

Dean Rusk Oral History Collection

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Dean Rusk interviewed by Richard Rusk and Tom Schoenbaum

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RICHARD RUSK: --with Dean Rusk. It deals with the press and the media. Pop, I just want to quote you a first paragraph out of this story that John [Wesley] English wrote and quote him as reading "'The press demands complete candor from a public official on every subject except one, namely what he thinks about the press,' former Secretary of State Dean Rusk said as a broad grin transformed his dour image into a laughing Buddha."

DEAN RUSK: Start at the beginning. Whatever I say about the press starts from the view that the American people are better served by their news media than are the people of any other country I know, and I have seen the press in a good many countries. Secondly, I personally am fanatic about freedom of speech and freedom of the press. I think it's utterly fundamental to a free society. If I had a choice between a responsible press and a free press, I would take a free press every time for the reasons set forth by John Milton and John Stuart Mill and Thomas Jefferson and others.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you feel that way when you were in office?

DEAN RUSK: Yes. I don't like codes of ethics journalism. I think those are limitations on freedom of the press. I don't like all this fraternization among publishers and editors and national associations because that tends to convert them into a gentlemen's club where they don't take on each other. Further, the news media are the principal channel of communication between public officials and the people. One has to be aware of the limitations of this channel and that causes public officials to raise some searching questions about the press because the official himself heavily relies upon the news media. So, over the years I have used my freedom of speech to point to some of these limitations, whether or not they will make any difference. For example, the very answer given by the news media to the question "What is news?" creates a distortion of the picture of the world in which we live. Normality, serenity, agreement, are simply not newsworthy. It's the controversial, the violent, the extraordinary that is picked up by the media, so that the context of normality in world affairs gets overlooked. The overwhelming majority of international frontiers are peaceful. The overwhelming majority of treaties are complied with. The overwhelming majority of disputes are settled by peaceful means. But if that is not the impression of the man in the street, it is because he doesn't hear about normality.

SCHOENBAUM: But that brings up the point, how do we differentiate our press, then, from the Soviet Press. I remember reading *Pravda* for a couple months. And in *Pravda*, of course, everything is rosy. You hear about wonderful grain harvests and wonderful progress. Jetliner crashes are never reported. It's a rosy picture of the world. It seems to me our newspapers would be giving us a disservice if they reduced themselves to that too.

DEAN RUSK: I'm not looking for rosy reporting and a Pollyanna attitude toward life. I just think that the bad news ought to be balanced off with more positive, constructive news more often than it is. For example, no one in the media called attention to the fact last August 9th that we had put behind us thirty-nine years since a nuclear weapon had been fired in anger. Now, that itself is one hell of a story. But nobody writes it. They don't speak of it. All the governments of the world, despite many differences they have among themselves, put their heads together and eliminated smallpox from the human race. This great killer of mankind is gone. You had very little media attention to that. There are a lot of constructive things going on that get no attention compared to the negative, the violent, the controversial. The United States, for example, on every working day is attending somewhere between fifteen and thirty multilateral international conferences somewhere in the world, ranging in subject matter from the control of nuclear weapons to the control of hog cholera. Only about twenty percent of those even get mentioned in the press. Yet a lot of very constructive things are done at these meetings. Now, there are some other problems. There is increasingly a problem of competition within the media. As far as television is concerned, they are racing for ratings and viewers. The same with radio. The same with columnists. The same with byline writers. Sometimes you have reporters on the same newspaper competing with each other for space on the front page. That competition also tends to create a distortion. When a columnist has to write, say, four columns a week, there must be times when they will sit there with paper in the typewriter and ask themselves, "Well, what in the hell am I going to talk about today that's going to grab attention?" And this desire to grab attention points toward the unusual, the dramatic, again a distortion in the situation. Television has been almost fatally infected with show business in their news program. That creates another distortion of the situation.

There is also a problem of time. There are only a limited number of column inches, only a limited number of breathless moments on radio and television news reporting. So time imposes severe limits on what the media--This problem of time is very difficult. For example, in press conferences if I were to answer a question for more than sixty seconds or so, the fellows would start shuffling their feet and later accuse me of filibustering to avoid more questions. But the question might require fifteen or twenty minutes to discuss in any kind of depth or context at all. So you are snatching at sixty seconds worth. Now, if you pick up this particular sixty seconds this time and then the next time you pick up another sixty seconds worth of the same problem, then you've said something different. This is likely to be interpreted as a 'change in policy'. In congressional hearings, if you answer a question for more than about two minutes, the chairman will usually tap his gavel and say, "I respectfully ask the witness to keep his answer short so that junior members of the committee can get their questions in."--Pressure of time. Now the same thing applies to the readers and listeners. If a network were to put on a three-hour news program every evening, as they easily could in terms of the interesting and important information available on that day, I don't think any of us would spend three hours a day of our lives listening to it. So, this pressure of time is of great importance.

Now, another element is that our news media do such a phenomenal job in keeping us up to date that reporters at a press conference are not interested in what happened yesterday or last week, they want to know what's going to happen next week and next month. I did some spot checks with my press conferences and found that about eighty percent of my questions were about the future. Well, I couldn't stand there before 600 reporters and a battery of television cameras and

answer eighty percent of my questions by saying, "Damned if I know." But providence has not given us the capacity to probe the fog of the future with accuracy. So you do your best with it. And if two months later things happened about the way you said you thought they would, that's overlooked. But if they turn out differently, that's one of those small contributions to the credibility gap.

Now, people adopt different policies toward the press when they go into public office. In my own case, I would never say to one reporter what I would not say to any other reporter who asked me the same question. In other words, I would, in effect, reward initiative by answering a question that a particular reporter put. But I wouldn't give it to him on any kind of exclusive basis. If any other reporter asked me the same question, I gave him the same answer. Now the working stiffs in the press corps there appreciated that very much. But the big name people, like your [James Barrett] "Scottie" Restons and your [Joseph Wright] Joe Alsops and people like that, didn't like it because they wanted special information.

Further, I never lied to the press. And I think that's utterly fundamental. One must never do that. Not only as a matter of character, but as a matter of practicality. Sometimes you have to remain silent. Sometimes there is information that you don't want to get into. And so there are times when you have to learn to say nothing at considerable length and not really answer the question. There is, built into our system, a tension between the news media and officials in government. It's the job of the reporters to bore in to get the story. But there are times when it is the duty of the public official to keep his mouth shut-- not to reveal information. That is a question which I think should never be resolved in terms of rules, regulations, laws, whatever else, because I think that tension itself is wholesome. If the reporters weren't there constantly boring in to get the story, then the bureaucracy would abuse secrecy pretty badly. It's instinctive in the bureaucracy not to talk about what they're doing. But, I think it's the duty of people in government to keep quiet about information that has to remain secret for a period. And the primary responsibility falls upon the offices of government.

Now, when a new administration comes to town a bunch of new boys arrive. They sometimes are unaware of the fact that the Washington press corps is the best informed, intelligent, most sophisticated press corps in the world. These veterans in the press corps in Washington have all sorts of ways of getting information, particularly from new boys who haven't learned about the game yet. For example, Scottie Reston would use what I would call the bedside manner. He would come in and say, "Gee, Mr. Secretary, I don't see how you do it. Here you're working eighteen hours a day. You've got these people in such-and-such a country acting up in an impossible way. You've got senators hanging on your heels and batting your ears around." By the time he goes on that way a little bit you have a lump in your throat and first thing you know, you're saying to him, "Well, Scottie, you don't have the half of it. Let me tell you the rest of it." And he's got his story. Joe Alsop would use the hand grenade technique. He'd come into your office a little breathless and scowling and saying, "How could the government of the United States be as stupid as it was yesterday? Any idiot would know that that was not the thing to do." And he'd go on down that trail for a little bit and you'd be tempted to say, "Now wait a minute Joe, you don't know what in the hell you're talking about. Let me straighten you out." And he's got his story. But some of these reporters are highly--

RICHARD RUSK: What do you mean by the 'big shot syndrome'? You've got three or four other styles here.

DEAN RUSK: Sometimes there are people in government who simply don't want to confess that they don't know. And they'll pretend to know. They don't want to let a reporter know that somehow they are out of the picture. They'll pontificate a bit and pretend that they do know, and in the process just may or may not leak something that should have been kept quiet. There are always those who are subject to that particular syndrome.

RICHARD RUSK: What do you mean by the 'cockfight syndrome'? I'm drawing some of these terms out of John English's article. I don't see any problems with redundancy in this.

DEAN RUSK: One of the juiciest sources of stories around Washington are stories about feuding between public officials within an administration, or between somebody in the administration and somebody on Capitol Hill. A reporter is likely to come in and say, "You know, I was talking to Senator so-and-so the other day and he said he thought you were off your rocker about so-and-so," you see. And if you're not careful, you say, "Did that son of a bitch say that? Let me straighten you out about Senator so-and-so." And the first thing you know, you've got a pretty good feud going and that's prime story material.

SCHOENBAUM: Did you learn these things from hard experience? Did you fall for each of these tricks once or something?

DEAN RUSK: Not really, because I had learned a good deal about it during the Truman administration when I was keeping my eyes and ears open. I got to know a good many of these press people pretty well.

SCHOENBAUM: How did you handle that technique? When "Scottie" Reston came in and used this technique, how did you handle it?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, you just smile and let him go on a bit until he got around to his question. You'd keep your cool with a fellow like Joe Alsop and not get excited, because you knew that was his style.

SCHOENBAUM: Would you wait for specific questions? I mean, you would let them do all this and you would keep silent and wait for a specific question or something like that?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, sure.

RICHARD RUSK: When you're discussing your various rules for dealing with the press, when you wanted something out, normally your own press people would take care of that. But would there be instances in which you personally wanted to put a certain word out? How would you handle that? Would you call these people in?

DEAN RUSK: In the first place, I never used the press for trial balloons. I never tossed up something just to see what their reaction would be.

RICHARD RUSK: Never, never?

DEAN RUSK: Never, never. Never used it as a trial balloon, because I thought that was not only a little dangerous for people as high as--

RICHARD RUSK: Would you have other people at the White House do this type of thing?

DEAN RUSK: No, not really. Because I think trial balloons are a pretty tricky business and it's better to stay away from them. But I did have a background meeting almost every Friday afternoon over drinks there on the eighth floor of the State Department for about thirty key reporters. There we would go over the events of the past week and look ahead to the next week as to what was coming up. We just had a very relaxed kind of conversation. I found those quite valuable and the press found it quite valuable. At one point, late in the sixties, the *Washington Post* people decided to object to that weekly backgrounder as being an improper instrument for communication between the State Department and the press.

RICHARD RUSK: On what grounds?

DEAN RUSK: That you should not be putting out information, backgrounders, that you weren't prepared to acknowledge publicly. So when the *Washington Post* people raised this objection, I said, "Well, it's no skin off of me. Talk to the other reporters who come to that meeting and see if they wanted it continued. We can drop it if they want to." But the other reporters wanted it continued. They pointed out that in this *Washington Post* attitude was a competitive advantage for the *Washington Post* because they were resident there in Washington and they had the staff to comb the government to get that kind of information without sharing with everybody else. And so we continued those meetings despite the fact that the *Washington Post*, for a time, did not participate. They finally came back I believe.

RICHARD RUSK: Were these Friday afternoon meetings regularly scheduled and continued throughout your eight years? How did that work?

DEAN RUSK: I forget just when they start. I think it was probably the last four or five years we did them. My press folks would simply pass the word around to these reporters as to whether such a meeting was on. There we'd have the wire services and the networks and a good many of the principal newspapers, like the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*--papers like that. And some of the key foreign correspondents and writers, and Agence France Presse, and others. I think it was a fairly useful means of communication.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you have different rules within that format there where you had deep background as opposed to a shallow background?

DEAN RUSK: Once in a blue moon, somebody in that group would ask if I were willing to put a certain statement on the record. I would make a judgment as to whether I would put that particular point on the record.

RICHARD RUSK: By name?

DEAN RUSK: Yes.

RICHARD RUSK: Did those fellows do a good job?

DEAN RUSK: These were not off the record discussions. These were background discussions, which meant that they could use the information they were getting without attribution. I mean, if they wanted to use it on their own authority.

RICHARD RUSK: Attribution would typically be a senior spokesman within the Department of State or something like that? A high ranking official?

DEAN RUSK: No, I think without attribution meant not attributed to an official.

SCHOENBAUM: Do they generally adhere to that? What happens if they don't? What if they do name you or--

DEAN RUSK: They are pretty good about observing those rules. I, myself, in talking to a reporter there in my office, never on my own initiative put something off the record. I would say to the reporter, "Now, I can only answer that off the record. I will leave it to you as to whether you want it on that basis." Then he would make a judgment as to whether he would accept it off the record or take his chance that he'd get some other son of a bitch in the Department who'd give him the information without being off the record.

RICHARD RUSK: Of course, if he got a certain piece of information, then armed with that he could dig that much harder elsewhere in the government. And if he could get someone else to verify it, then he has the right to release that information.

DEAN RUSK: Now, one of the techniques that some reporters use, which is a fairly clever one-- they would write a story--

RICHARD RUSK: Is this what you call the 'Hercule Poirot method'?

DEAN RUSK: No, no. That's the 'detective method': Hercule Poirot. That's getting a little bit here, and a little bit there, and a little bit there and putting it all together and getting a story. Sometimes a reporter would write his story on a particular point, and then come in and say, "Now this is what I am about to publish. I just want you to have a look at it and tell me whether or not it's off base." And, if you're willing to accommodate him, you'd look it over and comment on whether it was down the line or not. Well, your own comments on that would be an important source of information for him. So sometimes, these first-draft stories were a device for getting the true story. And one has to be a little careful about that. But, bear in mind that these reporters not only cover the State Department, they cover the Pentagon; they cover Capitol Hill; they cover Embassy Row. And a number of things that were called leaks were attributed to the State Department which came out of, maybe, an embassy, or came from a senator. So, Secretaries of

State are not as worried about leaks as Presidents are because Presidents are in a very different political position than a Secretary of State.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you recall that time that Kennedy was upset with a leak and asked you to find its source?

DEAN RUSK: Yes. On one occasion at 7:30 in the morning Kennedy called me. I was still at home in my bathrobe. Apparently he had read something over on page ten of the morning paper and he just blew his top. And he called me and gave me hell about the leaky State Department. He told me to go down there and find out who leaked that story and fire him. So I went on down to the Department and, in a most unconstitutional fashion, I called in the reporter who wrote the story and said, "Now look, you're going to have to earn your living around this building. If you think you can do so with any comfort, you've got to tell me who gave you that story." And he did.

RICHARD RUSK: So much for protection of the press' sources.

DEAN RUSK: I'll come to that in a minute. So, I called Kennedy back and said, "Mr. President, I found out who leaked that story." He said, "Did you fire him?" I said, "No, because you were the one who gave it to him yesterday afternoon at 4:00." And Kennedy laughed and said, "Okay. Forget it."

RICHARD RUSK: Would that have been Benjamin [Crowninshield] Bradlee by any chance?

DEAN RUSK: No. I think what happened was that--

RICHARD RUSK: Do you remember the story and the reporter?

DEAN RUSK: No. When Kennedy called me that morning he had some staff person with him and he was putting on an act for the benefit of that staff person. He was just giving me hell, you see.

SCHOENBAUM: Was Kennedy that kind of [person]--to play jokes like that?

RICHARD RUSK: Did you have a staff person there when you called him?

DEAN RUSK: No. But, you spoke about protecting sources. Reporters don't protect their sources nearly as much as they claim to. You almost never had too much problem in getting from a reporter what his source was. Now, you'd do that indirectly. You'd do it through your press officer, who is working with them all the time. You usually had no problem if you would say, "Now look, we're not going to fire anybody over this, but we really do need to know," and that kind of thing. Sources get back to the President very quickly. So, if anybody goes around town leaking, the President usually knows who is doing it. Very often you can tell from the internal content of the story who did the leaking.

SCHOENBAUM: You seem to have identified certain people like [Chester Bliss] Bowles and [Roger] Hilsman, who regularly leaked things. Was this a real concern, especially toward the later years during the Vietnam War?

RICHARD RUSK: Who were the "deep throats" in your administration. Pop?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, there are some people who just like to talk. Arthur [Meier] Schlesinger, [Jr.] was a talker. He just liked to talk. He has made his living talking all his life. Now there is another side to this. That is, the bureaucracy needs continuing education about the needs of the press. I had some press assistant secretaries of public affairs, like [James L.] Jim Greenfield, now of the *New York Times*, or [Robert J.] Bob Manning, long-time editor of *Atlantic Monthly*, and [Robert James] Bob McCloskey, who played a very important role in educating the Department about the needs of the press. That was very helpful because again, you see, if you will just leave a bureaucrat alone he would like to clam up and not say anything. When we used to have those meetings before a Kennedy press conference, I'd take over a briefing book prepared by my people in the Department. And at the beginning on about half the questions that might come up, their recommendation was that the President say, "No comment." I remember Kennedy once said, "Hell. I'm having a press conference. I've got to say something." So we had to teach the bureaucracy about the needs of the press.

SCHOENBAUM: Where did Kennedy get those clever--he was so clever in his press conferences. Did he rehearse those? Were those all spontaneous?

DEAN RUSK: No. No. A good many of those were extemporaneous.

SCHOENBAUM: You didn't know he would say those things to the press?

DEAN RUSK: No. But when he would tease a couple of these old lady reporters, I forget their names now, but he was--Well, in the first place he was relaxed because he had done his homework.

RICHARD RUSK: He knew he was good at that sort of thing.

DEAN RUSK: When I first went into that job, I was nervous with those little red eyes on the television cameras staring at you. But it didn't take me long to realize that I knew more about the things that were coming up than the reporters did and I got to be quite relaxed about it. It does take a certain spirit. LBJ [Lyndon Baines Johnson] never got relaxed in front of television cameras--for reasons I don't fully understand. We could never get him just to be himself and take a more relaxed attitude.

SCHOENBAUM: Was the Kennedy we saw on television the Kennedy you knew in private? I mean did he come across as--

DEAN RUSK: Oh, yes. He was the same way. He had a sardonic sense of humor that he used on everybody around him. We all took that in good grace because he used it most of all upon

himself and members of his own family. But, he was a skeptic. He had his feet on the ground. He didn't go for highfalutin generalizations and cant, sentimentality and things of that sort.

SCHOENBAUM: But the press never captured Johnson. You say, the Johnson we knew through the press and the media was not the Johnson that you knew.

DEAN RUSK: Well, this is a very curious thing about Lyndon Johnson. If he had 200 businessmen at dinner in the White House, or any other group of that sort, where he was speaking privately, he could be the most convincing, persuasive, eloquent fellow you ever heard in your life.

RICHARD RUSK: And funny. And humorous, I take it?

DEAN RUSK: Yes. But when he got before television cameras he froze up. Now, admittedly following John F. Kennedy on television was a hard act to follow. But he somehow just--Maybe it was a sort of a personal sense of insecurity or something. I don't know.

SCHOENBAUM: Was he a--You know, this sounds funny, but I want to ask this question. Was he a crude man, in the sense of his personal manners? Many of the--Doris Kearns' biography, for instance, and many of the biographers, I mean--and the picture we saw of him holding up a cigar. He comes across as a relatively crude man.

RICHARD RUSK: Speaking to his staff people, for example. He would be sitting on the john in the White House bathroom and a staff guy would be right there in the doorway and he would [say], "Come on in, I want to talk to you." That type of thing.

SCHOENBAUM: Yes. I mean in that sense.

DEAN RUSK: He never did that with me. But there are a couple of things on that point. You see, reporters are constantly peering down every aperture in a President's body. They really are unmerciful in breaking through any kind of privacy at all. LBJ simply got fed up with this and showed them his scar. Then they picked that up and made it one of the crudest things a President ever did. Well, hell, these same reporters were trying to peer up his asshole, through his ears, down his nostrils, and everything else. And, so that causes some impatience at times. And then Lyndon Johnson would use these corn pone stories out of Texas. That tended to contribute to that reputation. But, he would often use old country stories to illustrate a point of policy. He would quote that old saying that "even a blind hog can find a few acorns if he roots around long enough." Well, on the eastern seaboard that sounds crude, you see?

RICHARD RUSK: Was he crude in situations and with people when he had really no business being crude? Obviously, he was crude when he was relaxed and when it was funny and the situation seemed to merit it.

DEAN RUSK: I would say he was earthy when he was relaxed. I wouldn't use the word crude. No. He showed impeccable manners when he was dealing with other chiefs of government. I'm sure he didn't pull any crudities on the Pope [Paul VI]. He had a sense of fitness of things.

RICHARD RUSK: Remember that big box he gave him as a present and the Pope was having trouble opening it? Johnson pulled out his jackknife and cut open the box and it was a bust of Lyndon Johnson that he had given the Pope.

DEAN RUSK: Well, Presidents are fond of giving their busts away. I've got a box of busts at home somewhere. Well, back to the press. I personally think that there is a conflict of interests between the television people and the written press. I suppose you wouldn't be able to get away with it, but the written press ought to insist upon their own press conferences away from television. Because when you are talking only with the written press reporters, you are more relaxed and you can be more informative. Also when you are talking to the written press, you always have the opportunity to weasel out with something like, "Oh, I was misunderstood," or "That wasn't exactly what I said." When you're on television it's there on tape. Every word you said is on tape and you are stuck with it. Now there are times when the reporters, God bless them, will anticipate how what you said might be interpreted and they, themselves, will ask follow-up questions to give you a chance to clarify and straighten out what you might have said without realizing all its implications. I have always appreciated that when reporters did that. As a matter of fact, in the debate between Gerald [Rudolph] Ford [Jr.] and Jimmy [James Earl] Carter [Jr.], when Gerald Ford made that funny remark about Poland not being under the domination of the Soviet Union, the reporter immediately came back and gave him a chance to clarify it. The reporter knew that he wasn't really meaning what he sounded like he was saying, but Ford didn't buy it. He just dug himself in a little deeper. But the press will sometimes be helpful in helping you to clarify something that might not come across exactly the way you meant it to. I did do one or two little things there that the--

RICHARD RUSK: Getting back to this same point--Not only having separate press conferences for TV and the written press, but two different types of press conferences: those that want to deal with issues of right issues and, not superficial, but sort of a brief way, as opposed to in-depth detailed discussions of a few matters of policy. Can you see a need for other types of press conferences?

DEAN RUSK: Well, you see, there is a press briefing in the State Department at noon every day where a Department spokesman meets with the reporters who want to be there. Usually there is quite a considerable number. There, occasionally, you would invite in a particular assistant secretary to talk about a particular subject matter that might be hot; or once in a blue moon I, myself, would drop in on one of those noon briefings. But, there are ways to get people in touch with the press who know about it and those are frequently used.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you ever try to institute two separate types of press conferences?

DEAN RUSK: No. No.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you float the idea amongst your media friends?

DEAN RUSK: No. No. I haven't done anything about that. That would raise all sorts of havoc. Unless it comes from the initiative of the written press, I don't--I think a good many people in the

written press that I have talked to about this point agree that there is this conflict of interest. Now, we did not have television present, of course, for those background meetings on Friday afternoons. Although television reporters were present. But, I would frequently, after a press conference, sit down with two or three colleagues with the transcript of the press conference and go over it to predict what the lead stories would be. We got to be pretty good at that. It didn't necessarily turn on the importance of what was said, but whether there was an eye-catching phrase, or whether there was something that seemed to be a little different than what had been said before, or whether there was something that would raise some hackles in Congress or with some other government.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you remember your instance with the U.N. [United Nations] General Assembly after the Czechoslovakian invasion by the Soviet Union in October '68?

DEAN RUSK: In early October '68, after the Soviets had marched into Czechoslovakia and then propounded what came to be known as the [Leonid Ilich] Brezhnev Doctrine--that is the right of the Soviet Union to move into any communist country to guarantee that it remained Communist--I made the principal speech for the United States in the general debate of the U.N. General Assembly. We were then in the process of confirming a new representative up there, so we didn't have anybody on the spot there for it. So I did it. In that speech I addressed a series of questions to Mr. [Andrei Andreevich] Gromyko, who was sitting there in front of me, about the Brezhnev Doctrine. What does this doctrine mean with respect to the U.N. Charter: the sovereignty of states, the independence of members of the United Nations, and things of that sort? Well, I thought it was a fairly important speech. But, was that what television news showed that evening? No. Because at the very beginning when I got up to speak, about six young people up in the public gallery, about the second gallery up, stood up and started making some noise about Vietnam. So that's what they ran. They didn't run what was really important about my speech. There were times when the television cameras, if I were going somewhere to visit, would set up so that when I came by to go into wherever I was going, they'd have the picketers in the background, so that when their pictures showed me, they'd show the picketers in the background. Well, occasionally I would infuriate the reporters by walking around behind the cameras and going in behind them so they wouldn't have a chance to get a picture of me with the picketers in the background.

RICHARD RUSK: Did we ever have a bunch of TV people out in front of the house? I think I remember some during the Cuban Missile Crisis. By and large, we didn't run into that at all.

DEAN RUSK: No. I don't think we had those. Although there was one time when a group of ladies came out and picketed your mother [Virginia Foisie Rusk], in front of my house, over Vietnam. And the neighbors were just furious about this.

RICHARD RUSK: Picketed my Mom? As little as she knew about all this?

DEAN RUSK: She had no responsibility for Vietnam, and they were picketing her.

RICHARD RUSK: Poor old Mom.

DEAN RUSK: I had a rule--we always had a rule in Washington that we would never admit a reporter or a camera into our own home: news cameras. Because we wanted at least that little island of privacy, see? Well one morning a TV cameraman and reporter turned up at the front door about 7:30 in the morning. He wanted to come in and take some pictures. I explained my policy to him, and as I closed the door he stuck his foot in the door. I came down on his foot with all 200 pounds. He went away hopping on one leg. My tort colleagues here on the faculty tell me that I probably used excessive amount of force on that. At least the statute of limitations has run out and I can't be sued now.

RICHARD RUSK: That would have made a great story if you had tried to do something about it. The whole country would have been behind you on that one. Do you remember your experience of taking Peg [Margaret Elizabeth Rusk] to--

DEAN RUSK: Oh, yeah. One time when Virginia was out of town--Peggy was then about fifteen--and I decided we'd get dressed up and go downtown and have dinner and hear Peter, Paul, and Mary floor show--the famous trio. So she got in a long dress and looked like a million dollars and I put on a black tie. And we went downtown, had a marvelous dinner, and enjoyed the program. The next day, reporters were around the Department saying, who was that chick the Secretary was out with last night? And it was quite clear that they were disappointed when they learned that it was my daughter. If it had been anybody else's daughter, they would have had a story, you see? They missed one story I think they would have been glad to get. One Saturday, things at home had just come all to pieces. The washing machine was broken down and all that sort of thing. So, I put on an old sweater and got one of these big clothes baskets and filled it with dirty clothes and got in my old Ford and drove out to an automat and did the clothing--sat there reading a paperback book. Nobody recognized me. But had a newsman gotten hold of that, he would have made something out of it, you see?

RICHARD RUSK: I can remember those little trips. You would normally put on sort of a London Fog overcoat and pull a big brimmed hat over the top of your head.

SCHOENBAUM: That must have been a real problem in Washington--not being able to come and go freely, not being able to go to a shopping center and shop.

DEAN RUSK: Well, in our own little shopping center there near where we lived, I did a good deal of shopping. Nothing much happened on that sort of thing. But, for security reasons, my driver would vary the paths that we drove back and forth from office to home. We wouldn't do anything on a routine basis.

SCHOENBAUM: Did you have security, for instance, if you were--I know you worked most weekends. But if you were at home on a Saturday or Sunday did you have security?

DEAN RUSK: No. In those days the security man dropped me at my house. Then I had no security until they picked me up to take me back to the office.

RICHARD RUSK: Dave [David Patrick Rusk] was the one who told me that you declined and deliberately did not want security people 'round the clock in the house--that they wanted someone there twenty-four hours a day and you said no.

DEAN RUSK: You see, after all, a Secretary of State is replaceable. It's not all that big a deal.

RICHARD RUSK: What about his family? These terrorists get serious these days, you know.

DEAN RUSK: Well, terrorism has been a problem since I left office. There was only one incident in eight years that affected my personal security. I was down in Uruguay, laying a wreath at the statue of the national hero. We were out in the main plaza and there was a huge crowd. In the center of the plaza is a big open space around the statue where the VIPs were. Suddenly a tiny little man ran out of the crowd toward me. He was immediately followed by a big, six-foot three, 200-pounder. And my own security man, who was with me at that moment, was a former Pittsburgh Steeler, decided the big man was the greater threat so he tackled him, not knowing that the big man was a plainclothesman trying to catch the little man. Well, the little man apparently wanted to get close enough to me to spit at me. But when he got there he was so scared he didn't have any spit. Well, that was about the only personal security thing that I encountered during my entire time.

RICHARD RUSK: There's an object lesson in that story involving the press. Do you want to do the follow-up on that?

DEAN RUSK: The reporters and cameramen were with us there around the statues to get their pictures. When this little man ran out of the crowd, did they as a group move forward and put themselves between that little man and me? Hell no. They all backed up three or four paces to focus their cameras. I remember that there was photographer up on the statue itself. And when this happened he jumped up and down and shouting, saying "I got it! I got it!" Then the son of a gun went away. And when he developed his film there was no spit, so he blobbed into his negative a blob of spit that was as big as my fist in relation to the size of my head. And that darned picture went all over the United States with that dubbed-in ball of spit wholly out of proportion to anything else.

SCHOENBAUM: We should get a copy of that. Would that have been Punta del Este at the--do you remember where that was?

DEAN RUSK: No. This was in Montevideo.

RICHARD RUSK: That would make a great photo in a biography. With a suitable caption underneath, that would be funny all right.

DEAN RUSK: Oh, any little thing that was unusual. For example, my official car broke down when I was on Capitol Hill and I had to rush to the White House for a meeting. So, a policeman very kindly gave me a lift in his squad car. Somehow, there were news cameramen at the White House there as I was getting out of this police squad car. That picture was used all over the country.

SCHOENBAUM: What was the caption on that?

RICHARD RUSK: On what basis?

DEAN RUSK: I don't know. They just thought that was a pretty unusual thing--as indeed it was.

RICHARD RUSK: What about the--I think it was the *New York Daily News* that ran a front page picture of you and you took a look at it and knew it wasn't you.

DEAN RUSK: No. *The New York Post* once ran an editorial calling for my resignation. And they had a little picture of me that looked like Al Capone. You never saw such a hideous creature. Well, shortly after that I called the publisher of the *New York Post* and suggested that I have lunch with her and her editorial board. She agreed and we had a very pleasant lunch. During the lunch I referred to this and I challenged her to go with me down to their photographic morgue to get out that picture and see what the artist had done to it before they used it. She wouldn't take the challenge. But they clearly had to dress up that picture of me to make it look as bad as possible.

SCHOENBAUM: In connection with Vietnam, were there some specific incidents--I guess there were some specific incidents--where the press falsified things or manufactured things like village burnings and things like that.

DEAN RUSK: Well, there were a good many fabricated stories and pictures coming out of Vietnam. I remember one instance where a reporter and a cameraman went to a deserted village which was being used by the Marines as a training base. This reporter gave one of the Marines this cigarette lighter and said, "Set fire to that thatch roof there." The Marine did and this went around the country as an example of Marines burning down villages. On another occasion there was a picture that went all over the country. It was a picture of a poor old woman pleading, like this, to get onto a helicopter. This picture went around, "U.S. Forces Refuse to Evacuate Old Woman." Well, I thought something was curious about that, so I had somebody look into it and found that if that cameraman had turned his camera ninety degrees without moving another muscle he would have had a picture of a helicopter filled with old women. The caption didn't point out that if that reporter had gotten his fat ass off that helicopter, that old woman could have gotten on. So, you get that sort of thing. Do you remember the picture of this Vietnamese general shooting a Vietcong right there in the public street? How did it happen that a reporter happened to be there at that moment? Was that framed up? I have never had the answer to that.

SCHOENBAUM: What about that napalm --the little girl flaming in napalm?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. I don't know about that particular picture. Peter Braestrup's book, *The Big Story*, which talks about the reporting of the Tet offensive, is very instructive on this kind of thing.

RICHARD RUSK: Incidentally, Pop, I'll get into that book and read through it a little bit and maybe we can put an addendum on this tape here specifically relating to Vietnam coverage and the points of contention in his book.

DEAN RUSK: Now, I don't want anything that I have said to minimize the--

RICHARD RUSK: I am not meaning to shut you off on any questions relating to Vietnam because we can certainly work with them.

DEAN RUSK: That Washington press corps is a very able press corps. They've got some awfully good, able people in there. There were times when what appeared to be leaks were nothing more than an intelligent reporter sitting down and figuring it out for himself and writing his story. Now, I suppose there were times when the reporters would make references to some officials in the State Department--something like that--to add a little authenticity to their own story. Sometimes they would cook up ghostly sources just to add to their story. On one occasion [William] Averell Harriman had gone out to Tokyo, where [Achmed] Sukarno of Indonesia was visiting, and negotiated some matters with Sukarno. It was a first class piece of diplomacy. I mentioned this to a reporter and said, "Now here's a very good example of real diplomacy of the old style. Why don't you write a story about it?" And he did. About ten days later he showed me what he got back from his editor on this. In big red letters across the top of the page the editor had written, "Sorry! No blood. No news."

RICHARD RUSK: Do you remember names?

DEAN RUSK: I don't remember names on that.

RICHARD RUSK: In big red print, huh? "No blood. No news."

DEAN RUSK: Now there's one kind of thing that I usually accepted. These programs like NBC's "Meet the Press," CBS's "Face the Nation," ABC's [American Broadcasting Company] "Issues and Answers"--there you would spend half an hour with a panel of three or four reporters. What you said was not edited in any way. It made a complete program. And you had a half an hour to get some of the main points across. I like that. That gave you much more representative time to get at the things that ought to be gotten at. So, I would always accept those programs. Although I must say that before we would sit down in any one of those programs, the producer would urge you to say something that would be newsworthy and get them picked up and have their program quoted in the written press. There again, this business of competition.

RICHARD RUSK: And also encouraging you to be relatively brief with your answers.

DEAN RUSK: Oh, yes. They're trying to be brief. I did bring about a change in the "Meet the Press" format with [Lawrence E.] Spivak. For a long time Spivak would come on and say, "The reporters are trying to get the news and they are not responsible for their questions." Well, before I went on "Meet the Press" once, I said to Spivak, "Now look Larry, you say this every time. But damn it, these reporters can be as responsible for their questions as I am for my answers. So if

you say that this time, I am going to say that I'm not responsible for my answers." And he said, "You wouldn't do that." I said, "You try me and see." And by George, he left that out.

RICHARD RUSK: What did he mean by a reporter not being responsible for his question?

DEAN RUSK: That the questions did not necessarily represent the views of the reporter.

RICHARD RUSK: Or the outfit he worked with?

DEAN RUSK: Or the organization he works for. I took the view that reporters can be as responsible for their questions as anybody else is for the answers.

SCHOENBAUM: What were your relations, then, with these heavyweight people, especially these columnists like Scottie Reston? This must have affected their perception and even the way they wrote about you that you did not buddy-buddy with them. I take it that to people like [Henry Alfred] Kissinger and many people this was a source of great pride with them, or they regarded as part of their effectiveness to cozy up to one or two reporters and give them the inside story. And in return they'd give them a good press.

DEAN RUSK: Kissinger played up to the big name writers and commentators. I didn't. I concentrated on the troops and I would treat the big name people the same way I would do the other reporters.

SCHOENBAUM: Do you think this affected the perception of the press? Obviously, I think Kissinger and many people do this because of what they get out of it. They get a good press.

RICHARD RUSK: Would it have affected the perception of the press, and consequently the public, on your role in Washington in general or--

SCHOENBAUM: Or about you and the State Department?

DEAN RUSK: It's possible, but--I won't name the individual concerned, but one of these big name writers came in to me in the early days of the Kennedy administration and in almost so many words said to me that if I could give him special sources of information he could be helpful to me in his writing. Now as far as I was concerned that was attempted bribery. There was no witness there and I couldn't do anything but throw him out of the office, but he was a little grumpy toward me after that.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you remember how you specifically responded to that?

DEAN RUSK: I just told him that I could not possibly go down that trail.

RICHARD RUSK: Who was the big name correspondent who said he was going to give some time for you if you cared to stop by and see him?

DEAN RUSK: Both Walter Lippmann and Arthur Krock, shortly after I took office, sent me word, separately, independently, that if I wished to call on them they would be glad to receive me.

SCHOENBAUM: Well, Lippmann regarded himself as kind of part of the government, didn't he?

DEAN RUSK: Well he was the kind--You know these barons of the media get to be--For example, I was there for eight years working alongside of David Brinkley who had come on the [Chester Robert] Huntley-Brinkley Show every evening saying, "This is David Brinkley, NBC News, Washington." Not once in eight years did he ever ask to see the Secretary of State. As far as I was concerned he was not a working reporter, he was an actor on the end of an assembly line where they had put together the program. Then he might make whatever little adjustments he wanted to make in style or something like that. But, he wasn't a working reporter in the usual sense.

SCHOENBAUM: What about Walter Cronkite of CBS?

DEAN RUSK: Same thing. Those fellows didn't come to press conferences.

RICHARD RUSK: And they wouldn't see you personally?

DEAN RUSK: That was beneath them. Hell, they were making at least a million dollars a year and I was making \$25,000. Why should they bother to go see that guy?

RICHARD RUSK: They wouldn't see you personally either?

DEAN RUSK: There's another point I think that is very important--fundamental here. When the press was in a flap about not being taken along on the Granada invasion my old friend John [William] Chancellor, for whom I have the greatest respect, was quoted in the press as saying, "The representatives of the people should have been there." Now this idea on the part of the press that they represent the American people cannot possibly be accepted. They speak to people, not for them--at least they speak to those who are not prepared to buy a newspaper or turn on a radio or television dial. Now, this notion of the press as the fourth estate is only a genial myth. I have sometimes compared it to the southern tradition of chivalry, which works fine until the ladies begin to believe it. You see, there's not one shred of democracy involved in the way these fellows are put in the positions they are put in. If I buy a General Motors car, I don't thereby authorize the president of General Motors to speak for me on anything. They seem to think that if people listen to them, that somehow they speak for those people who are listening. And that is an utterly fundamental error. The press are reaching out there for powers that don't belong to them.

RICHARD RUSK: That's a little bit different argument than they would put. But wouldn't they call it a public right to know as opposed to what they specifically represent--

DEAN RUSK: No, but the press cannot possibly support something called the public's right to know because the press will not accept a duty to inform. As far as the press is concerned, if the

public has a right to know, it has a right to know only what they elect to tell them. So, the press can't live with the public with this slogan. They'll use it at times in an argument about particular points, but when you look at it hard it disappears into thin air. If the press were nailed with the public's right to know, the First Amendment would disappear. Because they would have a duty to inform.

SCHOENBAUM: Isn't it true, though, the government is concerned and should be concerned about the press? I remember there is one widely quoted statement by President Johnson during the Tet offensive where Johnson is supposed to have said, watching Walter Cronkite on the news when Cronkite said some critical things, "My God, if we've lost Walter, we've lost the American people." Did that ever happen?

DEAN RUSK: It's possible. No question the press has a lot of influence. But that doesn't mean they speak for people. Remember that four-fifths of the press were opposed to Franklin [Delano] Roosevelt and he won his four elections with very large votes.

RICHARD RUSK: It could be that Presidents would use the press, what they say, as a barometer of public opinion.

DEAN RUSK: Another interesting question to me is: Who in the press possesses freedom of speech? Is it the reporter? Or is it the publisher and only the publisher or editor? There's no question that in the *Washington Post*, Kay [Katharine] Graham has the final word. Do the reporters of the *Washington Post* have any freedom of the press except as she permits them to have? Arthur Hays Sulzberger, the great publisher of the *New York Times* for many years, was a fellow trustee of The [John Davison] Rockefeller Foundation. One night at a trustees meeting over a highball, he said, "Well, so long as I can keep my wife's [Iphigene B. Ochs] votes on the board of directors, the policy of the *New York Times* will be my policy. If anybody wants another policy, they can publish another newspaper." It is an interesting question as to who actually possesses freedom of speech in the fullest sense--freedom of the press in the fullest sense.

RICHARD RUSK: Is there a good deal of tension and healthy dialog and conflict within these various press groups, within their own organizations, over that, or is it kind of a static thing, sort of an authoritarian process?

DEAN RUSK: They tend to close together to promote the interests of the media as corporate cellars of information. After all, when the federal income tax first was put into effect back in the teens, there were newspapers who challenged that on the basis that charging the press income tax was an invasion of the First Amendment. This opens up another line of my thinking, which some of my friends in the press would agree with me. The word "press" in the First Amendment is not spelled with a capital P.

END OF SIDE 1

BEGINNING OF SIDE 2

DEAN RUSK: We want to on the general rules. But the organized press that sells information for profit seems to think that somehow freedom of the press is their own personal property. When I find that the organized media are demanding rights and privileges which I do not have in the exercise of my own freedom of the press, then I become very skeptical. For example, why should a reporter in a court of law refuse to divulge his sources in the interest of justice if I can't do the same? The press claims the right to commit trespass, to receive stolen property in the form of information, to suborn the commission of a felony by people in government in terms of leaking classified information to them. Some of these questions just have no answer. For example, if a person goes into the State Department and wangles out a top secret and takes it down the street and gives it or sells it to the Soviet Embassy, he goes to prison. But if he goes in the State Department and wangles out a top secret and gives it to the Soviet Embassy and the rest of the world at the same time, he may well get a [Joseph] Pulitzer Prize. Now, there's a problem there, but I don't think there's an answer.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, it relates to the question of do the ends ever justify the means. Take Watergate as an example, where the government itself had operated in illegal fashion through secrecies, through all types of illegal, covert things. The press itself adapted some of that illegality to get that story through some of the practices you just named. Look at the final outcome. Who would ever argue that that ultimate process of Watergate was not in the best interests of the American people and that government was improved?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah, that's an interesting question. One interesting aspect of that, though, is that when Woodward and Bernstein wrote their book--later when you read their book it is clear that at the time that they were writing their stories, they were withholding from all of us a great deal of highly relevant information.

SCHOENBAUM: About who their sources were.

DEAN RUSK: Well, all sorts of things. And their stories are only partially true. And they deliberately--

RICHARD RUSK: Are you talking about the *Washington Post* stories as they occurred, or looked afterward?

DEAN RUSK: Yes. As they occurred. They were not completely candid in those stories about-- One of the most secret operations in Washington is the operation of the press. I remember one instance when a reporter was getting his car in the basement to go home and he saw the Soviet Ambassador come in and take my private elevator upstairs. He sensed that maybe something interesting was going on, so he got hold of his paper and they set up a little task force of about five reporters to comb the White House, the State Department, the Pentagon, to find out what it was the Soviet Ambassador had come in to talk about. Well, we could have followed these guys all over town because when these reporters would come in, then those that they saw would telephone and say, "Hey, such and such a reporter is trying to dig out such and such a story." But we just watched this little task force operate all over town, trying to find somebody who was

stupid enough or disloyal enough to talk about something they had no business talking about, you see.

When Virginia and I were about to leave office, the press corps covering the State Department gave us a farewell reception in January of '69. It was a very nice party. At that reception they gave us a very nice silver plate with a cartoon from the *New Yorker* engraved on it. The scene was of a stag and a doe in the forest. The stag was saying to the doe, "Remember dear, if we get through today we'll be out of season." We found that very touching.

You asked the question about what happens when somebody breaks the rule. There is something in Washington called the Overseas Press Club. This is a group of seventy or eighty reporters who have lunch. And I would go to these luncheons occasionally. The idea is that the luncheon never occurred. There is never any such meeting. There was never any such discussion. It's completely-

RICHARD RUSK: This was the Overseas Press Club?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah, this was deep background. Well, I went to one of those once and was quite candid.

RICHARD RUSK: Maybe Woodward and Bernstein got Deep Throat from you, Pop.

DEAN RUSK: But, then somebody who was at the luncheon briefed Joe Alsop about what I had said. Joe Alsop figured that since he was not at the luncheon, he was not under those rules, and so he blew it. He wrote about it. I thought that was kind of dirty pool, given their own rules about this particular luncheon. So, sometimes they will shave it pretty thinly.

RICHARD RUSK: Speaking of another case where perhaps the means did or did not justify the ends, what about the Pentagon papers and comments you might have on that particular issue as opposed to Watergate?

DEAN RUSK: There's an unfinished story. I mean there's an unwritten story still to be done. About five or six years ago the American Historical Association met in Atlanta. It was their national meeting. They asked me to talk about something. There I suggested to them that some enterprising young Ph.D. candidate or some investigative reporter do a story on the making of the Pentagon Papers. What were they all about? Why were the so-called analysts--and there were about thirty of them, the names of whom are still not known--why were the analysts told not to discuss these matters with any of the principals: myself, Walt [Walter Whitman] Rostow, the President, and so forth? Why was this job not turned over to the historical officers of the Department of Defense and the Department of State?

RICHARD RUSK: Did you ever ask Robert [Strange] McNamara any of these questions? Did he sort of set the guidelines?

DEAN RUSK: I'm coming back to that. The historical officers of the Defense and State Departments are never given policy orders from on high as to what to say and what not to say

when they are writing their histories. They really are left policy-free to use their own judgment on that as historians. Why was this not turned over to them? Why did these analysts not get the materials that I had in my own office about Vietnam, some of which were not available anywhere else? Why did they not ask for the notes on the President's Tuesday luncheon sessions, which were critically important to any understanding of Vietnam policy? Leslie [Howard] Gelb was the chief of the analysts. He is now back with the *New York Times*. I had lunch with him once and talked about it. Now, some years later he was interviewed by BBC. This question, "What were the Pentagon Papers all about?"--And in his answer he said, "Well, there were those who thought so-and-so, there were those who thought so-and-so, and there were those who thought that these were campaign documents for Bobby [Robert Francis] Kennedy." Now, three of the analysts, and I won't name them, told me that at the time they were working on them, they thought they were working on campaign materials for Bobby Kennedy. One interesting possible sidelight on this would be that if any of the preliminary drafts of the Pentagon Papers were to be found in Bobby Kennedy's papers that were given to the JFK Library. The implications of that are enormous. For people in government to be conspiring among themselves to assist a candidate opposing the sitting President.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you think this happened? Do you personally think this happened?

DEAN RUSK: I'd rather not put myself on tape on that at the moment. I told Leslie Gelb once that he had an obligation to write a story on the making of the Pentagon Papers. He said no he'd never do it. I talked to Bob McNamara once about it.

RICHARD RUSK: When was this, Pop? After you guys had left office?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. I first heard about the Pentagon Papers when I read it in the *New York Times*. Here I was--apparently there was--at some stage back in there, Bob McNamara asked me if his staff could get materials on Vietnam out of the Department of State. Well, that was a perfectly normal thing. I apparently said yes, because Ben [Benjamin Huger] Read remembers that he had relayed from me to the Historical Office and others that they were to make available to McNamara's office any materials on Vietnam that we had, but nothing like what came to be the Pentagon Papers.

RICHARD RUSK: He didn't quite specify exactly--

DEAN RUSK: But it was just usual for us to exchange information on things like that. Bob McNamara apparently--Well, he told me that he thought that this was to help prepare these black books that you take down to the Congress for hearings, and get the full story all drawn together as a basis for testimony, and things like that.

SCHOENBAUM: Who commissioned--Who set the ball in motion on the Pentagon Papers? Do you think Bobby Kennedy--

DEAN RUSK: Apparently Bob McNamara started it. You see, the Pentagon Papers were not approved by the Pentagon. They have no official standing. My guess is that the--well, the documents in the Pentagon papers are authentic documents.

[break in recording]

RICHARD RUSK: Continuing that discussion on the Pentagon Papers. Again, when Robert McNamara asked you for access to some of the records in the Department of State, I presume that there had already been this degree of access back and forth and that this was nothing unusual.

DEAN RUSK: Oh, yes. It was perfectly usual to exchange papers of that sort when you were both working on the same thing. As a matter of fact, it was so usual that I even forgot that he spoke to me about it. Ben Read remembers that I had asked him to pass the word to the Department to let McNamara's office have any papers we had on Vietnam.

RICHARD RUSK: You first learned about the Pentagon Papers in the *New York Times*?

DEAN RUSK: Yes.

RICHARD RUSK: Did they catch Bob McNamara by surprise a little bit, at least in terms of the depth and the detail of which he--

DEAN RUSK: He claims that the Pentagon Papers, as they finally appeared, were not the kinds of papers that he had in mind. But, I don't know. There are some mysteries. Now it is true that a full set of the Pentagon Papers was delivered to the office of the Under Secretary of State, Nick [Nicholas de Belleville] Katzenbach's office, on the day or two before inauguration. But in that hectic period when we were busy turning over power, nobody mentioned that to me.

RICHARD RUSK: In that full set, you're talking the multi-volume set of ten to fifteen?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. Right. But, it's also important to bear in mind--

RICHARD RUSK: The study did not continue after Lyndon Johnson left office. Is that right?

DEAN RUSK: No. Also, it's important to bear in mind that the Pentagon Papers were not approved by the Pentagon--not even by an Assistant Secretary of Defense. They were simply there, without any status of approval except on the part of the analysts who wrote them.

RICHARD RUSK: The lack of approval signifies what?

DEAN RUSK: That it should not be taken as an official document. Again, I am thinking about the prose section, comments written by the analysts. I am not talking about the actual documents.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you ever read the Pentagon Papers?

DEAN RUSK: I went through a fair amount of it, but I didn't read it all. No.

RICHARD RUSK: Was it the one-volume, the *New York Times*, Bantam paperback set or the four-volume [Senator] Mike Gravel set?

DEAN RUSK: I have the entire set in my office.

RICHARD RUSK: You do?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah.

RICHARD RUSK: Not the fifteen-volume?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, I think so. I'll check and see.

RICHARD RUSK: I didn't see it down there. What were your impressions of the Pentagon Papers as a whole in terms of the things they did do and the things they didn't do?

DEAN RUSK: Well, in the first place I didn't attach any importance to the alleged breach of national security; because, if you look at the Pentagon Papers, you'll find that almost everything that is in them was being discussed publicly at the time. It was sort of turned into a big secret scoop of some sort by the publicity attached to the publication by the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. But the information in it did not involve national security.

RICHARD RUSK: Had [Richard Milhous] Nixon not botched the [Daniel] Ellsberg case, had they not tried the attempted break-in in his office earlier, what case do you think the government might have had?

DEAN RUSK: Well, if they had forgotten the national security issue and had not loused up Ellsberg's prosecution--that raid on his psychiatrist's office--and just concentrated on stealing government property, they might well have nailed him. And if they had found him guilty of that, then the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* would have been bothered a bit by the idea of knowingly receiving stolen property.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you talk to Bob McNamara after the study was released by the [*New York Times*]? Did you feel him out?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, I had a brief word about it. I didn't persist.

RICHARD RUSK: Let's go back to things we were discussing earlier for a minute, specifically your first experiences with the press. Going way back, was it Oxford University? Was it Davidson or appointment as a Rhodes Scholar?

DEAN RUSK: Actually it was in high school. We had a big review, military review, of all of the cadets in the Fulton County high schools out at Piedmont Park, and I was the cadet commander of this review. At one stage in this ceremony the cadet officers--the senior officers--were supposed to advance and present flowers to their sponsors--their girlfriends. Well, then the *Atlanta Journal* tried to substitute Miss Atlanta for my sponsor and I wouldn't have it.

RICHARD RUSK: Most fellows would be overjoyed.

DEAN RUSK: And I wouldn't have it. So that was one of my first brushes with the press.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you have a little verbal row with the reporter who tried it? Or the paper?

DEAN RUSK: I forget exactly the details of just what happened, but they tried to bring her in there and have me present flowers to her and I told them no.

RICHARD RUSK: Was your sponsor your particular girlfriend or--?

DEAN RUSK: A girlfriend from the West End Presbyterian Church.

RICHARD RUSK: Well, that was your first experience. Did you ever consider taking up journalism as a career?

DEAN RUSK: No. Not really.

RICHARD RUSK: I know you had some mixes with it as a sportswriter for one of the Atlanta dailies. You worked on the college paper at Davidson I believe.

DEAN RUSK: Well, I was also the School Page Editor of the *Atlanta Journal* when I was in high school. The classes around the Atlanta school system would have their own correspondents who would write in little letters to me and I would edit them and paste them together to make up the School Page. That helped financially, and also I met some awfully interesting people. I sat right under the rail, under the desk of Harllee Branch, Sr., the City Editor. Then I knew many of the top reporters including many of the top sportswriters. That was pretty good fun. That only took one day a week. I did that on Fridays and the School Page came out on Sunday.

RICHARD RUSK: You never--

[break in recording]

DEAN RUSK: --be on television, but I have become very choosy now because if you're asked to participate in a morning news show or an evening news show, they only give you a half a minute or a minute. And I remember on one occasion not too long ago I appeared live with somebody on one of these shows and they told me that there would be two questions and I must limit my answers to sixty seconds per question. Well, it just isn't worth it.

RICHARD RUSK: No.

DEAN RUSK: Recently one of the networks spent a half an hour with me on camera asking questions. This was prior to the Gromyko visit to Mr. [Ronald Wilson] Reagan.

RICHARD RUSK: That was this year?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. And, on the actual program the anchorman picked up about three of the points that I had made and put them in his own mouth. Then they showed about thirty seconds of me talking about Mr. Gromyko doing these string games that children play, like 'cats and cradles,' and that was it. So it just isn't worth it. I'm not going to appear any more on morning or evening news shows where the limits of time are so terrible.

RICHARD RUSK: Moving from your experience in high school and coming up through Davidson, Oxford, and Mills College--well, Davidson and Oxford: any contacts with the press in any meaningful way?

DEAN RUSK: No, I don't think so. I had a number of contacts with them during the Rockefeller Foundation days.

RICHARD RUSK: What about CBI [China-Burma-India theatre]?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I knew some of the reporters out there very well: Jill Durden of the *New York Times*, and I forget the man's name from AP [Associated Press] who was out there.

RICHARD RUSK: [Arnold] Eric Sevareid? Was he--?

DEAN RUSK: Eric Sevareid was out there at times and also Teddy [Theodore Harold] White was out there a good part of the time.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you talk with them while you were there?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, yes. Sure. And we ate together; they came to dinner with us in our officers mess there. So we got to be quite good friends.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you have official responsibilities in terms of dealing with press, talking with the press, in CBI?

DEAN RUSK: No.

RICHARD RUSK: That stuff was handled by someone else?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. I was on the operational war plans. So, we had others who had that job.

RICHARD RUSK: But the same thing applied to your work with "Abe" [George] Lincoln's team back there in Washington?

DEAN RUSK: I had no contact with the press when I was in the Operations Division.

[break in recording, loud clicking noise]

RICHARD RUSK: --Dean Rusk's experiences with the press back during the late '40s, early '50s.

DEAN RUSK: I've got another name that's temporarily slipped me. There was a famous radio broadcaster named Elmer [Holmes] Davis. He came on around 6:30 every evening. This was during the Korean War. And it was his custom about 5:30 to give me a ring on the phone and tell me what he was going to say at 6:30. And our understanding was that if he was way off base that I would tell him so, although I had no obligation to fill him in on the correct story. He would simply check with me as to how far off base he was. Also, he and I were friends and I also accepted the obligation never to lie to him.

RICHARD RUSK: How do you spell his last name?

DEAN RUSK: Davis. Elmer Davis.

RICHARD RUSK: Okay.

DEAN RUSK: But that was a most unusual relationship with a top reporter during those years. But I think it worked to his advantage. It also meant that his reporting was very strong from a factual point of view.

RICHARD RUSK: As president of the Rockefeller Foundation, I know of at least one incident where when you first went to England as a newly arrived president of the Foundation. Why don't we slip that on tape?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I once visited London and I suppose the airline had tipped off the press that I was among the passengers. So several reporters there tried to get some stories out of me. They wanted to know what checks I was bringing to whom, what gifts we were going to make, and that sort of thing, in England. I just didn't talk to them. I had nothing to say. So one of the reporters, of one of the more flamboyant British papers, went off and just manufactured a story about this nice young man with three-quarters of a billion dollars to give away and didn't know what to do with it. Well, I was staying at the Clarendon Hotel and I had to leave to go up-country for about three days. When I came back to the Clarendon three days later I asked the man at the desk if there was any mail and with a strange look on his face he said, "Yes, your mail is in your room." And I went up there and there was a bathtub full of mail. The British are great letter writers. They were just writing from all over the country suggesting to me how we could spend this money, including grandmothers who had grandsons in Australia they'd never seen and they wanted to go out and visit them. So I had to have that stuff all boxed up and sent back to New York so they could be answered by the staff back in New York.

RICHARD RUSK: It was probably about that same time that you began hearing from all your long-lost cousins and relatives of Scotland and Ireland, huh?

DEAN RUSK: Ha! Ha! Ha! I heard from a number of them at that point. I heard from quite a few of them from northern Ireland.

[break in recording, loud clicking noise]

RICHARD RUSK: --the comment on Harry Truman and his relationship with the media.

DEAN RUSK: Well Harry Truman was pretty direct and simple and straightforward with the press. There is one interesting thing involving the press and that is toward the end of the period when Harry Truman was deciding whether he was going to relieve General [Douglas] MacArthur. We were tipped off by a reporter from the *Chicago Tribune* in Washington that MacArthur had sent a message to the *Chicago Tribune* suggesting that they hold some space on their front page for the next day because they would have a big story. This raised the possibility that MacArthur was going to resign with a blast at the President. So Omar [Nelson] Bradley, who was then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and I went over to see Truman at Blair House, where he was living at the time, and told him about this tip that had come in. We didn't know whether it was true or not. It was that evening that Harry Truman decided that he should relieve MacArthur and not have MacArthur resign. I know nothing about the truth of the story that the *Chicago Tribune* reporter tipped us off on.

RICHARD RUSK: How did you hear about the story?

DEAN RUSK: Somebody in the press office told me.

RICHARD RUSK: Did the press kind of cover up for Harry Truman and his excessive candor at times? I think you told me earlier that they tended to look out after Harry Truman and not nail him on every misstep like they tend to now- days.

DEAN RUSK: Well, they were a little more thoughtful in those days. But when you see one of these programs on Harry Truman, they concentrate in an hour's time most of the four-letter words he ever thought of in his life. I never heard of Harry Truman using four-letter words. Maybe on two or three occasions. He had a great respect for the office of the presidency. And when he was acting as President, he didn't throw a lot of four-letter words around. And he did not with visiting dignitaries. Privately he would occasionally, but I think that his use of four-letter words has been greatly exaggerated. But he had them in his vocabulary. He was a battery commander in World War I and he knew his way around in four-letter words.

RICHARD RUSK: After you became Secretary, then, of course, the big change for you and all of us was the fact that you were no longer a private citizen in any fashion and you lost a good deal of your private life and became a public person. The loss of privacy must get a bit tiresome at times. I think you have some stories that relate to it. Do you recall this little gal in Atlanta that accosted you at the airport one time, who planted herself in front of you and said, "Wait I've seen you on TV. I know who you are." Do you recall her?

DEAN RUSK: This is fairly in the last two or three years. A little old lady planted herself about three feet in front of me at the Atlanta Airport and stared at me and said, "You're in television?" I said, "Oh, you remember Hoss Cartwright, don't you?" And she went away very happy. Another gorgeous young lady came up to me in the Atlanta Airport with a little wrinkle in her brow and said, "Didn't you come to see me down in Savannah not long ago? I'm sure I've seen you somewhere before." I teased her a little on that and then told her who I was and she almost sank through the floor. I can tell that I'm gradually dropping out of the public eye because more and

more people stop me and say, "Haven't I seen you somewhere before?" One fellow some years ago stopped me in the airport and said, "Aren't you John Foster Dulles?" And I said, "Well, if I am there's been a hell of a miracle." And he went away grumbling.

You do lose your privacy in one of those jobs. Your Mom and I had a rule that we would never let reporters come into our home because we wanted that to be one little island of privacy, and also we didn't want the reporters beating on you kids. We thought perhaps, and I think quite rightly, that you kids wouldn't like that very much.

RICHARD RUSK: Did I ever tell you about the time that a press fellow called me at Cornell and asked a few questions, and then wanted to know about my military connections, whether or not I was subject to the draft. I told him that I was a Marine Corps Reservist and subject for active duty and call-up. He seemed really disappointed. I guess he was cooking up a story on how sons and daughters, especially the sons, of high officials had evaded duty in Vietnam. I never did see the story come out.

DEAN RUSK: As I understand it, I had nothing to do with it, but as I understand it your marine outfit was not called up because it did not have its own organic air wing with it. Had it had its own air wing you might well have been called up. Then you'd have had some decisions to make.

Loss of privacy gets to be a chore and a bore. For example, I was out raking leaves in the yard--out at our home on Quebec Street--and photographers came by and got pictures of it. Why should that be worth a picture?

RICHARD RUSK: Yeah. I can remember you slipping down to the supermarket on occasion late in the evening with an old trench coat on and a hat pulled down.

DEAN RUSK: Why, I took a basket full of dirty clothes one Saturday down to the automat. I drove our old Ford down there and sat in the automat while the clothes washed, reading a paperback book. Fortunately nobody recognized me. But if the press had gotten hold of that they would have made a big story out of it.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, at the very beginning of this tape you talked about being a little fanatic about freedoms of speech. Were there ever occasions where your freedoms may have been abused--going way back as far as Oxford and your experience in Germany in the '30s, coming up through--

DEAN RUSK: Oh, I got in trouble in Hitler's Germany a couple of times. Once I was held for several hours there. A Hindu friend of mine from Oxford came over to visit me while I was there and I thought I would show him the sights of the city. So I took him to a Hitler rally at the Sports Palace there in Berlin. He was a man of a very dark color. When we got up to the door, the brown-shirt guy at the door looked at my friend and said, "Only Aryans are permitted here." Well, in my youthful candor I said to him, "But this is the purest Aryan in all of Berlin." And he was. He really was an Aryan. This guy took me to his sergeant, or took me to his captain, and they held me for a while because I'd insulted the Fuhrer with this remark. Well they finally let me go as just a crazy American who didn't know any better.

Then I was in a memorial service for the war-dead in Berlin with a huge crowd at a big arena there. They had a bugle corps play some memorial music, but the tones of the horns were very, very strange--very weird almost. I just commented to whoever was with me that it sounded like a flock of geese. Well, somebody in the row below me heard me say geese and perhaps connected it with the fact that in French the word goose is a bad word. This guy called the usher and reported what I had said and so forth, but nothing much happened on this.

RICHARD RUSK: As far as your being in Germany during that time, I suppose you were privy to the knowledge that Hitler and his movement were taking away the constitutional freedoms.

DEAN RUSK: Oh, yeah. We could see that. I could watch with my own eyes.

RICHARD RUSK: In terms of press freedoms and things like that, did you see any other instances of it?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I went to Berlin to study international law at the Hochschule fur Politik under a Professor Bruns. When we went to his seminar there were about eight brown-shirt fellows among the students. There were about twenty altogether. And Professor Bruns opened up the question as to what we should do in this seminar--what we should study. These Nazis insisted that we study nothing but the illegality of the Treaty of Versailles. And, that's what they set out to do and I moved across the street to the University of Berlin. The Hitler period was a terrible period for German universities. When I was at Mills after I got back from Germany, we had a German exchange student, a young woman, who flunked my sophomore course in American government. Well, she went on home and the very next year I got a note back from her saying that she had received her doctorate at a German university for her thesis on the American government. Standards just went haywire and everything became highly politicized. I remember attending a lecture from a pretty well-known historian at the University of Berlin. His lecture was on the subject of how best to incorporate the Germans of the United States into Hitler's Reich. Should they try to do it by party organization? Should they do it by demanding territorial enclaves in places like Milwaukee and St. Louis? He was allegedly giving a serious lecture. It was just fantasy.

RICHARD RUSK: And you were in the audience for that?

DEAN RUSK: Yes. Sure I was.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you comment on it?

DEAN RUSK: No. No, you don't. In the Herr Professor in German universities in those days, students don't comment during the lecture. You listen to the lecture; the professor leaves; and you leave. Once in a while there would be a seminar where you might be able to raise a question.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you have any problems with press freedoms back during the [Joseph Raymond] McCarthy period at all?

DEAN RUSK: No. When you hold a job like that of the Secretary of State, there are some limitations on what you are free to say. To begin with, your personal comments should not be mixed up with public policy. George [Catlett] Marshall was once asked what his personal view was of a particular policy matter. He said, "Personal view? I don't have personal views on official matters. My views are the views of the Secretary of State and I reached those views by constitutional process." So, one has to be careful not to confuse what might be personal views with official views because you are an official at all times. And there are times when you just need to be silent. But I think you will find that in all my congressional testimony during the sixties that I tried to be pretty candid with senators and congressmen. I don't think that this sounds very self-serving, but if anyone wants to search through the public speeches, press conferences, or congressional testimony that I made during the sixties, they will not find anything where I thought one thing and said another.

RICHARD RUSK: You talked earlier about your own procedures and rules for dealing with the press and you discussed again your policy on having to remain silent on some matters rather than fabricate an answer. Were there different degrees by which you could respond to controversial questions between outright silence and a straightforward--? You had a reputation for being quite clever.

DEAN RUSK: Well, you have to be very attentive to the actual form of the question because there are a good many ways in which a question can be put where if you simply say, "No comment," it confirms what the questioner obviously meant in his question. That's where you have to do something else such as say, "I can't get into that in any way," or something like that.

RICHARD RUSK: Don't you--all of you fellows--sort of employ these little techniques to help deflect tension from a certain question. You answer another question and things of that nature.

DEAN RUSK: Well, back in the Truman administration a friendly senator once gave me some advice about congressional testimony. He said, "If you get a question that you can't answer or don't want to answer, answer another question." The senator will forget because he's wanting to get on to his next question. And so there are times when you, in effect, do that. I remember in one press conference a reporter asked me a question and I said something--I don't know what it was. He said, "You didn't answer my question." I said, "I know I didn't. I'm not the village idiot."

RICHARD RUSK: There are different ways of saying, "No comment," other than being outright silent, I think. You were regarded as a master of dealing successfully with a tough question, whether it be Senate Foreign Relations Committee testimony or press inquiries. You seem to have a reputation for being pretty effective without being devious. Let's make that distinction.

DEAN RUSK: I don't know that there are any little tricks of the trade to be passed from one person to another. I think it's just using your common sense under the circumstances. None of these tricky kinds of things applied during those Friday afternoon sessions I had on a background basis with about thirty reporters. That was entirely relaxed and straightforward with each other. I tried to show some special regard for the working press from out of town. For example, I passed the word around among them that these fellows representing out-of-town newspapers that if their boss came to town--their publisher or their editor--that if they wanted to bring him in to see me

I'd be glad to receive him. I saw a good many of them. Well, that set the reporter up with his own boss very nicely because that demonstrated to his boss that he had access to the Secretary of State.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you ever receive such bad coverage that you considered libel proceedings against any member of the press?

DEAN RUSK: No. I tried to brush aside personal remarks directed at me. By and large there were not too many of those. The press was generally quite considerate. But there were times when things would be said that were just annoying. But you'd just get on your job and pay no attention to it. Because when you have one of those jobs, in effect, you ask for that kind of comment or criticism and you might as well be prepared to take it. On one occasion in a press conference somebody asked me something about China twenty years down the road and I said, "Well, we face the prospect of a billion Chinese armed with nuclear weapons and no one knows now what their policy is going to be twenty years from now." Now those are three very factual things--a billion Chinese, armed with nuclear weapons, we didn't know what their policies would be.

RICHARD RUSK: Was the time span, over a twenty year period, in the question? Do you remember that specifically.

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. And I remember that Scottie Reston picked that up in one of his columns and charged me with dragging up the 'yellow peril' idea on a racial basis. Well, there's nothing racial about what I was saying. It was just three simple statements of fact. A couple of weeks later in fine print in one of his later columns he had an apology for that remark. But I think Senator [Eugene Joseph] McCarthy--

RICHARD RUSK: Eugene McCarthy?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah.--pulled the same wheeze about my having invoked the 'yellow peril' on a racial basis. Well, given my attitude toward race I find that very obnoxious and I didn't like that at all. You just have to live with it, or live it.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you recall other instances of bad reporting or bad press that either distorted what you said or felt or had sort of a bad influence on policy? I suppose the coverage of the Tet Offensive and the aftermath of that was probably another. We can discuss that later.

DEAN RUSK: Well there was one incident that occurred during the Truman administration. I was then Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs. I was invited up to the Waldorf Astoria to make a speech to a dinner group up there, under the chairmanship of Senator Paul [Howard] Douglas. So I spoke fairly briefly, but I spoke in simple words and short sentences and said what we had been saying for some time in long words and convoluted sentences. Well, this was interpreted by a lot of people as being a change of policy.

RICHARD RUSK: Is this your speech involving the phrase, "Slavik"--

DEAN RUSK: No.

RICHARD RUSK: That's another one, huh?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. So there was a good deal of flap in the press about a change of far eastern policy according to this speech. This was a little disconcerting to both Harry Truman and to Dean [Gooderham] Acheson. Among other things, Dean Acheson was coming up to the Senate hearings on the firing of MacArthur and he didn't want extra things to be dragged across his bow in those hearings. But he told me that, as he looked at the speech, that it was clear; that I was simply saying what we had been saying for months already in a somewhat less clear fashion.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you remember the instance of policy?

DEAN RUSK: No. I don't remember the particular policy points because it was more or less attitudes more than anything else. I did hear a story, but I can't vouch for its authenticity, that after that speech David Lawrence, of the *U.S. News and World Report*, and Arthur Crock got to arguing with each other about my speech at lunch at the Metropolitan Club. And they got so angry at each other that they stood up at the table and balled their fists up at each other, and friends had to come over and quieten them down. Well, when each one of them went off to write his piece, did they attack each other? Not at all. They attacked me from opposite planks.

RICHARD RUSK: You were the target of some pretty bitter and hostile press coverage at various times in the administration, particularly with respect to Vietnam later in the sixties. I know that had to have been quite painful. Some of that coverage must have hurt personally and professionally. Would you care to comment on it?

DEAN RUSK: Well I regretted it because it got in the way of our bringing the Vietnam War to a close on some reasonable basis. Because, you see, a good many of these people in this country who were very critical of the war in Vietnam had a complete right to say what they had to say. But not many of them realized that what they also were saying was saying to Hanoi, "Just hang in there fellows and you'll get what you want politically even though you can't win it militarily." I'm responsible for my part in the events of those years, but I would be glad to see some of these other people take the share of responsibility for what they did in that regard. After all it's not easy to negotiate a settlement with the North Vietnamese when they're quoting your own senators back at you. I think that that raises some very serious problems if, God forbid, it is ever necessary for the Congress to move to authorize action of that sort of anywhere else; because there are problems of censorship, problems of what, if anything, is done about dissent. Of course, I think it was a mistake for our draft to have such wide loopholes for deferments. I remember once about sixty or so student body presidents joined in a statement on Vietnam. So I invited these fellows to come visit with me at the State Department. I remember on one occasion the president of the Harvard student body made a strong statement about 'we' are doing the fighting, 'we' are doing this, and 'we' are doing that. When he got through I said, "Oh, by the way, what is your draft status?" He said, "I have a student deferment." I said, "Then aren't you being a little dramatic saying 'we' are doing this and 'we' are doing that?" Because there he was with a student deferment. I think if we ever have a draft again it ought to be absolute minimum deferments and exceptions.

RICHARD RUSK: It would make for a better military.

DEAN RUSK: Yes.

RICHARD RUSK: Well, Vietnam is unique, both in terms of the immediacy in the television coverage. Newsmen had good access to battle sites, a lot of mobility, and very little censorship, I take it. I suppose that contrasts rather sharply with press coverage in Korea and in World War II as well, where censorship was applied.

DEAN RUSK: Well, the press has become so much more competitive since those days, and so much more oriented toward the, what has come to be called, investigative reporting and things like that. Competition for Pulitzer Prizes and things of that sort. Your Uncle Phil [Philip M. Foisie], himself, is opposed to awards in journalism because he thinks that that itself creates subtle distortion and corrupts the process. Let's go back to the thirties when Cordell Hull was Secretary of State. There were only about half a dozen reporters covering the State Department in those days. He would meet with them every day at noon for a few minutes. Apparently he would answer at least half of his questions by saying, "You may say, gentlemen, that that matter is under the most serious consideration." And he would get away with it. I mean, they weren't really probing in, driving in, to get the stories. Those days have changed. They're long gone now.

RICHARD RUSK: The only press coverage that really affected me, I think, was probably in '64 when Schlesinger came out with his installments on "The Thousand Days" in *Look Magazine*. I read that darned cover story regarding you and, by golly, I felt like I'd been kicked by a mule. It really did get to me.

DEAN RUSK: What Arthur Schlesinger did not know when he wrote his book was that my original agreement with Kennedy was that I would serve for only one term. Arthur Schlesinger made something of a big deal out of the fact that I would not have served a second term, without knowing that that was my original understanding with Kennedy. Another thing, I didn't know how I was going to finance another four years. The pay was \$25,000 a year, with kids in college and so forth.

RICHARD RUSK: Any coverage that you recall that really affected you personally--that really kind of penetrated that thick hide that you all tended to form back in those years?

DEAN RUSK: I'd been around government enough to know that you really do have to thicken your hide and not pay too much attention to--You do have to spend some time almost every day, correcting mistakes that are in the press. You usually do that through your press officer, at his noon briefing or some other way. I used to tease the press by saying that when there was a New York newspaper strike, it would save me thirty minutes a day. I think the reporters, most of them, understand that, as you've heard me say before, that we're all in this canoe together and we're going to come through it together or go down together. They're not really wishing you ill. They do want things to--One little moment I might mention to you: During the Cuban Missile Crisis, I would meet with the press, in the background, every day. There was just a very different Press Corps during that period.

RICHARD RUSK: Were you the only one connected with the crisis that was doing that, or was McNamara doing it that for the press?

DEAN RUSK: I don't know. I was doing this for the reporters covering the State Department. I don't know who was doing it elsewhere. During that period the reporters were drawn, and gray, and weary, and scared. They were looking to me for support. And my need to give them some support helped to support me. I've never seen the Press Corps in quite the same mood that it was during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

RICHARD RUSK: We were all nuclear targets back in those days.

DEAN RUSK: They understood how serious it was. I think, on the whole, you will find that the reporting during the Cuban Missile Crisis was pretty responsible.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you recall instances where either exceptionally good reporting or poor reporting may have adversely, somehow, affected policy?

DEAN RUSK: Well, you have to keep in touch with what the press is saying around the country including television news and papers of particular influence like the *New York Times*, *Baltimore Sun*, and *St. Louis Post Dispatch* because you're interested in public opinion. The press does have an important input into public opinion--not decisive. There are many other ways of getting some ideas about what the public was thinking than just looking at the press. I would have a press wrap-up every day, including what was being said by the press out in various parts of the country, smaller newspapers and things of that sort. So, that was one of the elements that you took into account when you were discussing the policy options and what might be done or what ought to be done. I wouldn't say that--I don't remember any time when the government took its policy from an editorial of the *New York Times*, or the *Baltimore Sun*, or the *Baltimore Tribune*, because policy is much more complicated than that. You must be very much aware of what the American people are being told about what's going on in the world.

RICHARD RUSK: Didn't the press get access to, at least the *New York Times*, or one paper, got access to the Bay of Pigs story prior to the invasion, and Kennedy appealed to them to sit on the story--later regretting the fact that they didn't go ahead with it and perhaps by so doing--

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. I read that account. I was unaware of that at the time, but apparently he called *the New York Times* and asked them to sit on it.

RICHARD RUSK: Was it *The Times* that was involved?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. *New York Times*. And I can well see why later he might have hoped that they had gone ahead with the story and that would have been the basis for canceling the operation.

RICHARD RUSK: It would have been, wouldn't it? Blown up the cover right at the start.

DEAN RUSK: Sure. Sure. As a matter of fact, one amusing incident, when he called me in mid-December 1960 to tell me he wanted me to take the job, I told him that there were a lot of things we ought to talk about before he made that decision. So, he told me to come on down to West Palm Beach the next morning and talk things over. So, I went down there and got there pretty early. Well, as a matter of fact, I walked into his living room before he himself had gotten dressed and finished breakfast. And there on the table in the living room was the morning edition of the *Washington Post* with a big headline on it, "Rusk To Be Secretary of State." When he came in, he blew his top. He asked me if I had talked to anybody about it, and I said no. He asked me with whom I might have discussed the matter and I said, "Only my wife, and she sure as hell wouldn't have." So he called Phil [Philip L.] Graham, the publisher of the *Washington Post* and just gave him hell for this headline. And apparently, Phil Graham said, "But you told me that yourself yesterday, Jack." Because I heard Jack Kennedy say, "But that was off the record." And apparently Phil Graham said, "You didn't tell me it was off the record." But they carried the story before Kennedy announced it.

RICHARD RUSK: Looking back on all that experience and press contact, who were your favorite journalists, the people you enjoyed dealing with the most, and why?

DEAN RUSK: I think that among the written press, one of the men I always admired greatly is John [Murmah] Hightower, for many years the diplomatic correspondent for the Associated Press. I say that because I read, I suppose, everything that he wrote over a period of about twenty years. And not to this day can I tell you John Hightower's personal view on any matter of public policy. He just kept that out of his stories. He wrote his stories straight, without injecting any personal views of his own into it. The same thing could be said about Frank Blair of NBC News. Now some people considered him to be kind of stodgy and not one of the glamor boys, and that sort of thing. But again, I listened to him for many years reporting the news and I cannot tell you his personal views on any of these matters. I once complimented John Hightower of Associated Press on this. He said, "Well, don't give me too much credit, because when you're writing for the Associated Press you're writing for a very large number of member newspapers who have the greatest diversity of points of view. So you've got to keep your own viewpoint out of it." Then, I thought John Chancellor has always done a very good job.

RICHARD RUSK: In terms of commentary?

DEAN RUSK: Well, he was a straight news reporter for many years.

RICHARD RUSK: What about the commentator stuff. Whose meant a great deal of sense to you? I suppose it would differ on issues, but in general.

DEAN RUSK: Well, as these commentators develop standing and prestige, they tend to get--not stuffy, but pontifical. I just don't like people who pontificate about complicated questions. Eric Sevareid was very good for many years. Then he got to be a little pontifical as he got older. Maybe that's one of the privileges of getting old.

RICHARD RUSK: Any of the Vietnam coverage stand out in terms of individuals reporting?

DEAN RUSK: Not particularly.

END OF SIDE 2

