to the Soviet Union in World War II they were treated very badly when they got back home by the Stalin regime. But in any event that protracted, I am quite sure myself, the talks at Panmunjom--

SCHOENBAUM: To what extent did you think you were dealing with our, were you dealing with the Soviet Union and China? Of course China came into the war; the Soviet Union did not. But was there any feeling--did you discuss the idea of the Soviet Union coming in? Was there any hard evidence? You said they gave the green light. Did they do any more?

DEAN RUSK: Well, they gave major logistic support to the North Koreans and full political support in places like the United Nations. And we believed that there were a good many Soviet military advisors for the North Koreans. We never captured one to my knowledge, but we understood from esoteric types of intelligence that there were Soviet advisors in there.

The role of China in the outbreak of the Korean War is somewhat intriguing because at the beginning of the North Korean invasion, there was no direct impression that the Chinese were playing a major hand in this. This looked to be more like a North Korean/Moscow operation. But then when we picked up a lot of these prisoners during the war, we learned from a good many of them that several months before the outbreak of the war, they had combed the armies in north China to find people of Korean ancestry, and language, and background and had moved them over into North Korea. So I personally am of the view that the Chinese were, if you like, co-conspirators in this invasion some time to come.

SCHOENBAUM: In the ultimate Korean settlement, do you think that there were missed opportunities to get more than we did, basically the status quo ante, or that this was the best that could be done under the circumstances? It certainly has led to a continuing American presence and an unsatisfactory situation with a split country.

DEAN RUSK: Well, it was the effort to unify Korea following the North Korean debacle after Inchon that brought the Chinese in. And then there is another factor that one can speculate on; one can never know. But when MacArthur moved north of the 38th parallel into North Korea, he broke up his forces into different tongues, if you like, where in all that mountainous terrain they were not in position to give each other any kind of mutual support. The Joint Chiefs had raised a question about this deployment, but too late to have affected MacArthur's handling of his forces. And so when the Chinese came in, they could get at these forces piecemeal. Had MacArthur
moved north with his forces intact, we might well have been at the narrow neck of North Korea right now. I don't know. Who knows on something like that? The other side might not have settled on the basis of that status quo rather than the 38th parallel. So these things are mixed up with both tactical and political ramifications.

SCHOENBAUM: What was your--

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