

Dean Rusk Oral History Collection
Rusk P: Part 1 of 2
Dean Rusk interviewed by Richard Rusk and Loch Johnson
circa 1985

The complete interview also includes Rusk Y, Side 1 Part 2.

RICHARD RUSK: [We are discussing] the congressional testimony of 1974 and 1975 for the [Edmund Sixtus] Muskie hearings on warrantless wiretapping and electronics surveillance. That was 1974 and Frank [Forrester] Church's committee dealing with the intelligence agencies and the possibility of firmer congressional oversight of those agencies, that was in the spring of 1975, spring and fall. Anyone interested in this material can be referred to the testimony itself or a real good summary that was put out by the *Congressional Quarterly Almanac* in 1975 dealing with the Frank Church hearings, the summaries of those hearings, and all the issues raised by those hearings.

I gather both from reading through your testimony in 1974 and '75 regarding these hearings and these intelligence issues, and also based on what you have told me personally, that a lot of what was disclosed in '74 and '75 came as a real surprise, a real shock to you. Why was that the case?

DEAN RUSK: Well, there were two things that were particularly a surprise. One of them I was very angry about. I was a statutory member of the National Security Council to which CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] was supposed to report, and I never heard about those assassination plots against [Fidel Ruz] Castro until after I left office; and I learned them from the Church committee. We had an interdepartmental committee during my years there which had various names, often called the 303 committee but there are other tags for it--

RICHARD RUSK: Is that the same as the Forty committee?

DEAN RUSK: It's possible. And I had a representative on that committee. It might be Llewellyn [E.] Thompson, [Jr.], or Tom [Thomas Lowe] Hughes, or [U.] Alexis Johnson, or whoever it might be. It was my practice to have a talk with them before they went to committee meetings on anything that was expected to come up. Then I usually saw them after the committee meeting was over to be brought up to date on it. And even in that highly restricted committee, these things apparently did not come up. Llewellyn Thompson, I remember once, with a laugh spoke to me about some junior person on one of these committees saying something about the assassination of Castro and it was not discussed. And Llewellyn Thompson and I both laughed about it because I had a very strong view that playing the game of political assassination was just very bad business. To begin with, there was no practical result because you couldn't be at all sure that whoever succeeded would be any better than the fellow who had been killed. But secondly, the practice of political assassination would just bring international life into the state of a jungle. So I know if I had known about it, I would have moved to veto it or try to stop it.

RICHARD RUSK: Incidentally, what was Llewellyn Thompson's relationship to you? What was his title?

DEAN RUSK: Well, he was Deputy Undersecretary.

RICHARD RUSK: Pretty high-level fellow?

DEAN RUSK: Yes, he had been ambassador in Moscow. As a matter of fact, he served as ambassador to Moscow for part of the time when--

RICHARD RUSK: And you always had high-level people sitting as your representative on that committee?

DEAN RUSK: Yes. I never attended a 303 committee meeting personally myself, but I tried to keep in touch through the State Department representative on that committee. It was in that committee, for example, that Bobby [Robert Francis] Kennedy once strongly recommended that we get American businessmen abroad to organize themselves to be able to produce pro-American demonstrations as an antidote to the anti-American demonstrations that were popping up here and there. I strongly opposed that on two grounds; one, that this is not the job for businessmen; and secondly, that these foreign governments would not let our businessmen monkey around with such things and they would be thrown out. The business of business is to trade, and we ought to keep them in that role and not sort of foist upon them this other kind of activity.

RICHARD RUSK: Bobby Kennedy was a member of that 303 committee?

DEAN RUSK: He sat with it quite often, although not technically a member. I remember on that point that I spoke to President Kennedy about it and told him that I just had to oppose Bobby on this. And he smiled and said, "Well, let Bobby play around with these things because he likes to do it and is interested, but if he gets in your way, please let me know and I'll take care of it."

The other thing that surprised me was that CIA had an internal security group. There was an understanding that I thought most of us were familiar with, that CIA would operate abroad but that the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] would handle internal security questions. Now, I was not aware of the existence within CIA of this internal security group. I never saw a manning table of CIA, another thing that was not right. So I came out of that experience strongly with a feeling that although we must have CIA and its capabilities, we must use them only in the extremely rare cases and with complete supervision by the executive branch of the government and by a committee of congress. My own preference in the Congress was that they have a joint Senate/House committee, patterned on the old Joint Atomic Energy Committee, because that committee had demonstrated that it could receive the most sensitive information we had in government and could protect and guard that information. Don't recall that there was ever any kind of embarrassing leak or indiscretion on the part of members of the old Joint Atomic Energy Committee. But, I am quite sure that CIA should be closely monitored, both in the executive and legislative branches of government.

RICHARD RUSK: Could you differentiate between the National Security Council and the National Security Agency?

DEAN RUSK: The National Security Council was established by law during the Truman administration to coordinate foreign defense policies in their recommendations to the President. Statutory members of the National Security Council may vary a little from time to time--were the President, the Vice President, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, the head of CIA, the Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the President's National Security Advisor.

RICHARD RUSK: Was the FBI director there?

DEAN RUSK: No. He was not a member of the National Security Council. And its function was to put our heads together and to try to sort out different points of view of these agencies and to prepare options and recommendations for the President. The National Security Administration is a super-secret-intelligence gathering information which operates, I think, under the wing of the Defense Department. And it is heavily involved in communications intelligence which I can't get into in any detail.

RICHARD RUSK: As a statutory member of the National Security Council, how often did you fellows meet and how often did you get into this area of oversight of intelligence activities?

DEAN RUSK: Well, we had occasional formal meetings of the National Security Council. But then the members of the National Security Council met very frequently without sort of calling themselves the National Security Council. When you had a meeting of the National Security Council you'd have fifteen or twenty junior people sitting around the walls. And so when we really wanted to talk privately among ourselves, we'd simply meet and not announce it as a meeting of the National Security Council: that is the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, the President, the head of CIA, Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs. For example, those many Tuesday luncheon sessions we had with President Johnson were, in fact, meetings of the statutory members of the National Security Council. But we didn't call them meetings of the National Security Council because there'd be all sorts of staff people who would think they had a right to sit in. But there was a lot of give and take among those statutory members. For example, almost every week I would have a long talk, just the two of us, with Bob McNamara usually on a Saturday morning, sometimes on Sunday morning when we could meet using my office, sometimes in his, without a lot of people around to get in our way and interrupt us. I found those extraordinarily valuable.

RICHARD RUSK: The 303 committee was a subcommittee of the National Security Council?

DEAN RUSK: Yes.

RICHARD RUSK: And how many people did it have on there?

DEAN RUSK: It would have representatives of the departments that were represented on the National Security Council. Now, the President was always free to invite anybody else to sit in on the National Security Council when things affecting their responsibilities were to come up. And

he would have the Attorney General, Bobby Kennedy, sit in from time to time; he would have the Secretary of the Treasury sit in from time to time; and it was up to him.

RICHARD RUSK: This was the President's committee and he would establish the agenda?

DEAN RUSK: That's right. In our system, it is the President who is charge of the executive branch of the government. So when you have committees like that, or cabinet meetings, at the end of the day it's the President who makes the decision. A famous example: [Abraham] Lincoln, at a cabinet meeting, asked for a show of hands and everybody held up their hands "no" except for he [sic], and he voted "aye". And he simply announced that, "The ayes have it." We never took votes, as such, in the cabinet. It's an advisory group in the sense of advising the President, although each one of us had a major responsibility for directing our own department.

RICHARD RUSK: When you said that you weren't aware of these assassination plots while you were a statutory member of the National Security Council. Does that include an unawareness of covert action in general? Did you guys ever discuss covert intelligence action?

DEAN RUSK: Oh yes, that came up from time to time. One of the problems that you have in any kind of organization is that intelligence tends to become a thing in itself and people tend to look upon gathering intelligence as the end to be achieved, whereas the purpose of intelligence is be able to inform policy people about what's going on in the world. And there were times when I vetoed a number of proposals for gathering intelligence because I would rather not have that particular information than to use the means that were being proposed to get it.

RICHARD RUSK: Can you give any examples there?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I'm afraid they're too highly classified for me to put on the record, but--

RICHARD RUSK: You often have made the comment that ninety percent of intelligence is obtained through overt channels.

DEAN RUSK: Yes, about ninety percent of the information you gather comes from public information. There's just a blizzard of articles and books published all over the world and it takes an enormous amount of effort just to keep an eye on all that and see what significant information can be distilled from it. Eighty-five percent of that, well I say ninety percent of the work of the CIA is gathering information, and about eighty-five percent of the information that it gathers is in the public domain. Then there is another element of secret intelligence that is added on top of that. Then the cloak-and-dagger kind of stuff that CIA fools with is less than ten percent of the work that CIA--

RICHARD RUSK: Was it possible that some of this stuff that later created such controversy in Washington in 1975 could have been discussed at the 303 committee level without you knowing about it? Another way of asking that was, were you adequately and faithfully represented by your representative on the committee?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, I would find it very hard to believe that these things were discussed in the 303 committee without my knowing about it, because my own representative there would not, I think, have dared to participate in discussion of such a subject without discussing it with me either before or after the discussion.

RICHARD RUSK: And they would report back to you each time what went on there?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, yes. I just think that these things were handled really, that is the assassination plots, were handled without reference to the 303 committee.

RICHARD RUSK: Well, it must have been a subject of real, not only surprise, but discouragement to see that that stuff went on without your being involved.

DEAN RUSK: Well one thing that--I don't know whether I'm repeating myself here. One thing that bothered me about that, when President Kennedy was assassinated we scoured every piece of information we could find to see whether or not there was any foreign government that might be involved in it. Because that might have been a matter of war and peace. I then testified before the [Earl] Warren Commission that we were not able to find any evidence that any foreign government was involved in that assassination. But then I added a paragraph in my testimony saying that I did not really believe that any foreign government had a motive for being involved. Well now, at that point no one tugged on my coattail and said, "Now wait a minute, Mr. Secretary, there's something you ought to know about before you testify in that direction." And Allen [Welsh] Dulles himself was sitting there as a member of the Warren Commission, and he didn't say a word to me about it. So I feel very badly about that. I mean, such things should not happen without the knowledge of the Secretary of State.

RICHARD RUSK: You made a reference to Bobby Kennedy's suggestion that American business overseas possibly get involved in sponsoring public demonstrations on behalf of the United States. It came out in the Church testimony that IT&T [International Telephone and Telegraph] and some of the multinational corporations did, in fact, get involved in some of the electoral campaigns in a country or two, especially Chile, I believe it was. Any comment on that type of thing? Do you think the government at all encouraged that type of business involvement?

DEAN RUSK: I don't know about IT&T and Chile. That was after my time and I just can't comment on that. But American companies have played some part in politics in countries in different parts of the world. To begin with, they are strongly urged to by some of the local political people, local political leaders, when they start raising campaign funds and they're trying to do this and do that at times. And in the old days the United Fruit Company played a pretty active role with governments in Central America.

RICHARD RUSK: In a certain sense, it could be a matter of survival or self-defense for these businesses if countries that have groups vying for power would bring about the nationalization of those industries. Did the government itself, while you were in government, ever, to your knowledge, encourage these businesses to get involved in the domestic politics in those countries? Was it ever a matter of American policy to have do this?

DEAN RUSK: Well, one would have to look at individual cases. I remember after the Berlin crisis of '61 and '62, it sort of shook the nerves, and the building of the wall in Berlin. We urged a number of American businesses to consider putting up branch offices in Berlin to contribute to the economy of West Berlin. Now, that kind of thing we did from time to time. I don't recall ever having--Well I am sure that I, myself, never discussed with any businessmen their getting involved in cloak-and-dagger kind of stuff within a foreign country.

RICHARD RUSK: What about in the electoral process? What about American business getting behind certain candidates or political parties?

DEAN RUSK: Well--

RICHARD RUSK: As far as you, personally, were concerned?

DEAN RUSK: I am sure some of that went on. And one must be careful about condemning that kind of thing across the board. For example, at the end of World War II we were faced with bringing what had been a Nazi Germany, a fascist Italy, and a fascist Japan into the postwar period as democracies and constitutional governments. But their own political parties had, in effect, been destroyed during the days of Hitler, [Benito] Mussolini, and [Hideki] Tojo. And I am quite sure that we provided some funds, not just to a single party, but to different political parties to help them get party politics started again in countries like that. Now that doesn't bother me at all. But, obviously if you do that, because of the ability to turn that into a campaign issue, we did that quietly: as quiet as we could. And I found in my time, when we began to wean some of this support out and stop it that our friends in certain other countries were very upset about the fact that we were turning off the spigot on that kind of thing.

[break in recording]

I have a somewhat guarded view about what might be called extreme purism in the field of civil rights, where public order and the survival of the state may be involved. Both John Locke and Thomas Jefferson have pointed out that there may be times when a government must act beyond the law in order to preserve the constitutional system.

RICHARD RUSK: And that's precisely what's at stake with a lot of these--

DEAN RUSK: That's right. And it requires some judgment. I mean, if we had tens of thousands of terrorists wandering around the United States assassinating sheriffs and blowing up courthouses and blowing up railroad bridges and things like that, one of the first victims would be the Bill of Rights of the Constitution because we would probably go into martial law, because running that thing down is very difficult indeed. If I had known that there was a fellow named Lee Harvey Oswald, who was determined to kill President Kennedy, I would have insisted that we put him under the most complete surveillance possible. And then I would leave it to the Attorney General to wrestle with the law of the matter. I mean, there are times when the priorities don't permit you to be Simon Pure on some of these things. There's a very mean, dirty, back-alley game out there being played around the world in which forty or fifty governments

take part in in one way or another. If we simply resign from that dirty back-alley fight, we'll learn what Leo [Ernest] Durocher meant when he said, "Nice guys finish last."

RICHARD RUSK: That's a good point. This Muskie hearing in 1974 came before the other, and this one dealt primarily with wiretapping and electronic surveillance. You gave testimony that you didn't recall an instance of State Department wiretapping, or any wiretapping of State Department employees back when you were in office for the purpose of shutting off news leaks or for the purpose of internal security. You mentioned having to call the FBI in on a half dozen probes or so. You thought that electronic surveillance was not part of their techniques, that they were primarily conducting interviews and interrogations.

DEAN RUSK: Well, they could use that technique, but--

RICHARD RUSK: My question is, why was the FBI called in?

DEAN RUSK: Well they were the internal security agency of the government.

RICHARD RUSK: The FBI?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah.

RICHARD RUSK: Didn't the Department of State have its own security branch within the department?

DEAN RUSK: We had a security office, but its function, its primary functions, were, first to give me protection; secondly to run security checks on prospective employees of the Department before we hired them and occasionally, to investigate a fellow who was already on the job. I personally came away with the feeling that there ought to be that capability in the government, but that it ought to be exercised only with the approval of a federal judge and the Attorney General. And that, again, we should have the capability but--

RICHARD RUSK: You're talking about electronic surveillance and wiretapping?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah, that kind of thing. But I didn't like the idea of having every department in town running around wiretapping people. That didn't make any sense.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you recall the instances in which the FBI did come in? This is stuff that you, yourself, brought out in this Muskie testimony, you volunteered the information.

DEAN RUSK: I don't remember the specific cases, but there were very few cases where, maybe of a leak or something or other, we asked the FBI to look in for us. I could count them on the fingers of one hand, I suspect.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you eliminate their use of electronic surveillance when you brought them in? Conceivably they could have gone ahead on their own.

DEAN RUSK: Well, there was one instance where somebody down the line used electronic surveillance on somebody in the Department and then they lied to a Congressional Committee about it. I took the resignation of the guy who had lied about it.

RICHARD RUSK: You're talking about this [Otto Fred] Otepka thing?

DEAN RUSK: Well I think there was something involved there. In my own office I was naturally concerned that nobody was wiretapping me, including anyone in our own government. My office was heavily protected by all sorts of electronic devices against wiretapping, but I would have those things checked out from time to time by different agencies. I didn't want a single agency responsible for that because they might have fish of their own to fry. So I would have different kinds of people check out my office for vulnerability. As a matter of fact, I eliminated a squawk box in my office--that is an interoffice communications box--when I was told that it was fairly easy to break that from the outside. We even had a scrambler telephone in my office. I could talk to Europe and places like that. But we took that out because it proved to be relatively easy to break. Now I did not at any time have in my office any capability of recording any conversations that occurred in my office. I'm quite sure that some of my visitors thought I did, but I never did and I never recorded any conversation that took place in my office.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you remember ever having wished you had recorded a couple of those conversations?

DEAN RUSK: I take the Fifth Amendment on that!

RICHARD RUSK: The Department also would check our home phone on Quebec Street. Did they ever turn up anything during their sweeps?

DEAN RUSK: No, I had a White House phone and a State Department phone in our home there on Quebec Street. And I remember on one occasion it appeared it sounded as though I was being tapped.

RICHARD RUSK: I can remember little cracklings and poppings on that.

DEAN RUSK: Yes, so I called the boys out and had them check it over and they looked and looked and couldn't find anything. But then they discovered that apparently the squirrels rather liked the taste of the insulation on the wires outside leading into the house. So these squirrels get up there and gnaw away on this insulation and as soon as their teeth hit the wires it would produce one of these clicks like you were being wiretapped. So they put on squirrel-proof covering for those wires.

RICHARD RUSK: You also stated that there were at least a dozen or a half dozen foreign agents or people in Washington who would monitor your radio telephone calls in from the limousine as you were driving in to the office.

DEAN RUSK: Oh, there must have been lots of people around Washington listening in that telephone chatter. And for that reason, about the only thing I ever said over my car telephone

was to call the office and say, "I'll be in in about ten minutes. Please have some coffee and a donut waiting for me." So nobody got any information from me from listening in to my telephone conversations.

RICHARD RUSK: I don't know what you specifically remember about this Otto Otepka fellow, but apparently he was fired or dismissed by the Department in '63, I believe. Do you remember who he was and what the issue was?

DEAN RUSK: Sure, I remember the issue there very well. Otto Otepka was in one of the sections of the security office of our department and--

RICHARD RUSK: Incidentally, I'm bringing this particular question up because he did challenge your testimony in 1974, [saying] in fact that the Department had conducted some of this electronic surveillance and that he thought you probably knew about it. And evidently he made something of a public statement.

DEAN RUSK: Right. Well, during the [Dwight David] Eisenhower years Otto Otepka was furnishing personnel information to the staff of a subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

RICHARD RUSK: Early fifties?

DEAN RUSK: Well, during the fifties. It also lapped over into my time. This was clearly in violation of an executive order of the President as to how these personal security files should be handled. And so I decided to put a stop to it. He was resisting and so I suspended him, with pay, pending a board hearing on the matter. And the board hearing was negative to him on the issue.

RICHARD RUSK: What was his particular "kick"? Was he a right-wing fellow who was concerned about infiltration of the Department, say?

DEAN RUSK: He and that chief staff officer of that Senate committee--I forget his name now--were [Joseph Raymond] McCarthy types. You see, the law provides that the head of the Department is responsible for making the judgment on the loyalty or security of people in his department, and it was my job to look at all the raw material that anybody could furnish me and make my own judgment as to what all this added up to. And here this fellow was, passing pieces of gossip and things like that over to the Senate committee. Then they, in turn, were using this to harass members of the Department of State. And since this was contrary to the executive order of the President, I just decided that had to stop. I talked to Senator--I'll furnish his name later--who was chairman of that subcommittee.

RICHARD RUSK: Was it [James] Strom Thurmond or Thomas [Joseph] Dodd?

DEAN RUSK: No, neither one of those was chairman. It was a Senator from Mississippi, I think. He tried to get me to lay off Otepka and I offered to assign Otepka to a post in Europe, but he didn't want it. He wanted to stay there in the Department and continue to furnish this information to the Senate. I told the chairman that if he wanted Otepka to work for him, all he

had to do was to get Otepka to resign from the Department and put him on the Senate payroll. But so long as he was on my payroll he was not going to act in violation of an executive order of the President on this subject. So that was quite a hassle.

RICHARD RUSK: And after these warnings, these reprimands, he continued to conduct his little maneuvers with the Senate committee?

DEAN RUSK: We removed his access to these personnel materials. We put him in a little office somewhere upstairs and told him just to sit there pending the final resolution of this matter. But I was, and if he's still alive, am still in his black book. I would occasionally get a hostile question about this in a press conference, but I have no misgivings or after-the-fact doubts about what I did in that matter.

RICHARD RUSK: How was it that a couple of other State Department employees happened to get fired over the matter? Apparently they had, either on their own initiative or under orders, gone ahead and conducted some surveillance on Otepka within the Department and this later blew up into a minor issue.

DEAN RUSK: Yes, they were expected to. They were asked to see what evidence they had on Otepka's activities because he would take this material down personally to this fellow on the Senate committee. [It was] pretty hard to get firm information, so they did a few things like looking at the carbon papers that he threw into his wastebasket, and then they bugged him without asking my permission.

RICHARD RUSK: They didn't have authorization from you to put taps on his phone?

DEAN RUSK: No, but then one of these fellows was called before the Senate committee and fibbed about having bugged Otepka to the committee. I couldn't have that, and so I took his resignation.

RICHARD RUSK: Altogether not one of the better moments in the Department's history.

DEAN RUSK: Well, that's right, but it was almost incidental in terms of the total flow of business of the Department. But, you see, I grew up in my own family in the officer corps of the Army and worked for people like George [Catlett] Marshall with the idea that a false official statement is simply impermissible. That is the thing you must not do if you are holding public office; and so I expected people to follow that. And 99.9 percent of the time they do follow it.

RICHARD RUSK: Why would they have not have testified correctly before that committee?

DEAN RUSK: I simply don't know.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you remember responding to a fellow named Reed Ervine, who wrote in 1973 a personal letter to you here in Athens requesting clarification of this Otepka thing?

DEAN RUSK: No. If I wrote him while I was here in Athens it'll probably come with my letters in my office.

RICHARD RUSK: The only place I saw mention of this whole affair was in the back pages of this hearing on Muskie, the committee hearings. I guess there was a few letters written to the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*, but other than that, it wasn't major.

DEAN RUSK: See, this question of how far you go and what might be looked upon by some as an infringement of civil liberties, takes on real importance in a world in which there's been such an almost revolutionary increase in political terrorism. I personally think we've got to find some way to get at this phenomenon of terrorism and find a way to stop it. Electronic surveillance may be one of the ways you do it. And some of it is more of a problem theoretically than it is practically. For example, I've noticed that some reference was made to the CIA having looked at 200,000 pieces of mail over some period of time. Well, there are millions of pieces of mail every day. I mean this is a tiny fraction of one percent of it.

RICHARD RUSK: Yes, the Church committee reported that they had photographed the fronts and backs of 2.7 million pieces of mail and opened about 215,000 pieces over a thirty-year period.

DEAN RUSK: I suppose maybe I have a little bias on this that some people wouldn't like. But I've lived most of my life in a goldfish bowl. I don't consider that really there's anything about me that the government can't know as far as I'm concerned. And I don't believe that--I think there's a limit to people's right to commit crime in secrecy. I don't know the full answer to that; I'm not pretending to have a full answer. We don't want a police state, but I think there are certain--For example, I would be very tough on these bastards who peddle drugs to junior high school kids because there the priorities seem to come out a little different than they do in the normal situation.

RICHARD RUSK: An example you used in your testimony was the suitcase nuclear weapon and what the state should do, or can do, to protect its own interests--

DEAN RUSK: If a President should--I don't think that this is a sort of a wild and outside possibility: But if a President were to get what he thought was reasonably reliable information that a suitcase bomb had been hidden away in some city, well the constitutional provisions with respect to search and seizure and wiretapping and all that sort of thing would just go out the window with the snap of a finger. You'd turn the place upside down trying to locate something like that. So, its context that makes a big difference on a lot of these questions.

RICHARD RUSK: Incidentally, I, referring to these Otepka people and questions of this nature, am not trying to trip you up in any way or poke holes in your record back there in Washington. I am more or less accepting your views and the views of everyone that has known you that you're an honorable guy and a man of great integrity. When I report that in my book, I just want to have all these loopholes closed.

DEAN RUSK: Well that's all right.

RICHARD RUSK: Don't forget I'm on your team.

DEAN RUSK: Some of the details of it I have forgotten over the years.

RICHARD RUSK: Yeah, you bet. Did the Department have the means of monitoring or recording telephone conversations or the conversations of its employees within the Department, although you, yourself, in your office did not have that capability?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, I suppose that--

RICHARD RUSK: There was equipment in the building?

DEAN RUSK: I suppose that could have been arranged, just that you'd have to work it out with, say, the telephone company in doing it outside. I mean, there are certain things you can do. And also there's considerable technology involved in protecting yourself from other people doing it to you.

I remember once inviting an appropriations subcommittee to come down to the Department to see a demonstration of some of the most advanced electronic gadgetry that was being developed by us and by other governments. And it's really quite amazing stuff. But after we had gotten through this briefing, the congressional members of the subcommittee said, "We found this very interesting, but on bounds we would rather not have known this." I showed it to them because we needed to get support for pretty sophisticated experimentation and research on how to protect ourselves against people doing these things to us.

[break in recording]

DEAN RUSK: --and all this security and spooky business. I had a secretary who was a very able, single girl. One day I had an extraordinarily sensitive document that I wanted to put away somewhere and be able to get it again when needed. So I called her in and explained to her this was a very secret document and asked her to take care of it for me. Then I said, "You don't talk in your sleep, do you?" And she drew herself up and said, "If I were to do so, Mr. Secretary, there would be no one to hear!"

RICHARD RUSK: This Otepka fellow made the charge that other State Department employees were under surveillance. Is the record clean there, to your knowledge? Is it possible that other types of surveillance could have taken place without your knowledge or without your being aware of it?

DEAN RUSK: Well, one can't prove a negative. It's always possible. But I think there was--If anything like that happened it would have been extraordinarily unusual and minimal. There was not a general practice of that kind of thing.

RICHARD RUSK: Why do people leak? Why do lower-level, middle-level, upper-level bureaucrats leak information that's sensitive?

DEAN RUSK: Well, there are a variety of motives involved in something like that. There are people in the bureaucracy who like to appear to be a big shot and who just don't want to confess to somebody that they don't know, and in order to demonstrate that they really are in the know they'll leak something. Or, sometimes what amounts to leaks will occur when some intelligent reporter will come in and say to somebody, "Now this is a story I plan to write tomorrow. Now you look over this story and tell me whether you think I'm on the right track or not." And if the story is off base, then the person in the Department might be tempted to set him straight. Then, once in a while, there will be somebody who will leak in order to try to frustrate the policy of the President or Secretary of State. To me, given our constitutional system, that is the kind of leak which one must not tolerate. But I think the impact of leaks has been greatly exaggerated.

RICHARD RUSK: You made the point that Presidents seem to be more vulnerable to this type of thing, more sensitive to it.

DEAN RUSK: Well they are more sensitive to leaks than Secretaries of State because Presidents are political animals, and they just are more sensitive to things like this. Secretaries of State are not running for anything. And I think I told you earlier that there was only one leak in my eight years there that really bothered me.

RICHARD RUSK: That's the one about eyeball to eyeball--

DEAN RUSK: Eyeball to eyeball, and the other fellow just blinked. Some stupid colleague leaked that right in the middle of the Cuban Missile Crisis and I thought that was a terrible thing for them to do. But, and then sometimes people in government, particularly the President, are inclined to think that there's been a leak when it's just simply [that] a smart reporter's pot it together himself. A lot of those fellows in the press corps there are very intelligent, very experienced, and often they can dope out what's going on without having anybody tell them.

RICHARD RUSK: That leak of your comment during the Cuban Missile Crisis was somewhat embarrassing to you. Do you remember any leaks that were outright damaging to policy or to you or actually affecting the outcome of policy?

DEAN RUSK: In general leaks were more of a problem to relations between a Secretary of State and his President than between the United States and other governments. There are all sorts of sources of leaks around Washington. As far as foreign policy is concerned, these could come from State Department, Pentagon, White House, members of Congressional committees or their staffs, or Embassy Row. Some reporters follow the embassies there in Washington pretty closely, and if a foreign government wants to pursue its own interests by having the press report one thing rather than another, very often they will leak something. I remember when I went to my first meeting with NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] foreign ministers with the Kennedy administration, it was explained to me that the Secretary General of NATO would hold a press conference at the end of the NATO meeting and it was suggested that we foreign ministers not each have our own press conference. Well, I followed that the first time, and then I discovered that at least six or eight of the other foreign ministers had their own private meeting with the press. And so I had to start doing it too in order to be sure that the U.S. point of view

was, from my point of view, fairly and accurately represented. It's a kind of a game. I must say there's one thing that I would be glad to put on the record and that is that when [Andrei Andreevich] Gromyko and I would agree as to how we would deal with the press, he always--

END OF SIDE 1

BEGINNING OF SIDE 2

DEAN RUSK: When I was a student in Germany after Hitler came to power, I remember being in the audience at a big Hitler rally at the Tempelhof airfield there in Berlin. There were a million people on that field and I was struck with the fact that apparently the larger the crowd, the lower in tone its roar became. And with a million people this was a very deep guttural roar and it was almost frightening. I again got in trouble there at that particular occasion because it was some kind of memorial to the German veterans of the earlier wars and they had a bugle corps playing a memorial song and there was a very strange tone to the bugles. I just turned to my neighbor, my friend, and said, "This sounds like a flock of geese." Well, some guy in front of me--

RICHARD RUSK: In German, you said that?

DEAN RUSK: No, I said it in English. But somebody in front of me picked up the word geese and apparently connected it with the fact that goose or geese in French is a real insult and he took high dudgeon at my calling these people geese. I hadn't meant anything at all by it, just the strange tone of the trumpets that I was commenting on.

RICHARD RUSK: All of that information is on the back side of this tape here.

DEAN RUSK: Okay, all right.

RICHARD RUSK: We'll just continue from there. My first questions are just going to deal about intelligence in general: just the process of intelligence gathering and etc., so that all comes as a block. Why don't we go ahead and get into your concerns there and we'll start with you.

JOHNSON: It seems to me that one logical way to discuss the subject of intelligence is to look at three primary missions within that framework. One I would call collection and analysis--and probably that's the most important of all--two, I would refer to as covert action, and three counterintelligence. Let me begin with the first one. What impressions did you have as Secretary of State regarding the quality of intelligence that came your way?

DEAN RUSK: I had a constant flow of information from the intelligence services coming across my desk. There were several systematic briefings waiting for me on my desk every morning put together by poor devils who had to turn up at four or five o'clock in the morning to prepare them. My own personal staff would look through all this material and would underline those things

which they thought it was important that I see, although they had the entire material there in case I wanted to read further. Then I had every morning, every day, an oral briefing from the chief of our Bureau of Intelligence and Research in the Department. There I could put particular questions to him for him to go back and dig up more information on, or he could tell me, summarize for me, what had happened. I think on the whole the flow of intelligence information in our government is pretty good. There are two things which policy officers and the public and the media should not expect of intelligence. One is to be a prophet. Providence has not given us the capacity to pierce the fog of the future with accuracy. And so when intelligence officers are looking ahead, they should do so with considerable circumspection in order not to mislead policy officers. I have said to more than one CIA director that some of these strategic surveys, these strategic estimates ought to begin with the expression "Damned if we know, but if you want our best guess, here it is." There are other situations where the information you want is not present in the real world, therefore there is no way that intelligence can come up with it. For example, Soviet forces marched into Czechoslovakia on a certain Tuesday night in August, 1968. We thought we'd learn later that the Soviets had made that decision on the preceding Saturday; that's three days before. Now, if a week before, we asked our intelligence people whether or not the Soviet Union would move their forces into Czechoslovakia, there is no way that they could have known because the Soviets didn't know. And people like Llewellyn Thompson would say to me, "Well the Soviet forces are there. They've had their maneuvers. They have the capability. But whether they will move or not, we don't know. Take your choice." It's very important for policy officers not to have--that intelligence people not be more certain than they are, than they can be; and otherwise intelligence people can mislead policy people.

JOHNSON: Did you ever, yourself, feel the need to bring in a fairly low-level analyst from the CIA, the man who'd been reading the cable traffic?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, I would quite often bring in junior people. When I would ask--As a general practice, when I would ask an Assistant Secretary to come in to see me about something I would ask him to bring his junior colleagues who were working with him on that particular subject. I wanted to have a chance to hear from them and I wanted them to see me, hear from me.

JOHNSON: What about outside the Department of State did you bring analysts in from CIA or DIA [Defense Intelligence Agency]?

DEAN RUSK: Occasionally, but then it would usually be for a group briefing. We'd get somebody. They have extraordinarily talented people as analysts over at CIA.

RICHARD RUSK: The DIA is what?

DEAN RUSK: Defense Intelligence Agency. They have some extraordinarily able people there on the information and analysis side.

RICHARD RUSK: And your intelligence service is called the what?

DEAN RUSK: The Bureau of Intelligence and Research. And there you have a good many research people like PhD's, working on all sorts of subjects. But they have very close ties with the other intelligence agencies.

RICHARD RUSK: There is a lot of communication back and forth?

DEAN RUSK: A lot of give and take, oh yes.

JOHNSON: Some people think that the INR [Bureau of Intelligence and Research] analytic product is the best in the community. Is that your sense?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I never tried to rate them in that sense, but they were very good. And one thing that INR used to do for me was to send me, during the day, just little snippets, short paragraphs, calling my attention to something that was developing in one or another part of the world. I had a constant flow of these little--They were not PhD theses, they were just little snippets to alert me to something that might be going on and that I might want to know about.

RICHARD RUSK: What is the INR?

JOHNSON: It's the Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

DEAN RUSK: Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

JOHNSON: Did you confine through these sources information that you couldn't have found in the *New York Times*?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, yes, sure, lots of it. You see the *New York Times* is able to use only about three percent of the daily output of AP [Associated Press], and UPI [United Press International], and writers and so forth. Their slogan, "all the news that's fit to print," should have a little parenthesis under it, "at least three percent of it".

JOHNSON: Some directors of the CIA have complained that they never got to see the President very much, particularly [John A.] McCone and I guess [Richard McGarrah] Helms, too. Did you spend much time with DCIs [Directors of Central Intelligence]?

DEAN RUSK: Sure. They were present at National Security Council meetings at those Tuesday luncheon sessions with Johnson. I had a good many talks with the head of CIA, just the two of us in my own office. I don't know whether I ever, myself, visited CIA; I think I might have done it once. But, typically, he would come to see me rather than the other way around.

JOHNSON: Some who have written on the Bay of Pigs say that the CIA analysts who were warning against such covert action were never heard or listened to--

DEAN RUSK: They were never heard from in the presence of President Kennedy. I think that's a mistake. See, there's a tradition in the military: when you have a group of officers together and you want to get their opinion, you start with the junior and then work your way up to the seniors.

That is to protect the juniors against the temptation just to repeat what their seniors had said. Some Presidents often use that technique. For example, when President Truman met with a group of us on the occasion of the Korean invasion [the invasion of South Korea], there were about ten of us there and I was one of the juniors. I was one of the first to be called upon by President Truman as to what I thought we ought to do.

RICHARD RUSK: If I can ask a related question here, Loch [Kingsford Johnson], about this popular comment that part of the problem with intelligence is that intelligence analysts are not prophets. They can't pierce the fog of the future, yet they are expected to pierce the fog of the future, at least in terms of the public and perhaps public officials. You call this thing the Pearl Harbor syndrome, where they don't foresee an event they catch holy hell for it afterwards. The effects of that upon future intelligence, how would you describe that?

DEAN RUSK: Yes, well, one of the problems about this demand that somehow intelligence predict the future is that intelligence people don't want to get caught with something adverse happening which they have not somehow predicted. And so that tempts them into all sorts of predictions, most of which never occur. And so the policy officer has to sort of figure out for himself which ones of these may be for real and which ones of them are simply crying wolf. So I think that complete candor on the part of intelligence people as to the nature of their information and the nature of their conclusions would be very helpful to a policy officer.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you care to comment on that that incident in the War Department after Pearl Harbor, when a fellow officer advised you to take one last look at a note?

DEAN RUSK: Oh yes, well, I was in the British section of military intelligence on Pearl Harbor Day. And I'd come to work very early that morning, around six o'clock, because we were all pretty certain that the Japanese were going to attack in Malaya and in Indonesia because we had been following a Japanese fleet that was on the move right down there in that area. But the Japanese section of military intelligence had not predicted Pearl Harbor. And when Pearl Harbor occurred, my own colonel, in charge of the British Empire section, showed me a memorandum. He said "I thought you ought to see this, but you won't see it again, because all the copies are being collected and will be destroyed." And this was a study which they had written [the Japanese section had written] about a week before in which they had listed the possible points of Japanese attack in the Pacific. And Pearl Harbor was not on the list. So, they didn't predict Pearl Harbor but they sure predicted the Roberts Commission of Investigation, because they destroyed all copies of that particular memorandum.

JOHNSON: You said that Kennedy didn't have access to the CIA analysis on Cuba. Does that imply that you did?

DEAN RUSK: You mean these juniors?

JOHNSON: Yes.

DEAN RUSK: No, that wasn't brought to us. As a matter of fact I wasn't even permitted to talk to my own Bureau of Intelligence and Research about the Bay of Pigs situation.

JOHNSON: To preserve secrecy?

DEAN RUSK: Yes. Right. It was being held in such few hands that the talents and resources of the government were not brought to bear. I have a memorandum that Rich [Richard Geary Rusk] has on some of the reasons for the mistakes at the Bay of Pigs. You can see that if you want to.

JOHNSON: Did you have a sense which was more important during your years, human source intelligence or the technical intelligence?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I rather regretted the fact that we came to rely so heavily on technical intelligence that we lost our touch for espionage.

RICHARD RUSK: I need those categories defined.

JOHNSON: Human is the classical espionage, the spy on the ground who would steal documents or listen to agents; and technical is the satellites and what not.

DEAN RUSK: Satellite photography and monitoring communications and things of that sort. No, I think we need to improve our human intelligence sources. We've gotten out of the know-how to some extent in maintaining espionage. Now in some countries it's very difficult where you have block captains keeping watch on every sixty people, and if any stranger, even from that very country itself, comes into the area he is immediately checked on and picked up. And so it's very difficult in some countries to maintain espionage. But it's an important source. Of course all of these sources have to be related to all the other sources. You have to put the jigsaw pieces together to get a complete picture.

JOHNSON: During the Nixon years it's pretty clear that Richard Helms decided not to give a certain document to the administration advising that an invasion into Cambodia in May 1970 wouldn't really accomplish much, because Helms had found out that the White House was so dedicated to that invasion that no intelligence would--

DEAN RUSK: Well I think intelligence people need to be very careful about making policy recommendations because that's not their business. One thing one has to watch is whether or not the intelligence itself is being tilted in order to favor one policy rather than another.

RICHARD RUSK: And that would occur when CIA or intelligence gets involved in the operational end of things as well as strategic.

DEAN RUSK: Yes. I mean, for example, one of the major causes of the error on the Bay of Pigs was that the same people who were proposing the operation were the very people who were providing the information on which a judgment was supposed to be made. And after the Bay of Pigs we separated these two functions as much as we could so that the intelligence would not be tilted by operational. I must say that in such places as those Tuesday luncheon sessions or meetings of the National Security Council the head of CIA very, very rarely made any policy

recommendations. He typically did not look upon that as his function; he was supposed to provide information.

JOHNSON: Do you know of any examples during your years in which intelligence was withheld from policy purposes makers or distorted in some way?

DEAN RUSK: Even the very poor information we were given prior to the Bay of Pigs, I would hesitate to say that it was deliberately distorted. There's a natural tendency for people to mobilize information to support their own point of view, and one has to be careful about that in the intelligence community. But, no, I don't think I recall any deliberate attempts to mislead high policy officers by the nature of the information. Also, there's a safeguard against this because we have several intelligence agencies operating alongside of each other. At the end of the war, I was special assistant to Secretary of War Robert [Porter] Patterson, and he pressed very hard for a single intelligence agency for the government as a whole. At that time I supported that view, but later I came to disagree with that. I think it's much more wholesome for there to be independent intelligence agencies in State and Defense, CIA, NSA [National Security Agency] under the general supervision of the director of central intelligence so that they can balance off each other on certain points, or they can at least point policy officers to disagreements within the intelligence community on particular situations.

JOHNSON: As you know, Truman found it very frustrating to get so many different reports from different agencies. He wanted it coordinated better and he wanted--

DEAN RUSK: Well that should be done by somebody on the White House staff to pull these things together. But a President should always know major differences of view within the intelligence community that bear upon major policies.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, if intelligence was not deliberately distorted, in your opinion, what about the effects of bureaucracy: the effects of government itself on the intelligence gathering process and how sometimes views are inadvertently warped as they pass up through the layers of bureaucracy, starting with the lower-level guys in the field?

DEAN RUSK: Well, remember that on every day there would be bales of information. And for that to get to the policy officers in any kind of useable form, it has to be digested. And then the digests get further digested. In that process of reducing unusable quantities of information to useable information that a policy officer has time to get to, there could be some slippages: some. But I don't think those are deliberate.

RICHARD RUSK: To some extent bureaucracy is a necessary filter, in your opinion?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, yes, simply because of the mass involved.

JOHNSON: Now this may be outside of what we want to discuss today, but of course when you talk about intelligence distortion that brings you to the Vietnam war. And the allegation was made by some that the military commanders were distorting, keeping information back, from the White House.

DEAN RUSK: Well, I don't believe that at all in terms of any attempt to mislead the people in Washington. This is involved in the [William Childs] Westmoreland suit against CBS now. Had I been called to testify, I would have.

RICHARD RUSK: Looks like you're not going to be called.

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. Unless CBS calls me. But, William Westmoreland lived all of his life at West Point and in the officer corps of the Army. There, there is a very, very strong tradition against what they call false official statements. I lived for five years in the officer corps of the Army and I was deeply impressed by the strength of this tradition. Had William Westmoreland given orders which were clearly to deceive people in Washington, he would have earned the contempt of his fellow officers and bells would have started ringing all over Washington. There's just no way that could have happened. Secondly, this was an argument about an order of battle. Well some people--Well, an order of battle is supposed to represent those military forces in the field which are a threat to your own forces or can prevent you from carrying out your military mission. It is not a total inventory of all the elements in the war-making capabilities of the other side.

JOHNSON: It's certainly not the political cadres.

DEAN RUSK: Yeah, I mean it's an order of battle; it's not something else. I don't believe, for example, that Hanoi would have included in its order of battle Senator [James William] Fullbright, and Senator Church, and Jane Fonda and people like that, although they were a considerable help to them in their propaganda: the propaganda part of their war. And then, also, an order of battle is inherently unreliable. The other side doesn't form up in parade and invite you to come in and count them. And I've had enough experience with this, both as a part of military intelligence, and as a user of military intelligence to know that there could be very large variations in numbers depending upon who's looking and who's making the guess. An order of battle can only be an educated guess depending upon the kinds of information you have at your disposal. Even when you capture an enemy document that says that battalion so-and-so is here and regiment so-and-so is there, that document normally doesn't show how many are available for duty, how many are sick, how many are on leave, things of that sort. So, at the end of the day this turns out to be largely a matter of judgment and it's proper for you to look to the responsible commander and his judgment as perhaps the starting point. Now, there are always people in intelligence down the line who have some different views and who think that the people upstairs are just stupid, and that's a common phenomenon; there's nothing new about that.

JOHNSON: When you talk about the need for independent intelligence agencies, I think that's got the ring of truth to it and I agree with you. But what about the notion that the DCI is in a poor position to guide, even in a general way, military intelligence when the Secretary of Defense outranks him in the academic hierarchy?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, he's not supposed to tell military intelligence what to say. Now he will frequently be in touch with the Secretary of Defense. But what was important is that when these reports come in from intelligence communities, that the different views of the different

intelligence agencies, if there be such, be made known in the report so that the policy officer knows that, "Well here's what CIA said, but here's what DIA said, or here's what the Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Research in the State Department said." You must always make a note, a footnote at least, as to divergent views so that the policy officer is alerted to these things.

RICHARD RUSK: Did that happen consistently in your experience?

DEAN RUSK: Yes.

RICHARD RUSK: It did, huh.

DEAN RUSK: On almost every national intelligence estimate there was usually a parenthesis or a footnote indicating divergence of views here and there. Now another thing that one has to keep an eye on, particularly in military intelligence but also to some extent in CIA, intelligence tends to concentrate on the worst case, the worst case.

JOHNSON: Is that particularly true of Defense intelligence?

DEAN RUSK: I think so, because, see, the military has to be braced for the worst case. For example, a commander of troops in the field has to give thought to whether or not his own forces are going to be destroyed, which is his worst case. So the tendency is to inflate the capabilities of the adversary.

JOHNSON: Just the opposite of what Westmoreland is accused of doing.

DEAN RUSK: And to minimize the capabilities of your own forces, your own side, because they tend to look at the worst case. Well, now, in terms of policy, a President and Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense have to make some policy judgments as to acceptable degrees of risk. Otherwise, we'd be an armed camp. And it's up to the Congress to decide, given the total situation, what is a prudent level for our armed forces when they make their authorizations and appropriations. So that there is that kind of adjustment that needs to be made deriving from the "worst case" psychology.

JOHNSON: When it comes to gathering intelligence the CIA needs an excuse to be able to see who traces the question of cover. Sometimes the CIA has wanted to have diplomatic cover overseas. Would you think that would be a good idea?

DEAN RUSK: Well this, I'm not sure this has been handled too well for quite some time there. CIA people in our embassies were not listed as having a specific assignment, where everybody else was. Anybody who looked through an embassy telephone book could fairly easily, with a little experience, pick out the CIA people. So, they started giving them diplomatic-type assignments and listing them as diplomatic officers. Some of this grew up because the CIA was able to get the money and the State Department was not. And the CIA could provide personnel for political, economic, other kinds of analysis in embassies where we were simply short of State Department personnel. You see, the CIA budget in those days was prepared in CIA and then shown to a couple of especially clear officers in the Bureau of the Budget, then whisked by the

nose of the President, and then put in the hands of Senator Dick [Richard Brevard] Russell [Jr.]. And he would lose it in the Defense budget and nobody would ever ask him any questions about it.

JOHNSON: What about Carl Vinson, did he have anything to do with it?

DEAN RUSK: Well, he--Yeah, I think he and Dick Russell worked together pretty closely on that. But this business of using diplomatic cover for intelligence people is a pretty common practice among nations. In fact, everybody does it. And bear in mind that one of the primary functions of an ambassador and his embassy is to provide information about the country in which he is posted. So the line between normal diplomatic reporting activity on the one side and something that might be a little under the rug on the other is a very difficult line to draw.

JOHNSON: This really raises the last question I had on this particular subject. There's been some tension over the years between the chief admission in the field of the ambassador and the chief of station, the top CIA person. And there's been an allegation that sometimes the CIA will bypass the ambassador and conduct its own little American foreign policy.

DEAN RUSK: Well, you see, we went through a period when the head of CIA was the brother of the Secretary of State. And during that period some rather bad habits developed. For example, the CIA station chief would, through his own CIA channels, report back to Washington on his view of the performance of the American Ambassador. Well that was nonsense. So President Kennedy, very early, tried to deal with this by a letter which is in the record somewhere--

JOHNSON: I had that once.

DEAN RUSK: --Making it clear that the ambassador is in charge of all United States government personnel and activities in his country and he, himself, had access to CIA communications if he wanted to. And we tried to put a stop to that kind of thing. Now, this would vary from post to post, depending upon the attitude of the ambassador, and his wishes, and his relationships with the chief of stations as far as CIA was concerned. But, it tended to clean the situation up pretty well, to make it clear that the ambassador was in charge and that he had access to all communications going out of his embassy.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you care to relate your experience regarding the Dulles [John Foster and Allen Welsh] brothers and your role as president of the [John Davison] Rockefeller Foundation?

DEAN RUSK: Oh. Well, John Foster Dulles was Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Rockefeller Foundation at the time that I was elected president. And one day, after I had been in the Foundation for some time, Allen Dulles, Director of CIA, came to see me and he said that he understood that our Foundation officers visiting abroad had frequent discussions, sometimes of an intimate political sort, with leaders in other countries, which was true, and that these Foundation officers would write memos of conversation about these talks. And he said that it would be a great help if the CIA could be given access to these memos of conversation. I told him no, I couldn't do that, because I couldn't do that without letting the officers of the Foundation know that that was being done in which case they'd stop writing such memos. Secondly, if that

ever leaked, got out, it would spoil the ability of Rockefeller Foundation officers to have such talks with key officials in other countries, and we found those very important to the work of the Foundation. And I was backed up in that attitude by members of my Board of Trustees who had had long service in government, like Robert [Abercrombie] Lovett, and John J. McCloy and Lew [Lewis Williams] Douglas, and people like that. I made it stick. I was somewhat amused and a little irritated when I learned from the [I think during the Church committee hearings] that Allen Dulles then went out and started reading the mail of the Rockefeller Foundation.

JOHNSON: The [Nicholas de Belleville] Katzenbach Commission brought a formal stop to that relationship between the CIA and many foundations, as I recall, in '67. Do you remember when that conversation took place?

DEAN RUSK: No. It was in the mid-fifties sometime.

JOHNSON: To go to the next subject, which is of course much more controversial: covert action. I've read, or listened to, the recorded tapes, so I won't ask you to repeat what you said about that. But one of the things that I wondered about when I listened to that tape was this informal meeting of statutory NSC members. One got the impression that these Tuesday lunches and Saturday meetings between you and McNamara were much more important than any formal statutory gathering of the NSC.

DEAN RUSK: Well, the Tuesday luncheons were, in fact, the NSC: that is, the principals of the NSC. Typically, at those luncheons would be the President, occasionally the Vice President, but always the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Director of CIA, and the National Security Advisor. So, those were the statutory members of the National Security Council.

JOHNSON: But it wasn't officially called a meeting--

DEAN RUSK: We didn't call them that because if you'd call an official meeting of the National Security Council there'd be twenty-five or thirty people in the room. Everybody wants to bring, and it gets to be a matter of prestige as to whether you're going to be able to get in on those meetings, you see.

JOHNSON: So is it correct to say that more important business took place in these luncheons than in the formal convenings?

DEAN RUSK: As far as Vietnam was concerned, yes. But we talked frequently about other subjects as well. But now, the minutes of those Tuesday luncheon sessions are like most minutes of such meetings: pretty sterile. They simply sort of summarize the subjects and what conclusions, if any, were reached. They do not reflect the lively debate that we had at those Tuesday luncheon sessions. See, everybody there knew that they could speak freely and wouldn't read about it in the *Washington Post* or the *New York Times* the next morning.

JOHNSON: Not a lot of staff and--

DEAN RUSK: That's right. And so we debated each other and the President very vigorously in those meetings.

JOHNSON: Where were those luncheons held?

DEAN RUSK: In the White House.

RICHARD RUSK: Let's see, Walt [Whitman] Rostow kept notes on those?

DEAN RUSK: Well, there was always a note taker there. Sometimes it was Tom [Thomas] Johnson, now publisher of the *Los Angeles Times*; sometimes it was, maybe, [William Don] Bill Moyers sat in occasionally.

RICHARD RUSK: LBJ would have--

DEAN RUSK: Or McGeorge Bundy or Walt Rostow--Walt Rostow, typically. But we would go back to our departments and not write our own memorandum of such a meeting. But if we had any doubts about what the conclusion had been, what the President's decision had been, we would check back with each other by phone or with Walt Rostow. And if there was any doubt he would simply ask the President. But we did not circulate those. I never wrote memos of conversation that I had with the Presidents I served and circulated them within the Department. I would translate those conversations into instructions in the Department, but I was not one of those who compiled a personal record over against my own two Presidents by writing diaries or by writing memos of conversations.

JOHNSON: I'm certainly not asking you to discuss anything of a classified nature, but are there any things in public domain that you could talk about with reference to strong positions of advocacy you took for a covert action in these NSC meetings or a covert action you strongly opposed?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I vetoed a number of proposed covert actions. These things come sometimes from the tendency of intelligence to become a thing in itself rather than related to the needs of the government. For example, when David Bruce became Ambassador in London, a friend of his in the British government [K.E.] came to him one day and said, "David, tell your air attaches to stop flying low over British factories taking pictures. It makes our people nervous. If you want pictures of our factories, we'll give them to you. Just ask us for them." Well, when David Bruce looked into that he found that, you see, that the intelligence people have a template of information that they need from every country in the world if they had their way. And included in this template is the category of bombing targets. And here our people were flying low over British factories taking pictures so they could fill in that section on bombing targets for Britain. And it's that kind of thing. Now there are times--Well I remember on one occasion, I may not tell you what the proposal was. It was a proposal to use a particular means to get information. And I said, "I don't like that. By the way, for whom are you getting this information?" And they said, "We're getting it for you, Mr. Secretary." I said, "Well I can tell you right now that I would rather not have the information than to get it that way. I'm opposed to it. Don't do it." And they didn't do it.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you remember the instance?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I can't. Hell with it.

JOHNSON: You said that you had been able to veto some proposals. Would the objection of any statutory member of the NSC automatically veto a situation? Did you take formal votes?

DEAN RUSK: Well, if the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Defense says "no" to something like that, then the only recourse of those proposing it is to take it to the President. And most of the time they would not have the ability or the guts to take it to the President, and so these vetoes were usually effective.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, during the--I think this information came out of the Church or the Muskie subcommittee hearings. But during your tenure there were approximately twenty proposals for CIA covert activity that came out of the Department. Do you recall what those may have been? Are these the ones that got by your veto or ones that you personally approved?

DEAN RUSK: I wouldn't be able to go into that. I don't know to what extent that's still classified. But in any event I wouldn't remember any significant number of them.

JOHNSON: I've got one of these that we can talk about in general terms without getting into anything classified.

DEAN RUSK: All right.

JOHNSON: One of the things we do in a covert way is to have propaganda dispensed around the world through secret channels. And my question would be: Is there really a need for that when we have a rather robust USIA [United States Information Agency]?

DEAN RUSK: Well, one of the reasons why CIA was drawn into such things as giving support to the National Students Association to send delegations to these international student meetings, or support for Radio Free Europe, or Radio Liberty, was simply money. CIA could get the money.

JOHNSON: I see.

DEAN RUSK: And the State Department, USIA could not. And so there were some things that were done simply because they had the money and we didn't, which could have been done quite entirely overtly had we had the money.

JOHNSON: I think that's an interesting point.

DEAN RUSK: And so we cleaned that up now, so that that kind of aid is given overtly by one of the other agencies. But CIA got into that simply because they had the money.

JOHNSON: Of course the CIA is still in that business, and one wonders if it isn't redundant and unnecessary. Why have the CIA and the USIA propagating--

DEAN RUSK: Well, our work in that field is only a fragment of the activities of the Soviet Union, and they engage in what are called "black operations" much more than we do. For example, we found during the sixties that a couple of crudely forged documents had been planted on a couple of Presidents in Africa trying to persuade that President that CIA was out to destroy him. And when we looked at it, it was very simple to demonstrate to the President of the country involved that this was the crudest kind of forgery. That kind of thing goes on a lot, but we don't do nearly as much in this field as some other governments do.

JOHNSON: Cy [Cyrus Roberts] Vance and others have said that we should use covert action only when the vital interests of the United States are at stake.

DEAN RUSK: Well, the one reason I am in support of the maintenance of some covert capability is that there may be situations where covert activity is the only alternative to war. I'd rather have covert activity than war. But you have to use it very sparingly and under tight control.

JOHNSON: Was it your sense that Bobby Kennedy played an unduly large role in such affairs?

DEAN RUSK: Well he had a very lively interest. And I don't know the answer to this question, but it may be that he had his own direct contacts with CIA and encouraged them to do certain things that had not been taken up in the 303 committee or with the members of the National Security Council, and that the people in CIA more or less supposed that when Bobby Kennedy was speaking, he was speaking for John Kennedy. I'm convinced that is not so. But, I think Bobby Kennedy had a--And I had to veto several of Bobby Kennedy's ideas.

JOHNSON: I know the one about businessmen that you mentioned on the tape.

DEAN RUSK: Right.

JOHNSON: Is that maybe one of the answers to the paradox that on one hand the CIA claims that it had marching orders from the White House for the assassination plots, yet Secretary McNamara and other leading cabinet members say that there was no such authority granted?

DEAN RUSK: It's possible, but I don't know whether there is anything in the Robert Kennedy papers that would bear on that or not.

JOHNSON: Is there any other explanation for this discrepancy in perceptions between the agency and the cabinet?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I suppose that somebody down the line in CIA would think, "Well President Kennedy approved the Bay of Pigs operation, so he must be in favor of these lesser actions." And they assumed somehow that that kind of activity had his blessing even though it had not been reviewed by top people.

RICHARD RUSK: I wonder if they felt a duty to go ahead and do certain things that they knew that the President was better off not knowing about.

DEAN RUSK: Well, that's a very dangerous thing to get into, for people to get into, because sometimes you are tempted to try to shield the President from something and take the heat away from him by not bringing him into it. The cover story at the time of the shooting down of the U-2 by the Soviet Union was, in effect, that the President--this was not an action by the President. But when Eisenhower looked at it he realized that that would mean that he, the President, was not in charge of the United States government. And he didn't want to confess that, either to our own people or to other governments. And so he immediately took responsibility for the U-2 plane and, in effect, threw the cover story out the window. I personally felt that we ought to resume our diplomatic relations with the Vatican. Those relations had never been broken. It just happened that in the 1860s Congress put a rider on an appropriation bill saying that none of these funds shall be used to maintain a minister in Rome, which was in the Vatican City. And Secretary of State [William Henry] Seward wrote to our minister in Rome and said, "Now you can do it either way. You can stay there at your own expense or you can come home, but we can't pay you." And our minister said, "Well I can't stay here at my own expense, so I'll come home." And throughout all those years, the Vatican diplomatic list included the United States with a notation of vacant opposite it. Well, at the beginning of the Kennedy administration, I felt that we ought to go ahead and normalize that relationship. And I spoke to President Kennedy and I told him that this might be complicated for him because he was a Catholic President, but I was a Presbyterian Secretary of State and that I would be glad to take the responsibility for this. Well, he immediately pointed out that there was no way that he could avoid responsibility for it. But he said check it out with the Catholic leadership in this country and see what they think. And we did; and he Catholic leadership in this country, particularly the Cardinals, were not in favor of this. Whether it was because they felt that they were the channel to the Vatican or whether they didn't want to stir up the Southern Baptists and things like that, but the Cardinals were rather cool to this idea at that time.

JOHNSON: Are there conditions in which assassination might be a useful part of our--

DEAN RUSK: Well, in general I'm very much opposed to the idea of political assassination of specific political leaders, because if that grows, then international life becomes anarchy. Also, if you look at what happens when somebody is overthrown, the successor is usually not much better from your point of view than the guy who was killed. There's only one instance that tempts me on this point. At one time Adolf Hitler was one of seven people in a beer hall in Munich. Somewhere along the way, did somebody have the duty to assassinate him? Because fifty million people paid their lives for this thing. Whether his assassination would have decapitated the Nazi movement and gone a long way toward preventing World War II is something else. But that's the only case where I think there's a real question as to whether political assassination might not have been somebody's duty.

RICHARD RUSK: In time of war it's, of course, entirely legitimate to mount those kind of operations to go after leadership--

DEAN RUSK: Yeah, but even there you want to be very careful because typically you need somebody on the other side who can make a decision to quit. And also that's a two-edged sword. It can work both ways. They can come after you. You see, when two nations declare war on each other, they respect the inviolability of embassies and diplomatic personnel. They intern them and usually work out exchanges through some mutual--So even in wartime one has to be pretty careful about whether assassination is a good idea of the top leaders.

JOHNSON: Is it unwise to make a checklist of the types of covert action that should be prohibited, such as mass destruction of crops in a country?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I wouldn't want to make a checklist like that myself. But if anybody roots it out of the public record it's all right with me.

JOHNSON: Looking at counterintelligence, you said on the other tape that when you look at our mail-opening program that gained a lot of controversy, that there were really very few letters that were ever opened--

END OF SIDE 2

