

Dean Rusk Oral History Collection
Rusk RR, Side 1
Dean Rusk interviewed by Richard Rusk
circa 1985

Rusk RR, Side 2
Dean Rusk interviewed by Richard Rusk
1984 August 20

RICHARD RUSK: Do you recall having testified on behalf of John [Paton] Davies [Jr.] in the early fifties?

DEAN RUSK: Yes. When I was with General [Joseph W.] Stilwell during the war, John Davies was out there in that same theatre as a political advisor to General Stilwell. And I got to know him and his wife, Pat [Patricia Grady], very well and consider them very close and good friends. Then when some charges were brought against him later, there was a hearing before a State Department board, I testified at that board on his behalf. At that time it was my strong impression that had John Davies used top-secret material in his own defense he would have been cleared, but he simply refused to do it. He got a negative report from this board and John Foster Dulles, the Secretary of State, then relieved him from duty in the Foreign Service. Well then later, when I became Secretary of State I wanted to get right into this and turn the thing around, but I was told by the law officers of the government, including the Attorney General, Bobby [Robert Francis] Kennedy, and the lawyers in my own department that since I had testified on his behalf in the hearing that I had to disqualify myself from dealing with that issue. So it took several years before we got a retired federal judge to go over the whole thing and get the thing straightened out, with other people carrying the burden. I am convinced myself that John Davies was done a very great injustice in that situation.

RICHARD RUSK: You were able to get his name cleared in 1968.

DEAN RUSK: Yes. That's much too late. It should have been done much earlier.

RICHARD RUSK: Was it a politically sensitive thing to do, say in '61 or '62?

DEAN RUSK: No, it wouldn't have been. But the wheels move so slowly on those things that--and Bobby Kennedy wasn't much interested in clearing people like that. When he was Attorney General he was very rough on personnel matters.

RICHARD RUSK: Did John Kennedy ever express an opinion on the case of John Davies?

DEAN RUSK: No. Another case that I felt badly about was John--turn that off for a minute.

RICHARD RUSK: The general question, as far as this whole [Joseph Raymond] McCarthy period is concerned--And I've got to do some more studying up on it to talk to you any length

about it. But, do you think it's possible that we could go through this kind of thing again, or have we had sufficient education of the American public in general, with all the people going to college nowadays and what not?

DEAN RUSK: Well I hope we won't go through it again because it's a very unlovely thing and wholly out of bounds for a free democratic constitutional system such as we have in this country. Now, for example, one small example: George [Catlett] Marshall, when he was Secretary of State, asked me to come over to the State Department and take charge of the Bureau of United Nations Affairs. It was then called Bureau of Special Political Affairs. I was the successor to Alger Hiss. Well, there was about a two-month gap between his service and mine. I had heard rumors in the Pentagon about Alger Hiss, so I felt that, like an old company commander that I ought to have an inventory on what I was taking over. There were about 225 or so officers of staff in that bureau when I took it over. I asked the security officer in the office of the State Department to give me a loyalty and security rundown on all of the people in that bureau. They all checked out cleanly and no one in that bureau, to my recollection, ever got into any problems on the grounds of loyalty and security. So whatever the truth about Alger Hiss, it was clear to me that he had not stuffed that bureau of the Department with questionable characters.

The presumption of good faith and the presumption of innocence is the very cement that holds our kind of society together. It's a terrible thing when that begins to give way to suspicion and fear and things of that sort. I do think, however, that the idea that McCarthyism had stifled the Foreign Service in frank reporting has been exaggerated. If you take a look at those who have come to the top in the Foreign Service over the years, you will find that those who have come to the top are people who have always been frank and expressed their views with integrity when asked for them, sometimes volunteering them, whether or not those views turned out to be in accord with the existing policy or the wishes of the administration: people like Llewellyn [E.] Thompson, [Jr.], Charles [E.] Bohlen, [James W.] Jimmy Riddleberger, and [U.] Alexis Johnson, people like that. They never pulled their punches.

As a matter of fact, when I was Secretary of State I tried to meet with each new class of junior Foreign Service officers entering the Foreign Service. On one occasion I had heard that a Foreign Service officer, Class Four, had gone to meet with this group of new Foreign Service officers during this orientation period and had told these young Foreign Service officers that they should keep their heads down, that they should be careful about what they say. When I heard that I immediately went to this same group to turn that around.

RICHARD RUSK: What was the name of the group?

DEAN RUSK: It was the incoming class of young Foreign Service officers. You see, we take in a couple of classes each year of new Foreign Service officers. I did not want these young officers of the Foreign Service to think that they must be very careful not to say anything that their elders and betters might disagree with, because you don't get a fair crack at the issues unless everybody's free to say exactly what's on their minds about them.

RICHARD RUSK: Wasn't it [William] Averell Harriman who labeled this group of higher-ranking people in the Far Eastern Affairs desk as a wasteland in 1969-1970 when he headed to

Paris on behalf of, was it [Richard Milhous] Nixon, to head up the Peace Commission?

DEAN RUSK: In Vietnam?

RICHARD RUSK: In order to conduct peace negotiations.

DEAN RUSK: Oh, yeah. But he was getting old; and one of the joys of getting old is you can use a sharp tongue occasionally. I don't think that represented his real view.

RICHARD RUSK: Well apparently he got a staff report from someone he didn't like and ended up sending that guy off to Afghanistan. Could it happen again, this McCarthy thing?

DEAN RUSK: It's possible if we don't watch ourselves. We ought to be very jealous about that though and not let it happen again.

RICHARD RUSK: Are we more sophisticated now as a people than we were back in the early fifties?

DEAN RUSK: Well this calls for some comments on the [Ronald Wilson] Reagan administration, and I am not sure that we are. I think there are people--

RICHARD RUSK: Talking about the public at large, are we? Of course that does reflect on the public as far as who we're supporting at the time.

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. I think there are in government now a good many people from some of these ultra-conservative think-tanks that sit around the back rooms of the government. I think we have to watch them pretty carefully. I do think that the Congress is in pretty good shape on this kind of thing. I just don't believe that the Congress would let this sort of thing get very far if it broke out again.

[break in recording]

RICHARD RUSK: --in the books containing this testimony before the [Edward Eugene] Cox and [Edward H.] Rees Committees I didn't see mention of the committee reports, either from Cox Committee or the Rees Committee. Would that be in a separate publication, or why wouldn't it have been in the same binder?

DEAN RUSK: I'm not sure that the Rees Committee was able to issue a report.

RICHARD RUSK: Didn't they more or less just kind of fall apart?

DEAN RUSK: That's right. If there had been a report, there would have been, I am sure, there would have been a strong dissenting minority opinion from Wayne [Levere] Hays and others. (laughter) I don't recall a report actually issued.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you recall a Cox report? There must have been something.

DEAN RUSK: I don't recall it now, but there may well have been.

[break in recording]

DEAN RUSK: You see, this kind of thing should not be dealt with on a basis of innuendo and that sort of thing. I remember when I was Secretary of State being invited to the National Convention of the American Legion. I went to this convention and found that they had a motion before the convention to put in by some state or local chapter to investigate the State Department: that the Congress ought to investigate the State Department. Well, in my speech to the convention I referred to this and said, "Why don't you fellows investigate us yourselves? You appoint an American Legion committee and we will give that committee full clearance. They can look at anything whatever in the State Department. Make your own investigation." And they did. And they appointed a committee. And they spent a year or two investigating the State Department and came out with a very favorable report. (laughter) People in government basically are neither knaves nor fools. Get these things out and get the facts on top of the table. That's the only real way to deal with questions of that sort.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you remember when you did this for, was it the Foreign Legion?

DEAN RUSK: In the mid-sixties sometime. Maybe early sixties, I'm not sure. I thought the way to deal with that question was just to put it to them and let them make their own investigation, which they did.

RICHARD RUSK: Did it create a precedent that other groups followed?

DEAN RUSK: I don't recall another one.

RICHARD RUSK: One question as far as these two hearings and their effect on the Rockefeller Foundation: Did you fellows ever make an estimate as to what it cost the Foundation to defend themselves and prepare testimony for the hearings? Or another estimate on what it cost all the people involved, plus the foundations, the various universities?

DEAN RUSK: It was fairly costly, not only in terms of time that had to be put in by the senior officers of the Foundation, but lawyers' fees, printing up of briefs to be submitted to the committees. I think it was fairly expensive, but I never tried to make any estimate of just how much it was. We had a Wall Street law firm working with us on it and they don't come cheap.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you get supported by anyone within the administration, the Eisenhower administration, at the time that you had to go to bat in Congress there? Or by any other segments of the public?

DEAN RUSK: We didn't ask for any support from the executive branch of the government. We handled this on our own.

RICHARD RUSK: And the public really didn't get involved?

DEAN RUSK: And the public really didn't get much concerned about it.

RICHARD RUSK: Just the newspapers?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. Some of the newspapers were hostile to the Cox and Reese Committee hearings. You can find that by checking back.

RICHARD RUSK: Sure. We can go over it later, but I thought I'd ask you now why it was that General and then-President [Dwight David] Eisenhower didn't take a stronger stand in the face of McCarthyism. He seemed to know what it was all about. I remember reading in this material on the Cox and Rees Committees some excerpts of a speech of his at Columbia University in which he identified quite clearly the threat to our liberties caused by this type of thing. Why was it that he was not able to--

DEAN RUSK: Well, Dwight Eisenhower, whom I admire and served with for a brief time in the Pentagon at the end of the war when he became Chief of Staff of the Army, was not very active on what might be called political issues. The principal black mark I have on Dwight Eisenhower is the fact that when Senator [William Ezra] Jenner of Indiana called George Marshall a traitor, that Eisenhower didn't move in on that and just slap that senator down straight away. George Marshall had bathed Dwight Eisenhower and he should have stepped forward publicly and flatly and denounced any such idea and registered his full confident support in George Marshall. George Marshall himself would never comment on anything like that. He just simply remained silent. It was beneath him. He wouldn't get into it at all. I think Eisenhower--as a matter of fact I think I heard a report that Eisenhower went out to give a speech in Indiana in which he was to make some complimentary remarks about George Marshall and because he was in the same state with Senator Jenner he deleted those remarks from his speech.

RICHARD RUSK: Jenner was a Republican?

DEAN RUSK: Yes. Very right-wing McCarthyite-type of Republican. A very unpleasant fellow as far as I'm concerned.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you attribute this to Ike's conservatism and cautious attitude? Do you attribute this to Ike's conservatism and cautious attitude?

DEAN RUSK: Well, he was just very cautious on political matters. He might have had some political advisors around him who urged him not to get into it for one reason or another.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you personally get touched by the McCarthy period? Were you ever charged or suspected?

DEAN RUSK: No. And I have sometimes wondered why. Joe McCarthy never laid a glove on me. I had the impression from some comments made later that some of the Republican senators had gone to McCarthy and told him to keep hands off of me. Now just who that might have been and why I don't know, but I was never directly caught up in the McCarthy business. That was

one of the reasons why I thought it might help if I took over the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs under Dean [Gooderham] Acheson because--

RICHARD RUSK: You had the feeling at the time you volunteered for that that McCarthy was not going to nail you?

DEAN RUSK: Well, he had not nailed me and I was not caught up in so much of the controversy surrounding people who had worked on these Far Eastern questions. I thought maybe that would be one way to get sort of a fresh start on the whole thing. On the merits, in terms of what I've actually done and said and worked on in my life, I might have been a prime target for Joe McCarthy if somehow he had gotten around to it. Apparently he might have been warned off by some Republican senators.

RICHARD RUSK: Dean Acheson was very responsive to that volunteerism on your part. I think he said, "I kissed him on both cheeks and gave him the job."

DEAN RUSK: I think that was figurative. I don't think Dean Acheson would ever kiss anybody on both cheeks! (laughter)

[break in recording]

DEAN RUSK: Dean Acheson helped to open the door to McCarthyism by a remark he made in a press conference about Alger Hiss. I was in the group that was briefing Dean Acheson for his press conference that day, and our advice to him was that since the Hiss case was in the courts, that he should not comment on it in any way. Typically you don't comment on issues of action before the court. And he seemed to accept that advice, but apparently on the elevator going down to the press conference all by himself he changed his mind. When this question came up he made the famous remark, "I will not turn my back on Alger Hiss." That, I think, opened the way for attacks on him and on the State Department and so forth.

[break in recording]

DEAN RUSK: When I worked for Dean Acheson in the Truman administration there were a good many times when I would have to go out to his house at night in Georgetown or out on the farm in the country and talk over various things with him, so I saw a good deal of him personally and also his wife Alice [Stanley Acheson] whom I had the highest regard for. She was a very intelligent and savvy woman who had a pretty good understanding of Washington and all the things that go on around there. She was a little bit like Alice Roosevelt Longworth in that respect. She was one of the grande dames of our system.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, was this whole McCarthy movement pretty much the creation of one man? Would McCarthyism have happened if Tail Gunner Joe had not stood up and made this an issue? That's an old historical question.

DEAN RUSK: The story is that this all started by accident. Joe McCarthy had to go out to West Virginia somewhere to make a speech and he didn't have a speech. Somebody put into his hands

this gossip or rumor that there were X number of communists in the Department of State. He went out there and used that and he got such a reaction on it that he decided he had something going and he followed up on it.

RICHARD RUSK: He specifically was looking for a campaign issue on which to run for reelection.

DEAN RUSK: That's right.

RICHARD RUSK: As a matter of fact he sat down and had a meeting one time with a reporter friend and some other people to try to find an issue that he could run on.

DEAN RUSK: After McCarthy's death a reporter interviewed Mrs. [Jean Kerr] McCarthy. After they talked for a while this reporter apparently said to her, "Well at least Joe McCarthy believed in what he was doing." And she came right back at him and said, "You must never, never, never say that Joe McCarthy believed in what he was doing on this matter. He was acting out a role."

RICHARD RUSK: She said that?

DEAN RUSK: Yes. McCarthy's own wife apparently said that to a reporter.

RICHARD RUSK: So, was McCarthyism something that had to happen, given the mood of the times, or is this a case where one fellow in history was able to start something?

DEAN RUSK: I think that it was not the mood of the time. I think that this really went back to this fellow Joe McCarthy who was a kind of swashbuckling politician to begin with and stumbled onto something that he felt was an issue that he could make some hay on. Perhaps he did, in the short run, but it was an issue that finally brought him down in shambles.

RICHARD RUSK: You're not exaggerating the role of leadership in this country? He was obviously striking a very sensitive chord out there with the American people. You referred to it in these testimonies, as a matter of fact, the fact that we are living in confusing times and a great many things have happened abroad.

DEAN RUSK: Well, there were things that contributed to it. There was a question that was asked in those days which is a phony question: Who lost China? Well China was not ours to lose: hundreds of millions of people. We weren't the den mother of China.

RICHARD RUSK: Is that the way you felt in '49?

DEAN RUSK: Sure. If anybody lost China it was Chiang Kai-shek or perhaps the impact of the ten years of war against the Japanese without any outside help. You see, we had had a century-long very warm and friendly relationship between the Chinese people and the American people. Almost every church had least a part of a missionary to support in China, schools all over the place run by American churches, hospitals, medical facilities, things of that sort. Maybe we were a little patronizing toward China on the American side, but there was that really friendly attitude

toward China. Then over night the Chinese became hostile to the United States. So we had some of the feelings of a jilted lover: Here the Chinese have turned against us. And that was pretty hard to take. So that created a fairly fertile ground for McCarthyism. It generated more interest among the American people than it was worth, partly because of actually what happened with China.

RICHARD RUSK: Well, I can remember it as a six-year old kid.

[break in recording]

DEAN RUSK: When we lived in Scarsdale we were a small Democratic minority in an ocean of Republicans. I remember one year the Westchester County Democratic Committee came to me and asked if I would not run for Congress from that district. And I said, "Look, what you're asking me to do is to resign my job at the Rockefeller Foundation, run for Congress, get twenty-five percent of the vote, and then start looking for a job." I said, "That's not very attractive." (laughter) Of course, in the internal affairs in the village of Scarsdale it was on a nonpartisan basis. The Democrats were a pretty small minority. That's like the Republicans in Georgia when I was growing up down here.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you personally ever have any dealings with Joe McCarthy?

DEAN RUSK: I don't think I ever actually met Joseph McCarthy personally. It's possible that we might have crossed paths at a big White House reception or something of that sort, but I don't recall ever having--He was not on the Foreign Relations Committee or any of the--

RICHARD RUSK: He was making waves during your last year with the Department of State, though.

DEAN RUSK: In the Truman administration?

RICHARD RUSK: Yeah.

DEAN RUSK: Yeah.

RICHARD RUSK: We'll get into that later. One or two other questions: The specific question of the Rees Committee Report, I'm quoting you as saying it was widely regarded to be a confused and inadequate review. Widely regarded by whom? Again, is this the newspaper opinion?

DEAN RUSK: I think not only in the Foundation world, but the college and university world, many of the newspapers like the New York Times, the Washington Post, others. I don't think that meant widely regarded at the grass roots because I don't think people at the grass roots follow these things that closely.

[break in recording]

RICHARD RUSK: What about incoming grant proposals to the Rockefeller Foundation. Were

you ever lacking good ideas? You must have got a lot of proposals, but--

DEAN RUSK: Really good new ideas are hard to come by. We are always on the alert trying to recognize them when they came down the pike. Robert [Abercrombie] Lovett, one of our trustees at the Rockefeller Foundation, once commented that after his experience on the Rockefeller Board he had just about concluded that the problem was not in finding money, but to find an idea that was worth a nickel. I am sure there are lot of ideas lying around at the ends of our fingertips which when stumbled upon seem perfectly obvious. The tantalizing thing is that it's always difficult to spot them. I mean, the idea that if somebody put a point on a bolt and called it a screw: That was a heck of a good idea. I remember once during--Well in my day in the State Department I set aside about twelve young Foreign Service officers in a special forum and I told this group that their job was to search for new ideas, to challenge basic assumptions, to challenge the standard interpretation of the facts, to look for new ideas including weird ideas to see where we would go. When I gave them their initial charge I said, "I think you're going to find this a very difficult job," and they looked at each other and laughed. After a year I met with them again and they said, "You're right. New ideas are hard to come by."

RICHARD RUSK: When did you appoint this group? When you got there?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, in 1963 or '4, along in there.

RICHARD RUSK: Would this have been in response to developments in Vietnam?

DEAN RUSK: No. It was before that. That now has become an open forum panel where the Foreign Service officers have occasional meetings where they invite some outside speaker and have a question period. It's a very open and free kind of discussion like you have in places like the National War College.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you have a name for that group?

DEAN RUSK: I think it's called the Open Forum now.

RICHARD RUSK: And that was a practice that they initiated in response to the committee that was--

DEAN RUSK: Well, this was a development from that committee of twelve that I first established.

RICHARD RUSK: Dick [Richard Charles Albert] Holbrooke in that group?

DEAN RUSK: I don't think he was.

RICHARD RUSK: He would have been overseas at that time?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. I don't think he was. A policy department like the Department of State ought to be reaching out for all the ideas it can get hold of that have to do with the issues before

the Department. There should be the freest--swinging kind of debate and discussion before a decision is made. My own view is that since it is the President who is elected by the people to give direction to the executive branch of the government that after a decision is made it is the duty of the professional services to support the President. That doesn't mean that they can't propose changes and amendments along the way, but before a decision is made there must be the widest range of discussion. There are some of my colleagues who commented after I left office that they had found it difficult to learn my own view of some of these policy questions. That was possibly because I inherited from George Marshall the practice of getting other people's views before I reached my own. When I would call an Assistant Secretary in to talk about something I would ask him to bring along his own junior colleagues who were involved in that question. I would usually start with the juniors first and ask their views of a particular problem. One must welcome the widest range of discussion during the process of policymaking even though there is a constitutional obligation of discipline after the decision has been made.

RICHARD RUSK: Speaking of good ideas from the foundations, the Carnegie Foundation decided to pursue grants along the lines of how to prevent nuclear war that seemed to me to be an exceptionally good idea. Long overdue. Did you fellows ever anticipate or think about doing that sort of thing back when you were at the Foundation in view of the fact that it was really every bit as much of a threat then as it is now. Of course a lot of your grants did pertain to the very issue of peace.

DEAN RUSK: We made a good many grants looking toward the widest range of public discussion of foreign policy issues and the study of those issues in universities and colleges. I don't think we concentrated specifically on nuclear war because we were aiming at the general problem of war. We did not concentrate on the nuclear issue as such. I think it's entirely appropriate for some of the larger foundations to put a good deal of money into the examination of these issues in a nuclear world. Because keeping those nuclear bombs in their cages is the number one problem before the human race. No, we didn't concentrate on the nuclear issue when I was president of the Rockefeller Foundation. We put money into the Council of Foreign Relations, the Foreign Policy Association, the United Nations Association, to these various regional studies in universities and colleges. We put a good deal of money into that kind of thing.

END OF SIDE 1

BEGINNING OF SIDE 2

RICHARD RUSK: This next tape deals with Dean Rusk and his years in Athens, Georgia, starting from fall of 1970 up through the present day. Today is August 20, 1984. This tape should include that period of time after my dad left the [Lyndon Baines] Johnson administration in January 1969. It would include his year as a Fellow at the Rockefeller Foundation. Okay, Pop, do you want to follow along with the chronology I have here in the questions?

DEAN RUSK: Whatever you'd like.

RICHARD RUSK: Okay, what about your reactions upon leaving office in January of 1969. Your last day at the office, your party at the State Department, which I missed and have a tape of. For some reason I didn't go to your last party. Basically you were a year in Washington, a year and a half in Washington as a Fellow with the Rockefeller Foundation, etc.

DEAN RUSK: Well, the end of my time as Secretary of State came as a great relief. I personally believe that eight years are too many on that particular job. In that final year I was just bone tired. The job requires you to work fourteen-sixteen hours a day, usually seven days a week. Very rarely do you get any time off. The longest time I had away from the job in eight years was about ten days that I took away to have the flu. The Russians do this much better than we because they require their top people to take a month's vacation every year and they enforce it. I remember once Mr. [Andrei Andreevich] Gromyko remarked to me that he was planning to take a vacation the following month and he said, "Will it be all right?" and I said, "Oh, yes, go ahead, we're not going to do anything to you."

My original arrangement with President Kennedy was that I would serve for only one term. To begin with I wasn't sure that I could finance more than that. The pay of the Secretary of State at that time was \$25,000 a year and the kids were headed for college. It was pretty short rations for us to be on. But with the tragic circumstances of Kennedy's death in November 1963, President Johnson asked all of us to stay at our posts, and you could not say no under those circumstances. Then he insisted that I stay with him as Secretary of State as long as he was President. Both in the summer of '63 and the summer of '67 I told both Kennedy and Johnson that if they wanted to get a fresh start with someone else on my job I would fully understand and would be glad to leave and both of them told me not to bring the subject up again. Anyhow, it was really a great relief to--

RICHARD RUSK: Was that in response to any particular policy happening or any particular difficulty you were having?

DEAN RUSK: No. In the case of President Kennedy, he was coming up to an election and I wasn't sure at the time that I said this to President Johnson that he might not be coming up for another election. And there is such a thing as getting a fresh start on certain key jobs in preparation for an election, but anyhow they wouldn't buy that.

RICHARD RUSK: Incidentally, you made the point that the job for you involved a seven-day week, then, twelve, fourteen hours a day. Ronald Reagan seems to get by with a good deal less.

DEAN RUSK: Well, as a matter of fact, it's possible that I did not handle my time properly. Perhaps I put in too much time at the office. Secretary George Marshall had taken the view that he would do only those things which only the Secretary can do. If anyone else could do it, he would leave it to them to do. So he would go home at 4:30 or 5:00 in the afternoon. But in our case there were so many functions at the White House, at embassies. I think it's about true that your mother and I had a chance to have dinner at home with our family, with the children, maybe once a month for eight years. We had four or five dinners out every week. So that made a full day. Of course, a job like the Secretary of State is one that you can never catch up on in the sense

that you can say at the end of the day, "Now I am caught up. Tomorrow I'll start all over again," because there's always unfinished business and there's always a lot of reading. It was strenuous. I'm not saying this in terms of self-pity, but it was a strenuous job. And there were a good many, just sort of routine things that you did every year.

RICHARD RUSK: That only the Secretary did?

DEAN RUSK: Well, it's one of those protocol things that they expect the Secretary--For example, I met the Eagle Scout of the Year every year. I met the Boys Nation every year: things like that. There are a number of those things that are just expected and you do them. The poor president has to do even more of them. I just breathed a tremendous sigh of relief when Mr. Nixon finished his oath of office and it was no longer my responsibility. I did want to take some time to decide what to do. Your mother and I agreed that we did not want to live on the Northeastern Seaboard anymore, in the Washington-New York-Boston axis, that we would either go west which was more or less where she grew up or come south which was my home. In any event, in that first year there were a good many things to straighten out. The Rockefeller Foundation very kindly provided a fellowship to finance that year, and I spent a good deal of time in that period dictating oral history material for the JFK and LBJ Presidential libraries for release in 1990. They put that date on it because by that time the principal documents would be available: The context of what I said in the oral history would be available for those who wanted to dig it out.

RICHARD RUSK: Who picked out the date of 1990? Was it your request?

DEAN RUSK: That was my--I figured that by that time the documents would be available and that perhaps I myself would be dead so that I wouldn't have to worry about it.

RICHARD RUSK: Don't count on it. (laughter) You might have to extend the date.

DEAN RUSK: In that oral history material I did not try to retell the story because that material is all available. What I did was try to put down in the record the principal things that were in our minds when important decisions were made because those things don't always appear in the written record. The historian has quite a job to realize that the written record is only a part of the story.

RICHARD RUSK: Incidentally, we're writing both libraries for the written transcripts of that taping. Hopefully that will be part of the materials available at the Rusk Center.

DEAN RUSK: Well, I'll have to think carefully about what is done with that because of this limitation of 1990.

RICHARD RUSK: As a matter of practice you had a habit of advising both your Presidents on a really confidential basis, in terms of your final word at the end of the day, and didn't always commit yourself to print in memo form, didn't always release your recommendations in larger gatherings. As part of these tapings, would you include material in there that might specify a bit more closely what you actually said to each of your Presidents in your one-on-one sessions with

them?

DEAN RUSK: I never made any record of my talks with the two Presidents I served. For example, I never at the end of the day dictated a diary that included all that kind of material. I never wrote memoranda of conversation between myself and the President. I would translate those conversations into instructions in the Department, but I would not write memos of conversation. I was not like some earlier cabinet officers, [James] Forrestal and [Harold L.] Ickes and others, who wanted to create a record for themselves over against their own President. Well, I didn't like that idea. As a matter of fact, I found by accident that there had been a practice in my office, at the very beginning for a short period, that was a holdover from the Eisenhower period. A secretary in the outer office would stay on the phone on my talks with the President and make short memoranda and then circulate those around the Department. I put a stop to that. I not only stopped that, but I arranged for a phone in my office which nobody else could listen to, which was a direct line to the President. I felt that the President and the Secretary of State ought to show a completely solid front between themselves, that that was a kind of constitutional obligation of the Secretary of State under our system. So many of my pieces of advice, or recommendations, or arguments to the President were done orally and privately rather than in memorandum form. I was not a great writer of memoranda on many policy points. Now I did at the end of every day send over to the President for his evening reading a one- or two-page memorandum: a little report, giving just two or three lines of report on things that we had done during the day and things that we were planning to do the next day. That would help to keep the President from being surprised when he read the papers, and also it would give him a chance to give me a ring and say he'd like to get into one or another point that was coming up. Those daily reports to the President, I think, were very useful in keeping him informed and keeping the President and me in touch with each other.

RICHARD RUSK: Incidentally, on your tapes for the Kennedy and Johnson Libraries, were you responding to interviewers' questions?

DEAN RUSK: Yes, the libraries had deemed young researchers, Ph.Ds, who had studied the record pretty carefully and had a very considerable number of questions which they would put to me. I went beyond a number of those questions from time to time, but they were very able interviewers and did a good job.

RICHARD RUSK: How much material is in the tapes? How long did you spend on them?

DEAN RUSK: I spent several days for each one, so it's fairly comprehensive material. Then I had a little downtown office in that first year after I left office at the Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies. Francis [Orlando] Wilcox was then the Dean of SAIS, as it was called, and he very kindly offered a little office downtown where I would have a chance to hang my hat and make a few appointments and things of that sort. Some of the students there at Johns Hopkins didn't like the idea that I would be provided an office there because I had been very controversial for a good many of the students. Francis Wilcox and I mentioned the matter and we decided that it would not be advisable for us to remind those students that when I was President of the Rockefeller Foundation we had given them the money to build the place with. We thought that would just make them even madder. (laughter)

RICHARD RUSK: Now what was his position there? He was Dean?

DEAN RUSK: He was Dean. He had been many years Chief of Staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and then served for a time in the Eisenhower administration as Assistant Secretary for the United Nations Affairs. Then he became Dean of the School at Johns Hopkins there in Washington.

RICHARD RUSK: Did the students get rather emphatic over their concerns there?

DEAN RUSK: No, I met with the students during that period. I had a bull session with them. It was a fairly warm conversation at times, but I think--Well I enjoyed it and I hope they did. But anyhow, working on materials for that dictation took up a good part of the time. There were a number of other things to laying down the job. For example, a good many gifts had come in, and in the middle sixties a law had been passed putting a limit on the value of any gift which you could keep. So I asked the Protocol Office to put into one room there the gifts which your mom and I might be entitled to keep. So we went down there one day and looked through all those things and decided which ones we might want to keep and which we would want to keep and the rest of them we just turned back over to the Department and let them do anything they wanted to with. Typically those gifts that come in, if they are over the value that the individual can keep, are then turned over to the General Services Administration. If any of them are things that are needed or can be used in government, they will be used for that purpose. If not, then they would be auctioned off at some point. As a matter of fact, many years later a little gift shop up in New Jersey wrote me a note saying that they had come into possession of a solid silver cigarette box engraved to me and they wanted to know if I wanted it. Well, I didn't want it, but undoubtedly that came from, had gotten into the private sector by an auction.

RICHARD RUSK: That law was passed in '66?

DEAN RUSK: '66, along in there.

RICHARD RUSK: Would that have been retroactive back through '61 as far as your years in office?

DEAN RUSK: No. There are certain things that it was not applicable to: gifts earlier than that.

RICHARD RUSK: What ever happened to the silver ship, the one with all the sails?

DEAN RUSK: I gave that to Lamar Dodd here at the University of Georgia. He was long-time head of the Art Department here. We try to discourage gifts and I did not, myself, think that I should use taxpayers' money to buy gifts for foreign dignitaries. The President is in a little different position. There was no way he could avoid that. I didn't have the personal funds to get a lot of gifts for these foreign dignitaries, so I was very--

RICHARD RUSK: Yet there was a certain amount of protocol established when you would have to give something.

DEAN RUSK: No. Not necessarily. You just maybe get the reputation of being a stingy person. (laughter) The general idea was that you would discourage gifts, but that if you were offered a gift under circumstances where it would be embarrassing to refuse, then you would accept it and dispose of it according to law.

RICHARD RUSK: Can you ever think of an instance where gift-giving or the lack of gift-giving ever had any influence at all on matters of policy.

DEAN RUSK: No. Not really. I exchanged a good many pictures with foreign dignitaries: autographed pictures, framed pictures. You have to be a little careful about the gifts you take along to distinguished foreigners. I remember making a trip to Taiwan once. I was going to call on Chiang Kai-shek. I took along the gift from President Johnson to President Chiang Kai-shek. It was one of these new Accutron clocks, a very handsome piece. The clock itself was run on tuning forks, a new principle in time keeping. It was all engraved to President Chiang Kai-shek. Well when I got out there I mentioned this to one of my colleagues in the Embassy and he turned pale and said, "Oh, no, no, no. That's impossible. You must not give a time piece to a Chinese because to him that means that his time has come." So I had to scurry around and find a different gift for President Chiang Kai-shek. There were times when they would ask me what gifts we would like. Mom and I would suggest we would like records of their folk music. So we have quite a few records of folk music from different countries we visited. Not only were we interested in that, but also it was rather pleasing to them to have us express an interest in their folk music. So that worked out all right.

RICHARD RUSK: Were you with President Johnson when he was returning from Asia on Air Force One, and stopped in Italy to see the Pope?

DEAN RUSK: No, I--

RICHARD RUSK: --And gave the Pope a gift. And apparently the Pope had trouble opening it, so LBJ whipped out a knife and started [cutting open the box]. (laughter) Inside that box was a bust of Lyndon Johnson. Were you with him on that trip?

DEAN RUSK: No, I wasn't with him on that trip.

RICHARD RUSK: You heard about the incident, I'm sure.

DEAN RUSK: Yeah, we had a little trouble with aspects of that trip. His desire to come by Rome and call on the Pope was rather a last minute affair.

RICHARD RUSK: It sure was. Apparently his helicopters came right down on the Pope's garden over there and scattered his flowers.

DEAN RUSK: But it's not always easy to make that kind of appointment, almost on the spur of the moment. And somehow the communications got crossed and while he was flying over India, Indian fighter planes came up to find out who this was. We had made the proper arrangements as

far as our relations with the Indian government were concerned, but somehow the word didn't get past-- (laughter)

RICHARD RUSK: You remember the gift LBJ gave the family one time: a little miniature bust of him for a Christmas present?

DEAN RUSK: Yes. As you know, I smoke, and I prefer to use book matches to light cigarettes. Every time LBJ would see me light a cigarette with a book of matches, he would give me a lighter. But then the next time he would forget that he had already given me one, and I must have a dozen LBJ cigarette lighters around here somewhere. I also wanted to be in Washington for a brief period, just in the event that my successor William [Pierce] Rogers wanted to call me about something. Sometimes former Secretaries can help serving Secretaries with some memories of some of these things that may not be in the written record.

RICHARD RUSK: Well did he take advantage of your memory?

DEAN RUSK: Not very often, and I respected that because when you're out, you're out and you should not look over the shoulder of your successor. But it was a kind of resting-up period as well for me.

RICHARD RUSK: From my observation--of course I was back and forth between Washington and Cornell during that time. That was a tough year for you.

DEAN RUSK: The only problem on my mind was what we were going to do next because there were a number of things. Now there is a tradition in this business that if you turn down a job, the offer was never made. So I'm not going to put into the record some of the things that were offered during that period any more than in previous periods.

RICHARD RUSK: Did people come to you prior to your leaving office with various offers and suggestions of things you might do?

DEAN RUSK: Once in a while, but my view on that was I should not even discuss such things while I was still serving as Secretary of State, so I didn't discuss any of that. I had been to the University of Georgia for Law Day in 1967 to make a speech down here and had met Dean Lindsey Cowen of the Law School and the Law School faculty and others: Fred [C.] Davison, the President, and so forth. They came up with the idea of asking me to the Law School here as Professor of International Law.

RICHARD RUSK: Was this as early as '67?

DEAN RUSK: No, this was after I left office.

RICHARD RUSK: I see. What was the topic of your talk during Law Day?

DEAN RUSK: I forget now. There were some demonstrations at the time.

RICHARD RUSK: Wasn't this 1968?

DEAN RUSK: '67. It was rather interesting. In 1966 I had come down to the Atlanta Stadium for a rally called Affirmation Vietnam organized by the students of the colleges and universities of this area. By 1967 when I came down to Law Day, just one year later, there were a number of pickets. They didn't disrupt the meeting or cause any real problem, but the picketers had been organized in the Presbyterian Chapel here by my very close friend Milner [S.] Ball, who was then the Presbyterian minister to the University. It was in his chapel that these demonstrations were organized. We've often laughed about that, but we have become very close friends. Anyhow, the University Law School decided to invite me down to be a faculty member and that struck a very responsive chord. Teaching international law was what I really wanted to do when I was studying law at the University of California at Berkeley before World War II. The idea of winding up doing what I really wanted to do as a young man was very appealing. And then, Georgia was my home where I had many, many friends and kinsmen. My grandparents on the Rusk side had had fifty-six grandchildren, so I have hundreds of cousins all over Georgia. My roots are very deep in Atlanta and Cherokee and Rockdale counties. It was just a very attractive prospect.

I wasn't completely sure how Virginia would react, but she's loved it. I think it's partly because Athens is a university town, cosmopolitan, with people here from all over the world. It was not one of those old-time professional magnolia southern towns with all the traditions of the pre-war south. She quickly made many friends here and, I think, has really enjoyed it. She has very much enjoyed our family. Her own family is spread all over the place now, so if we had gone west we wouldn't have seen as much of her family as we have seen of mine down here.

RICHARD RUSK: Well, Mom's called this the best part of her adult experience, I guess. She really enjoys it here.

DEAN RUSK: Well, it has been for me in many ways. Working with young people is itself a very stimulating thing because it rejuvenates you every day. I have sometime said that you don't begin to learn until you begin to teach. I have found that to be true because you have got to be prepared for questions from any quarter about any aspect of the matters you are discussing. And the students themselves are law students, some of them more mature than younger people would be, and they were pretty serious and most of them worked pretty hard. But I did do some other things. When I came to the University I took the view that a professor in a state university should be reasonably available to the people of the state. So I have visited many parts of Georgia to meet with groups: civic clubs, chambers of commerce, historical societies, and all sorts of things. And I have thoroughly enjoyed that. It has given me a real feel for what people are like at the grass roots. And that's been always a source of great encouragement and strength.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, getting back to your earliest comments about the nature of your job and the way that you went at it. Jimmy Carter was criticized as a president for, in a sense, working too hard at the job, getting involved in the detail of policy as well as the broad outlines of policy. Just based on your experience, in looking back, again, do you think that it was necessary or wise to work that seven-day, eighty-hour week, whatever it came to?

DEAN RUSK: Part of this depends upon the Presidents you work for if you are the Secretary of State. John F. Kennedy, for example, had an insatiable curiosity about everything that was going on in the world. He would, himself, want to get into all sorts of, shall we say, lesser questions. Anything he got into, I had to get into because I had to be sure that he got the best judgment of, among others, his Secretary of State. I also did an enormous amount of reading and that, of course, took time. Not only reading materials that came out of the government agencies themselves, but also outside things: books, articles, things of that sort. That takes time. I think probably I should have worked out ways to conserve my own time more than I did. I don't know, in looking back on it, whether we could cut back on all those embassy dinners we went to. That's a little difficult because that's a courtesy that you owe as a matter of protocol to other governments and their ambassadors in Washington. I did try to make myself available to members of the Foreign Diplomatic Corps in Washington, that is, the ambassadors. Because I had the idea that an ambassador has the right to see the foreign minister or even the chief of government of the country to which he is accredited. We frequently send telegrams to our own ambassadors, "Please see the Foreign Minister," or "Please see the Prime Minister and tell him so and so," and we can't expect our own ambassadors to have that kind of access unless their ambassadors have that kind of access in Washington. Presidents sometimes get a little bit impatient with that when I would tell them that they had to receive somebody simply as a matter of style and protocol.

RICHARD RUSK: Most of your contacts with ambassadors would have been primarily for business purposes or for ceremonial, social type purposes?

DEAN RUSK: Well during the day in business hours it would be for business purposes. Only rarely did I have to see an ambassador after normal working hours. Sometimes I did, or I myself would have to call a man occasionally. The embassy dinners were sometimes a little tedious. But on the other hand, usually you had present at those embassy dinners some very interesting people and members of the diplomatic corps and perhaps some leading people from the news media or from politics, members of Congress, or occasionally a justice of the Supreme Court. So when the men would go off after dinner to have brandy and smoke, there was usually some pretty interesting political discussion going on because of those things. Nevertheless, it was time-consuming.

RICHARD RUSK: Did any useful business really take place at the embassy functions? Do you remember an instance where policy was made or effected?

DEAN RUSK: It's a good place for, in effect, exchanging political gossip and that all has a bearing on what you think you might be able to do or not be able to do. There were times when I would do something simply as a protocol matter. Your mother, bless her heart, went to all of the National Day parties as my representative. There are over 100 of those each year. Sometimes she'd have two or three of them on one day. She made a special point of going to the National Day parties of the smaller countries. Once in a while we would not go to the British Embassy or the French Embassy; everybody goes to those. But she would always turn up at the National Day parties for the smaller countries and very often was the senior person there from the American side. That was much appreciated by the Diplomatic Corps in Washington.

RICHARD RUSK: Any advice for your successors on this matter of scheduling the best use of one's time while there? I know it's always been a concern, not only of this past job here as the Secretary of State, but your other jobs to try to concentrate your energies on matters of policy and the big questions and longer range concerns.

DEAN RUSK: Despite the hours I myself kept, I was strongly interested in delegating authority downwards to my own colleagues in the Department. I had had that experience under George Marshall when he was Secretary of State and I thought that was the way that people grow and also a way to take care of the day's business more efficiently. You can delegate, but you cannot advocate. If you delegate you still have the responsibility. But there were times--And I don't know that I can recall one at the moment to mention--that I would let an Assistant Secretary go ahead and send out a cable which I might have written a little differently if I had been writing it myself, but I wasn't writing it myself. Also, he might have been right. I do have the impression that although I tried to delegate to assistant secretaries as much as possible, it was not always easy to get Assistant secretaries to delegate to people below them. Delegation is something that requires a real effort and a real determination or it just doesn't work. I once asked one of the--I had some fine people to whom to delegate. For example, I delegated a great deal to [James] Harlan Cleveland when he was head of United Nations Affairs in the Department. After I left office I wrote him once and reminded him of the extent of this delegation and how seldom I really interfered in what he was doing and I asked if he had any particular criteria that he used as to which things he brought to me and which things he went ahead and did. He said, "Oh, it was very simple. If I knew what you wanted to do, I would go ahead and do it. If I didn't, I'd come and ask you." Well, the art of the matter is--At the level of, say, an office director or an Assistant Secretary or a Secretary of State, the art of the matter is to know which things ought to be taken upstairs to a higher authority. In my case it was judgments as to which things ought to be taken to the President. So, there's no science to it. There are no cut-and-dried rules that would sort out all the questions.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you ever guess wrong on any of that? Not call a matter to the attention of the President and get surprised by it?

DEAN RUSK: No. I think with these daily reports that I would send over at the end of every day I kept the President pretty well informed. I don't recall at the moment when one of my Presidents would pull me on the coattail and say, "Hey, you should have brought that to me, I would have done that differently." I don't recall offhand.

RICHARD RUSK: Now that the world has become a more complex place and is increasingly becoming so, would it be a good thing for the foreign ministers and heads of government to get together and try to figure out ways of cutting down on the ceremony and protocol end of governing to allow more time, or time off as well as more time, for--

DEAN RUSK: Well, it's not easy.

RICHARD RUSK: Was such an effort proposed when you were there?

DEAN RUSK: When I would go up to the United Nations for two or three weeks at the

beginning of each meeting of the General Assembly to have bilateral talks with all our foreign ministers and prime ministers that turned up during that period we just called "general debate" at the United Nations, there were many, many receptions given by the delegates for each other. I came up with the idea that that was a great waste of time and a considerable cost and that what we ought to do is to have one big party, one real smash of a party, at the beginning of the General Assembly, in which every delegation is a host to every other delegation all at the same time. Let them gather in some place and that would be it. Then you wouldn't have to be giving all of the--But the smaller countries did not want that. They wanted their day in the sun and they rejected that idea when we sounded them out on it. And the same thing would be true if you tried--Now we did do something about the diplomatic tradition that when a new ambassador arrives at his post he calls on the, in our case, the Secretary of State, and then he presents his credentials to the President. Then traditionally he was supposed to make a call on every other ambassador assigned to Washington. It might be a ten-minute, a fifteen-minute call, but to go down the entire diplomatic list with such calls was really a great burden and wholly an unnecessary formality. So we worked it out that the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps would give a morning coffee about every month or two for the Diplomatic Corps to receive the newly-incoming ambassadors, and tried to cut back on the idea of ambassadorial calls. In the old days American ambassadors were supposed to pay a series of calls, but we have cut that out. We have cut back on that considerably. One great contribution your mother made to Washington was to reduce state dinners from seven courses to four. Everybody appreciated that. In the old days people just go staggering out and the dinner wouldn't be over until time to go home. She reduced it to four and everybody appreciated that. They may be coming back now a little bit more, but that was a big contribution she did.

RICHARD RUSK: Didn't she make a contribution in the clothing department?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I had noticed in white tie affairs that half the men in the room are extremely uncomfortable and unstylish because they used clip-on white ties. And most of them had just a guck in the back of the neck with these clips and piece of the ties hanging down and they were obviously very uncomfortable. We used bat-wing collars in those days, you see. So I started wearing turned-down collars with white tie. That made it much neater, much easier, and much more comfortable. When I did that I looked up the history of the bat-wing collar and found that there was not much to it, that Edward VII, when he was Prince of Wales, decided that he would simply remove the stock. The stock had become very stylized and it was prefabricated; you just stuck it on. He decided to get rid of the stock. Well, that then left him with a shirt with a little narrow neck-band on it, like my father used to wear when he put his celluloid collars on, and he thought that didn't look particularly good so he lifted that neckband. Then he found that the corners were uncomfortable in his clothes, so he turned those back and that was the origin of the bat-wing collar. I had several people in Washington follow me on this: the Chief Justice Earl Warren and some of the people in the Congress and so forth. The fashion people criticized me. They didn't like it at all. They were very shocked by this. But I still think it's a good idea and I would never wear another white tie without wearing a turned-down collar.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you have as much effect on fashion in Washington as Edward VII did?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, no. I sure did not.

RICHARD RUSK: Back to the old style, huh?

DEAN RUSK: Yes, of course tall, slim, handsome people like a John F. Kennedy could wear these bat-wing collars, and so forth, and look very nice in them. But most people are just in misery with the collar arrangement for the white tie and tails.

RICHARD RUSK: I guess a lot of these questions about scheduling lead to the question: What happens to policy when you folks in the government are working at it so darn hard, putting in the seven-day weeks, ten-twelve-fourteen hours a day? Is there a danger there of not only fellows burning themselves out on the job, but just doing things that they might otherwise not have done or vice versa because of fatigue or tunnel-vision?

DEAN RUSK: One has to watch the element of fatigue a bit. The Cuban Missile Crisis, in effect, ran for about two full weeks. The first week we knew about the missiles and spent about a week deciding what we were going to do about them. Then the second week followed President Kennedy's television speech to the nation and to the world. We were in that crisis for about two weeks, very little sleep, considerable amount of inevitable tension, of course, because it was a very dangerous problem. Long after it was over, many years later, I thought a bit about how long frail human beings could sustain a crisis of that magnitude and of that danger. Would there be a point at which sheer weariness, sleeplessness, exhaustion might affect judgment where somebody might say, "Oh, to hell with it," and just let things fly? It's something you have to watch out about. You see, when you are a policy officer, particularly a senior policy officer, you discover that every important foreign policy question has within it dozens and dozens of secondary and tertiary questions. The policy officer has to have a checklist that he runs over in his mind, not necessarily on paper, somewhat like the checklist that an airplane pilot has before he takes off in an airplane. He goes through these dozens and dozens of elements in the problem and he is haunted by the possibility that some factor has been left out that should have an important bearing on the problem. So he is haunted by the ghost of the missing factor. This is one of the big differences between people who carry responsibility of government and, say, professors. Because professors can pick out one or two elements in a problem and concentrate on that, but the decision-maker has to try to encompass all of the elements of the problem. In a world of 160 nations, one of your questions on that checklist is: What are the other governments of the world going to think about this? Well, already there are 160 governments to think about on that question, you see? Of course, the first question on such a checklist is, What is the question? Because often the proper statement of the question, the precise statement of the question may have a bearing on--

END OF SIDE 2