

Dean Rusk Oral History Collection

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Dean Rusk interviewed by Richard Rusk and Thomas J. Schoenbaum

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SCHOENBAUM: The first thing I would like to ask is a question about the early days with respect to the occupation of Germany. There was a so-called "[Hans Joachim] Morgenthau Plan," as you know named after the Secretary of the Treasury who wanted to turn Germany into an agrarian backwater in '43--that, as I understood it, was rejected even by [Franklin Delano] Roosevelt. But then there was an interesting offer by Truman in 1946, and then again renewed in 1947 at the Moscow Conference, to a twenty to twenty-five year agreement for a demilitarized, industrial democratic Germany. Were you involved in either of these proposals? Or what did you think of these proposals for the postwar occupation?

DEAN RUSK: Well, at the time of the German surrender I was in India with General [Joseph Warren] Stilwell. And when I got back to the Operations Division of the War Department General Staff in June, the German side of our problems was already being handled by other members of the general staff from the army's point of view. And I concentrated therefore on those issues relating to Japan on the one side, which was still undefeated, and the launching of the new United Nations. However, I was much aware of the problems we were having in the occupation of Germany. We still hoped in the summer of '45 that there would be a reunited Germany and that these four military zones of occupation would give way to a unified Germany. The Truman proposals that you referred to looked toward a unified Germany which would be democratic, and so forth, disarmed, and so forth. But we were not able to make any headway with the Russians on such a subject. The four-power arrangements for the occupation of Germany broke down very quickly because of the inability to get genuine cooperation between the two sides. And the three western zones of occupation then came to be our primary consideration. I do remember that in that period there was a very severe worldwide food shortage and we were responsible for feeding millions and millions of Germans in our zones of occupation. And we had to scrape the bottom of the barrel to find the food. We had a special task force in the Pentagon to try to find the food for Germany. It was a very difficult thing to do in those days. I had some contact with that group in the search for food.

RICHARD RUSK: By "contact with" do you mean that you were involved with that group?

DEAN RUSK: Well not really, because my responsibilities didn't really concern Germany in the summer of '45 unless some broad policy questions developed. I was involved to a degree in preparing some of the briefing papers for the Potsdam Conference, for example.

SCHOENBAUM: On Germany specifically?

DEAN RUSK: Yes. Things of that sort.

SCHOENBAUM: Do you remember what those papers dealt with? Did they--

DEAN RUSK: No, but I think you can find those papers reflected in the Proceedings of the Potsdam Conference, the records of the Potsdam Conference. You see, Germany was a very serious issue between us and the Soviet Union because after all, German forces had marched all the way to Leningrad, Moscow, and Stalingrad and occupied all of western Europe except Spain. The future of Germany was really a great issue because if Germany were wholly allied with one side or the other, it would make an enormous difference. And if Germany were left in a freewheeling position, like a loose cannon rolling around the deck, then you would have a future German problem on your hands, we thought, because Germany was looked upon as a country of energetic, intelligent people who were not very stable in their approach to questions. I mean, the Hitler experience had been a pretty traumatic experience for everybody. And there seemed to be a kind of romantic adventurism coming out of those dark forests of Germany that was sort of theirs: a part of the German spirit we thought at that time. And we were very wary about what might happen. But it was clear before too long that the three western powers would have to do something about their zones of occupation. The occupation could not go on indefinitely and we needed to give some thought to a new day for Germany. And so there developed there the idea of combining the three western zones into what came to be the Federal Republic of Germany and turning the responsibility for those areas over to the Germans themselves. And on the whole that worked out pretty well.

SCHOENBAUM: Of course, not only the Soviet Union but France gave us problems at first. In 1946, December, Britain and the U.S. fused their zones, but France gave us some problems. Were you involved in any of the negotiations?

DEAN RUSK: Not in the details of that. But you see, we also recalled, we thought, that it was French intransigence toward Germany after World War I which contributed greatly to the circumstances which gave birth to Hitler: their punitive approach toward Germany after World War I, their insistence upon reparations. You see, the French took the position that they would not pay any of their war debt to the United States unless they collected reparations from Germany with which to pay those debts. And that kept the Weimar Republic in shackles. Then the Weimar Republic went through that devastating inflation where you had to have a wheelbarrow to roll the money down to buy a sack of vegetables. So we felt, on our side after the war, that we must not let French intransigence toward Germany create a situation that would produce another Hitler, or that kind of situation in Germany, whether it was communist or fascist or whatever it might be. So we worked pretty hard with the French on that and they finally came around. You see, it's been a great thing in this postwar period to bring about a situation where war between France and Germany is almost literally unthinkable because the two most devastating wars in human history thus far began with French-German war. And that has been, I think one of the great pluses in this entire postwar period: the genuine reconciliation between France and Germany--well, the absorption of German armed forces, such as they are, into NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] and the embrace of NATO for Germany in such a way that Germany simply has no political, or perhaps even military, capability of launching out on adventures of its own anymore, and indeed, to bring about a situation where the Germans themselves do not even contemplate such adventures.

SCHOENBAUM: In 1947 there was, pursuant to the Potsdam agreements--of course Potsdam did not solve the German problem. In 1947 the Council of Foreign Ministers met in Moscow to carry out the Potsdam agreements, as you know. The four foreign ministers deliberated, and they deliberated specifically about Germany and Austria. Were you involved in those? Of course you began at the State Department again, I believe it was in February of 1947, having principal charge of the United Nations. Were you involved at all in the Council of Foreign Ministers' deliberations in '47?

DEAN RUSK: Not really. I do remember very well the launching of the negotiations with the Russians about Austria. And it took well over four hundred negotiating sessions with the Germans to work out the Austrian Treaty which removed all forces of occupation and allowed Austria to move into the future as an independent and neutral country.

RICHARD RUSK: Four hundred sessions with the Soviets?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah, over four hundred sessions. Llewellyn [E.] Thompson [Jr.] was to play a key role. He was our ambassador to Austria during this period. He played a key role in a number of those negotiations, many of those negotiations.

SCHOENBAUM: Did you play a role in those?

DEAN RUSK: No, not really. This was a little outside of my bailiwick.

SCHOENBAUM: The Russians pulled out in '53 or '54. It was not until--

DEAN RUSK: Well, let's see. It was during the transition in government in the Soviet Union, just after the death of Stalin. And it may be that had they not been in a position of transition that we wouldn't have gotten the Austrian State Treaty yet. But that was a very important step forward because it disengaged the western and Soviet forces that were in occupation in Austria and really meant that Austria was not going to be a flash point of disagreement and violence among the great powers. But I did go to Vienna when I was Secretary of State, for the tenth anniversary of the Austrian State Treaty, and that was a very interesting and big celebration. [Andrei Andreevich] Gromyko was there for it. [We] had some talks while he was there. But my concentration in the Operations Division of the general staff had more to do with the Pacific at that time, and indeed the new United Nations.

SCHOENBAUM: I want to focus on 1947 when you were having responsibility for United Nations, and you began, it seemed to me, to get into some European matters. Of course, after the failure of the Moscow Conference [which] occurred historically. May of '47, in June you had the Marshall speech; and in June, or May 29, 1947, the British and the U.S started a military reorganization and a political reorganization in Germany. Was the Marshall Plan connected with the failure of the Moscow Conference or is that just coincidence?

DEAN RUSK: Possibly. George Marshall was a man who used to say to us, "Let's don't sit around shaking and trembling about what the Russians may do next. Let's let them worry about what we're going to do next. Let's see what we can do to take the initiative in moving things in

the direction we would like to see them go." And the Marshall Plan was the kind of result of that kind of thinking. Western Europe was in desperate shape; of course, so was the Soviet Union at that time. But the situation looked to be very unstable. The prospects for real revival in Western Europe were pretty gloomy, and this great reconstruction effort for Europe came out of the circumstances where things looked pretty grim. And I was involved in some of the preparations for the Marshall Plan, but not directly responsible since my job was at the United Nations. But meanwhile at the United Nations we had other issues. There was a Greek guerrilla problem. And then of course, we had to think about those parts of the charter that called for disarmament. And there was the discussion with the Russians about the military staff committee and the troops that are supposed to be available to the U.N. Security Council under the charter. And then in 1948 came the blockade of Berlin. So I found myself, in charge of United Nations affairs, getting very deeply involved in a good many European issues.

SCHOENBAUM: The blockade of Berlin was maybe the principal European crisis that you were involved in through your post involving the United Nations. Is that right?

DEAN RUSK: Probably, because it was a dangerous crisis. Joseph Stalin simply blockaded Berlin, and we had to face immediately what we would do about it. Now, bear in mind [that] at that time we were disarmed: almost literally disarmed. And so there was no real military option open to us. There were some, General [Lucius Dub] Clay and others, who thought that we ought to break the blockade by throwing some troops along the access routes. But--

SCHOENBAUM: If I may stop you right there, how did you argue on that one? You must have been involved in the discussions. There was a Berlin group formed. Were you a member of that?

DEAN RUSK: If I was not a member, I sat in with them. But the military option was entirely uninviting because when you take a military step, you've got to look at steps two, three, and four. And some people thought that if we just used a show of force that the Russians would back off: roll over and play dead. Well that's not good enough. You've got to be ready for the circumstances in case they did not back off. And since we simply did not have the forces that could have, in effect, forced our way to Berlin, that, to me, was very uninviting.

SCHOENBAUM: You were against General Clay's thing. He wanted to send a convoy through-

DEAN RUSK: That's right. With tanks and all the rest of it. But such a convoy would have been very easy and simple for the Russians to stop. If they didn't want to shoot at us, they could at least knock out the bridges. And it just wasn't feasible. And that would have been a major military operation and we did not have forces for a major military operation.

RICHARD RUSK: What would we have used for forces?

DEAN RUSK: Well, we had a token force in Berlin itself and we had some occupation forces in our zone in Germany, but wholly inadequate to any kind of military response to it. And so I was among those who thought that we ought to lay on the airlift, to keep the people of West Berlin from starving and to keep the economy of West Berlin at a minimum level, and then see what

could be done through political channels to remove the blockade. Well, it took several months to do that, but at the end we did, in fact, succeed in getting the blockade lifted. I think Joseph Stalin, after several months of the Berlin blockade, must have come to the conclusion that he had milked that for all that it was worth and that the tides of governmental and world opinion were swinging very strongly against him. This had been taken up in the United Nations. We had very strong support in the United Nations, both in the Security Council and in the General Assembly. And I think Joseph Stalin for reasons of his own just decided that the blockade had gone on long enough. I think I put on another tape somewhere how this in fact was relieved: the conversation between [Philip Caryl] Jessup and [Yakov Alexandrovitch] Malik up at the United Nations following a long speech which Stalin had made about Berlin, and his omission of any reference to the currency question, which is one of the issues on which he alleged the blockade was imposed. You see, they would manipulate--I don't remember the details. But as between the mark used in East Germany and the mark used in West Germany, and the so-called "free flow" of marks back and forth, they were using this currency matter to milk, in effect, the west for what amounted to reparations. And we felt that we couldn't do that. As I remember, the Russians, when they occupied their part of Germany, had found the printing presses and the plates with which German marks were made. And so they began rolling off these marks at a great rate, you see. If they printed more and more of them and the marks were exchanged on an equal basis, then, you see, they could suck in resources from the west simply by printing those marks. That we found to be creating an intolerable situation. So we put in some currency restrictions to stop that and Joseph Stalin used that as one of his reasons for the blockade. But this was a very- lively and bitter debate that went on in the U.N. Security Council, and I was much involved in those debates over the blockade of Berlin. And it was only the Russian veto that prevented the Security Council from enacting some very important resolutions on the subject.

SCHOENBAUM: What about the decision to go to the U.N. in the first place? I imagine that was something you felt strongly, that we should go to the U.N. Were there some, like for instance [Dean Gooderham] Acheson, who argued against it? Did you have a battle on your hands to take the Berlin crisis to the U.N. as opposed to just handling it through the Council?

DEAN RUSK: Not very much. There was some questioning about it. But these fellows who were directly responsible for Berlin and Germany didn't have any easy solution themselves. And so they weren't all that resistant to taking it to the U.N. because something good might have come out of it. But my own general approach in these immediate postwar periods was to take the U.N. seriously. And where there was a situation which invited or threatened the use of armed force, I felt there was an obligation to take such issues to the United Nations before any shooting started. This was my view with the blockade of Berlin. It was my view toward the guerilla problem in Greece. It was my view at the time of the North Korean attack on South Korea a little later on. And also in the U.N. we had at that time a relatively favorable political situation. It was an easy majority for us in the U.N. Security Council. And the Soviets had to use the veto time after time because we had a strong majority in the Security Council. And the same thing was true in the General Assembly. With fifty-one members, we usually could come up with the votes of more than forty for anything that we considered to be serious. You see, bear in mind that just after the war, the United States was in an enormously influential position. We had been one of the victors of World War II. We had the resources with which to bind up the wounds of war and get the world starting again. We were the only major country that had not been physically

damaged by the war itself. An American prestige and so-called leadership was at its peak: a peak which was never to happen again. And so there was extraordinary American influence in places like the United Nations in those days.

SCHOENBAUM: Do you remember any specific incidents in Paris. Of course, Jessup was, I guess, our ambassador who carried on most of the debates. That was right at the end of Marshall's term.

DEAN RUSK: That was toward the end of Marshall's term as Secretary of State, yes. Well, when the United Nations decided to have the General Assembly meeting in Paris in '48 while the new headquarters was being completed in New York, the Security Council also moved to Paris during that season. And so these Security Council debates over the blockade of Berlin continued in Paris. And Jessup was our representative for that purpose. There were packed houses, as far as the public audience was concerned, at each meeting of the Security Council during this period. But it was clear, and it must have become clear to Joseph Stalin if there was anyone around him who dared to tell him the truth, that the world opinion plus the governments of the world were strongly opposed to the Berlin blockade, for example. And that might have made some difference because the Russians, from time to time, do turn out to be sensitive to propaganda values because propaganda means a great deal to them. But I think I related the knitting story.

SCHOENBAUM: Yeah. Jessup says that you met in the Palais de Chaillot, near the Eiffel Tower there. And he says that they cleared out the hall except for a big dinosaur skeleton that was too big to move. Do you remember that? Apparently a lot of these Security Council debates were held with a big dinosaur skeleton looking over. (laughter)

DEAN RUSK: I sort of forget that, I'm afraid.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, you traditionally, habitually tend to downplay your role in these matters in retrospect regarding the American response to the Berlin blockade. What points do you think you may have had some influence?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, I think that I had some influence in choosing the airlift alternative rather than an attempted use of force. On that issue I think I've always made some weight. I think taking the Berlin blockade question to the U.N. was very much down my alley, and I had considerable to do with that. But bear in mind that anyone who is head of a bureau or an office has on top of him an Under Secretary, a Secretary of State, and the President. I wouldn't claim that I made these decisions: decisions that were made by others. There's one interesting little point about the Berlin blockade that I almost hesitate to tell. But in the middle of this, George Marshall called me into his office one day and said, "Rusk, from a military point of view Berlin is untenable, and it's going to be a source of trouble for as long as I can see into the future. What would you think of turning West Berlin over to the United Nations?" And I expressed some doubts about the capability of the United Nations in handling such a problem. It had no forces. It just wasn't set up to do that. But he pressed it because he wanted somehow to disengage the American military presence in West Berlin if possible. He said it was too inflammatory and dangerous a situation for both sides. Well, he said, "At least try this idea out on Mike [Lester Bowles] Pearson of Canada." Mike Pearson was then one of the real leaders of the United

Nations. He had been one of their early presidents of the U.N. General Assembly and had great international standing. So I had a private talk with Mike Pearson in which I broached this question as to whether the United Nations might take on the responsibility for West Berlin. And Mike Pearson's reaction was very strong. He said under no circumstances could that be done and it would be a great blow to the west if an effort were made to do that, and the end effect would be to turn West Berlin over to the communists. He said, "Please urge Secretary Marshall not to raise this question." And I reported that back to Marshall and he dropped it.

RICHARD RUSK: That's as far as it went?

DEAN RUSK: That's as far as it went.

RICHARD RUSK: You took it to Mike Pearson?

DEAN RUSK: Yes. And in both instances these were one-on-one conversations. I think you'll find nothing in the record of that.

RICHARD RUSK: - That's right. This isn't in the record to your knowledge? Would it be a sensitive matter today, forty years later, the fact that a man as highly placed as George Marshall even gave remote consideration to that option?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, no. It might be a source of some surprise. And there would be those who simply would call me a liar for having said this. Well, it would cause some anxiety maybe in Berlin, I don't know. But in any event, the fact is that George Marshall himself turned down the idea, even though he was the one who had raised it.

RICHARD RUSK: That's right.

SCHOENBAUM: Yeah. Do you think he had been talking to Joint Chiefs about that?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, I don't think he had to. After all, he had served when he was the Joint Chiefs. I mean he didn't have to consult the Joint Chiefs on something like that.

RICHARD RUSK: It never went as far as Harry Truman, to your knowledge?

DEAN RUSK: No. It didn't go anywhere. First Marshall and myself, then myself and Mike Pearson, and then me back to Marshall, and the whole thing evaporated.

SCHOENBAUM: They did send some B-52's, I guess it was, to England, loaded with atomic weapons. It was kind of hush-hush at the time, was it not? Were you involved in that decision?

RICHARD RUSK: During the Berlin blockade?

SCHOENBAUM: During the Berlin blockade.

DEAN RUSK: Oh, I think it's entirely possible, whether it was the B-52 or some other bomber here for (coughs), but--

RICHARD RUSK: It couldn't have been the B-52.

SCHOENBAUM: B-29's, I guess.

DEAN RUSK: You see, our stockpile of atomic weapons in '48 was very small. And we knew later from what we learned about espionage that Joseph Stalin knew how many of these things we did not have at that time. And so he was not really intimidated during the period of alleged American monopoly with the nuclear weapon.

RICHARD RUSK: It only takes a few.

DEAN RUSK: I know, but Russia's a very big country.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you have other questions pertaining to the blockade? Did you get involved with any of the operational aspects of the Berlin blockade? Wasn't there Soviet harassment on American flights to various points? Certainly there was uncertainty on our side.

DEAN RUSK: Not quite as much harassment of our planes during the airlift as came later during the Berlin Crisis of '61-'62 when they would drop chaff in the air corridors to confuse our planes and things like that. That was a vexing aspect of the crisis of '61-'62. But, no, I don't think the Russians physically tried to interfere with the airlift. Wow hear in mind that airlift had to go right through bad weather. And the fellows who carried out that airlift did a brilliant job. I mean there was a plane landing in Berlin almost every two minutes carrying supplies in from the west. And sometimes this had to be done in terrible winter weather and things of that sort. The British, American, French, and Canadian fliers who participated in the airlift did a brilliant job from just a technical point of view. And we lost a few of them.

SCHOENBAUM: Were you surprised that the Russians didn't jam our radar or do something to make those--

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BEGINNING OF SIDE 2

DEAN RUSK: Well, we thought it possible that Soviets might try some kind of interference with the airlift. But on the other hand, Russia itself was in very serious straits at that time. They had just come out of a devastating war. They were trying to rebuild their war-devastated half of their country. I don't think they were interested in having this come to a major conflict. Of course, we would have had to remobilize most of the forces that we had demobilized after V-J [Victory over Japan] Day and that would have been quite a problem.

RICHARD RUSK: Gee, I would think the very fact of the Berlin airlift would have helped to strengthen or rebuild the relationship between the German peoples, peoples of West Germany in particular, and the allies.

DEAN RUSK: That's true: the western allies. That's true. Yes, that was a very important by-product of this solidarity between the Germans on the one side and the western allies on the other. And that was a very good prelude to the organization of NATO.

SCHOENBAUM: Another by-product seems to be a document called NSC-7, which is entitled "A Report on the Reaction of the U.S. to the World Communist Threat," or something. And there are some memos in the record from, I think, a man named John Knotter, to you, indicating you were working on that document. It looks like the first real comprehensive approach by the NSC and by the government toward thinking about the Soviet Union as wanting to envelop the world. Do you remember that? It was basically in 1947, 1948. The discussion started during the Berlin blockade. And the record shows that you were involved--

DEAN RUSK: Yes, but look at the evidence we had in front of us at that time. The Soviets had tried to keep Azerbaijan, the northwest province of Iran. They had demanded two eastern provinces of Turkey: Kars and Ardahan. They brushed aside the wartime agreements about giving the peoples of eastern Europe any say in their political future. And they made it clear they were going to convert the areas that were in occupation by the Red Army into communism, or communist regimes. They were soon to have a hand in the communist coup d'etat in Czechoslovakia. The blockade of Berlin was another item. In other words, Joseph Stalin made it very clear for ideological reasons, as well as say the interests of the Russian state, that they were in an expansionist move even though they had been devastated by the war. And so it was not a mythological problem. It was not simply an empty, ideological response on our side. There were the facts. There were the facts.

SCHOENBAUM: As Rich points out, and as you just said, the solidarity produced by the Berlin blockade--is it not true, too, that that is what produced the impetus toward the creation of the German government which, of course, happened

DEAN RUSK: I think that helped. I think that helped. We also thought that, contrary to the so-called Morgenthau Plan, that Germany ought to be permitted to rebuild itself as a combination of not only agriculture, but of industry, in order that Germany could earn its own living. After all, the costs of the occupation of Germany were pretty high at times. We began by having to feed the German people. And so we thought that the rebirth of a vigorous Germany with its industrial capacity and so forth was very important, partly to get the German economy off of our own backs, to put them in a position to earn their own living.

SCHOENBAUM: By that time you were doing not only U.N. affairs, but you were Deputy Under Secretary. You must have had a hand in those decisions to what the American position should be with respect to the formation of the Bonn government. Did you meet [Konrad] Adenauer?

DEAN RUSK: I didn't meet him at that time. Others were handling the operation end of it. But I was very much involved in the policy issues involved.

SCHOENBAUM: What about western European union? That occurred on 17 March 1948. Were you surprised by that, or in favor? That was the military union that the Europeans formed without the United States.

DEAN RUSK: Yes, that turned out to be a preliminary to NATO. No, we were in favor of as much European unity as they could achieve among themselves. You see at that time we, both on practical and sentimental grounds, were thinking about the possibility of the United States of Europe: The United States of Western Europe. We thought that what had been so good for us might be good for them. Well, there were also practical considerations involved concerning the defense of Europe, things of that sort. So we were generally in support of western European union.

SCHOENBAUM: The initiative seems to have come, interestingly enough, from France. [Robert] Schuman, the foreign minister at the time, proposed a Schuman Plan. It's interesting. Is there something behind the scenes there that we encouraged the French to make this announcement, knowing that if the British did it--of course, the Germans would not be--

DEAN RUSK: Well, one of the key elements in this period here was the close working relationship among George Marshall of the United States, Ernie [Ernest] Bevin of Great Britain and Schuman of France. Those three did an extraordinary job in pulling things together in a very difficult situation. Now--

RICHARD RUSK: Schuman and Bevin were both foreign ministers?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah, yeah. Schuman had a--I think he was an Alsatian wasn't he? But Schuman had the view that somehow the French and the Germans must be reconciled with each other. And he took the more moderate view toward anything involving Germany than some French had done in the past. But that partnership among those three was a very great positive contribution to the development of affairs in this period.

SCHOENBAUM: Did you have any part in the decisions there? Were you involved at all in decisions? Did you meet Schuman in Washington?

DEAN RUSK: I didn't personally because I was too junior in those days for that kind of thing. I wasn't in that league in those days.

RICHARD RUSK: Was there a considerable fight, either within our Congress or the executive branch, among the American people as to exactly how we would treat Germany following World War II? Did the Morgenthau Plan have any significant following?

DEAN RUSK: There was some view among the Jewish community that as a reaction to the holocaust and things of that sort, that we really ought to guarantee that Germany would not revive and become a significant threat to anybody. But I think calmer minds and voices

prevailed, and the Morgenthau approach was rejected. But I don't recall that there was very much public opposition to including Germany in the Marshall Plan, toward a peaceful reconciliation with Germany. Of course, we could not achieve an actual peace treaty with Germany because of the attitude of the Soviet Union. We simply were not able to agree with them on the framework of a peace treaty with Germany.

SCHOENBAUM: We never have gotten one.

DEAN RUSK: No, but we had the equivalent of it when the Federal Republic of Germany was-- I think we brought about a formal end to the state of war between us and Germany by legislation, if I recall correctly. But then there were important leaders in Germany who helped, who contributed to things like this. Adenauer himself and others who looked toward a reconciliation with Germany with the west, particularly a reconciliation with France and a dampening down of any revanchist sentiments that might have been present in Germany: sentiments that might easily have been fed into flames because of the total defeat of Germany.

SCHOENBAUM: What about the [Arthur Hendrick] Vandenberg Resolution? That occurred on the eleventh of June 1948. That led right into NATO. Did you work with Senator Vandenberg? You must have on that because--

DEAN RUSK: Well, Bob [Robert Abercrombie] Lovett handled most of the actual discussions with Vandenberg. I was following them very closely. But you see, the Marshall Plan came first. And in discussing the Marshall Plan with Vandenberg his reaction was that if you want to get that kind of money out of Congress, you've got to scare the hell out of them. And after the Soviets walked out of the Paris meeting of European governments to put their heads together to devise their answer to Secretary Marshall's invitation in his Harvard commencement speech, when the Soviets walked out of that, it became clear that the Soviets would not cooperate in the rebuilding of Europe. And also it opened the way for the formation of NATO to give a national security aspect to the Marshall Plan itself. So in terms of presenting the Marshall Plan to Congress, the national security issue was very persuasive to a good many of these senators and congressmen. And NATO was the instrument through which that was mobilized.

SCHOENBAUM: In NATO the key section is, of course as you know, Article 5. And there is a document in the record that shows that you and a few others were the key people working on Article 5, which is the one that promises that any attack on one is an attack on all, and that kind of thing. You made a difference on that one too, didn't you?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I forget. We had used that kind of language I believe in the Rio Treaty and this construction of the security arrangements in the western hemi sphere.

SCHOENBAUM: Did you work on that language in the Rio Treaty? There, the Rio Treaty says that there should be no requirement. The Rio Treaty is interesting because the sanctions are obligatory on two-thirds vote. There is no veto, but there is a proviso that no state shall be required to furnish armed forces without its consent.

DEAN RUSK: Yeah, that was an important caveat both for a number of the Latin American countries and for the United States Senate, as a matter of fact. Our Senate would not want to have two-thirds of the OAS [Organization of American States] countries commit our armed forces without our consent.

SCHOENBAUM: I don't think NATO has that restriction, though.

DEAN RUSK: That is correct. But then NATO technically requires unanimity. So you didn't have that same problem arise.

SCHOENBAUM: Why was that? Why that difference between Rio and NATO? Did you work on Rio?

DEAN RUSK: No, only on the sidelines. I was not directly involved in that. But, you see, there were some fundamental constitutional issues wrapped up in NATO, and perhaps to some extent with the Rio Treaty. For example, if under the NATO Treaty an attack on one is an attack on all, then if there is an attack on, say, Germany or Norway, then under our Constitution presumably the President could respond as if this were an attack on Virginia. Well, this was debated to some extent at the time. But later on the Congress got very nervous about this idea that an attack on one is an attack on all. And in the War Powers Resolution, you may remember, they have a section in there that purports to deny that that kind of a treaty can have that effect without the participation of Congress. But I think the combination of the Marshall Plan and NATO really opened the way for a revival of Europe. And I think those two things were fundamental and made an enormous difference to later history.

SCHOENBAUM: I ask the same question Rich did about NATO: Realizing you perhaps don't want to claim credit for the whole responsibility, what were your contributions to the NATO Treaty?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I sat in on a good many of the staff discussions on NATO. And I was strongly in favor of a solid security commitment to western Europe. I felt from a geopolitical point of view that if western Europe, with its hundreds of millions of intelligent, educated people, great talents, industrial competence and things of that sort--if western Europe was organized by those who were hostile to the United States, this would be a devastating undermining of any security the United States might have here in the western hemisphere, and that we could, in effect, lose our freedom of action and fall under the domination of somebody else without firing a shot. And so I was very strongly in favor of NATO and a strong American commitment to NATO.

SCHOENBAUM: Did you foresee or did you later have a part in the inclusion of Germany in NATO? Of course I think that was after the failure of western European union in '54 that NATO, that Germany came into NATO. But did you foresee the rearmament of Germany?

DEAN RUSK: I forget the actual year in which Germany came into NATO. Was it '53? '52?

SCHOENBAUM: '54 I think.

DEAN RUSK: '54. That came during the Eisenhower Administration. I thought at the time NATO was formed that Greece and Turkey ought to have been included. But it was not. Apparently there was not unanimity among the, shall we say, the central members of NATO on that point. And so when NATO was formed without Greece and Turkey, I worked pretty hard in the staff for the inclusion of Greece and Turkey, and that did come about. But there have been times later that I have wondered whether I was right, because the frictions between Greece and Turkey have been a great irritant of NATO from the very beginning, and we should have somehow waited until Greece and Turkey could have resolved their own bilateral differences before we included them in NATO. Because there have been times when, in NATO, these differences between Greece and Turkey have been a pain in the neck.

SCHOENBAUM: As I understand it, the allies at Potsdam, and even Truman, wanted to put Germany on the back burner. Do you think in retrospect that if Germany had been put on the front burner and been made a high priority we perhaps could have gotten Stalin's agreement to unify Germany, whereas later on Stalin made the--

DEAN RUSK: Oh, I must confess in retrospect I don't see that there was ever any real prospect of unifying Germany at that time. The Soviets would never in the world have allowed a unified Germany in close association with the west. And we were not about to allow a unified Germany in close association with the Soviet Union. So that I just don't think reunification was in the cards. Although one had to continue to talk about it, press for it, urge it, partly because of the impact upon German opinion.

SCHOENBAUM: Yeah. There are some in Germany, of course, who think that there were those in the United States government who really weren't unhappy to see the--

DEAN RUSK: Well you know, I've checked this point with some German friends, and they have smiled and tended to agree with me. I don't believe Konrad Adenauer was interested in a unified Germany. He talked about it frequently and insisted that we talk about it frequently, but I don't think he looked forward to the prospect of the East Germans coming into the Federal Republic with all those socialist votes, which would have knocked the Christian Democrats out of power in Germany. And so I was never convinced that beneath the surface that Konrad Adenauer himself looked warmly upon the idea of a reunited Germany.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you ever discuss it with him?

DEAN RUSK: Oh no, because the myth was, the theory was: "Yeah, we were all for reunification," you see.

RICHARD RUSK: What led you to think that Adenauer had some second thoughts about German reunification?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, sort of reading between the lines and considering that he used the rhetoric of a unified Germany, but he never had any ideas about what you do about it. He never put forward any real proposals that could have possibly led to reunification. My own view is, looking back

over all these years, the Federal Republic and the East Germans ought to do what they can to minimize the impact of that boundary between them, in terms of trade, free flow of peoples, reunification of families, and things of that sort, so that although there is a dividing line there between the German Democratic Republic in the east and the Federal Republic of Germany in the west, that the Germans as a people could go a long way toward making that boundary line relatively unimportant.

SCHOENBAUM: To use a Dean Rusk phrase, "Let the question of sovereignty float up in the air"?

DEAN RUSK: That's right. Also, you see, when I became Secretary of State we had had almost twenty years of harsh confrontation there along that dividing line through central Europe. And that had not moved us one centimeter toward solving the so-called German question. And so Gerhard Schroder of Germany and I began to talk about the possibilities of moving from confrontation to engagement, recognizing the fundamental difference between rape and seduction. And I think those talks had a good deal to do with the generation in Germany of attitudes that led to Ostpolitik: a feeling that they ought to try to reconcile themselves with eastern Europe and do what they could to reduce in eastern Europe that terrible hatred and fear of Germany that you found throughout eastern Europe, and that that would open possibilities for the future that harsh confrontation could not have reached. And so I think I did make some contribution toward what later came to be known as Ostpolitik.

SCHOENBAUM: And that happened with Gerhard Schroder?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. Well, I remember--Ann [S.] Dunn may have a letter here--when an important vote or two came up in the German parliament involving Ost- Politik and the Christian Democrats, who were then in opposition, seemed to be all set to oppose these votes. I remember writing Gerhard Schroder a letter reminding him that he and I had given birth to the whole idea.

SCHOENBAUM: That's interesting. That's something people don't generally know because people--did you ever talk to--Billy Brant [sic] was very much in favor of it.

DEAN RUSK: I talked to Willy [Karl Herbert Frahm] Brandt about it, yes. Willy Brandt's problem, as far as I was concerned, was that he was pretty vague when it came around to precision and details. I could talk with him for an hour and I wasn't sure after I got through just what it was he said. He was a fine man and I liked him very much. He rendered a great service to Germany and to the west. But he didn't have the mental attribute of engaging major issues with the kind of precision which they require, and that sometimes complicated things.

SCHOENBAUM: We're getting toward the end. I just wanted to ask you, did you visit Berlin? Of course you were there in the thirties. Did you visit Berlin during the forties? Of course you did in the sixties. But did you visit in the forties? Do you want to tell about it?

DEAN RUSK: No, I didn't visit Berlin during the Truman administration.

SCHOENBAUM: Did you see the Wall? Have you ever seen the Wall?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, yes. I went to Berlin with President [John Fitzgerald] Kennedy and saw the Wall.

SCHOENBAUM: Was that your only trip back to Berlin?

DEAN RUSK: No. I made another trip to Berlin on my own once. I forget now just when. I had to make a speech there at the city hall and go through all those things. But it was very moving to experience the determination of the people of West Berlin to remain free, to have free institutions, to live a normal kind of life as we in the west thought of it. But we've always had some problems in how best to sustain the economy of West Berlin. And we've encouraged some American businesses to establish branches in West Berlin: banks, for example, things of that sort, just as a sign of confidence. And it had always been some problem that the young people of West Berlin, not seeing a real future for themselves in West Berlin, would migrate out to the Federal Republic. So there was some possibility that West Berlin might become largely a colony of old folks or babies. But then during the early Nixon years, through negotiations conducted on our side by Ambassador [Kenneth] Rush [we] achieved a new four-power agreement on Berlin. And that agreement, thus far [knocks on wood] has helped to reduce the role of West Berlin as a possible flashpoint of violence among the great powers. I think on the whole that situation is much better than it was, say, during the Truman years.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, I get the feeling that German reunification was out, period, regardless of the Soviet point of view, and regardless of the American point of view. Just in terms of the fact that there was a real fear and hatred of things German and everything Germany stood for--

DEAN RUSK: Well, that was very much a part of the Russian problem. So I wouldn't sort of brush the Russians aside.

RICHARD RUSK: And also France and Great Britain.

DEAN RUSK: It's also true that some of the NATO Allies did not forget World War II as quickly as the American people did and that a number of them would have been nervous about a unified and militarily strong Germany. I mean the Norwegians, the Dutch, the Belgians, people like that. And so one has to keep that in mind. For example, when discussions came up about the nuclear arrangements in NATO, it was quite clear that if the Germans had their fingers on a nuclear trigger this would be a very divisive within NATO itself, quite apart from the devastating attitude the Russians would take on any such thing.

RICHARD RUSK: You know, it's an amazing story nevertheless, the fact that our peace with Germany has been a real peace in the immediate aftermath of World War II. And it contrasts so sharply with the western experience after World War I.

DEAN RUSK: Yes, and the same thing was true with Truman's peace of reconciliation with Japan. I was, as you know, deeply involved in the Japanese Peace Treaty, and I don't recall that we got any mail--letters, postcards, telegrams, petitions--objecting to a peace of reconciliation either with Germany or with Japan. Now it may well be that the overhanging security threat, as it

was sensed at the time by the Soviet Union, assisted in getting people to accept a peaceful reconciliation both with Japan and with Germany. But it was really quite interesting that the American people did not bring away from World War II such a legacy of bitterness that they could not move constructively toward a decent arrangement without forming enemies.

SCHOENBAUM: What was your own feeling? You must have had, especially in 1945 as you started working on these communiques in Germany and also during the Berlin Crisis, having lived there--after all, Truman was going to Potsdam, where you have gone around in boats, and you knew that area well. You must have had an emotional reaction. You must have liked the German people. And that thought--

DEAN RUSK: Well, my mother was German. Her family came out of the Black Forest section of western Germany. When I was living there as a student I found many things with which I sympathized. I mean, their Christmas celebration is very close to ours: for example, their songs, their music, and all the rest of it. But I also felt that a very large majority of the German people came to support Adolf Hitler and they had been almost hypnotized by him. Those Hitler rallies and those Hitler demonstrations were really something to behold. There was great drama in it. But I had the feeling that the Germans at heart could be a different kind of people. And, in fact, they've come to be a different kind of people. I myself do not worry about a revival of Hitlerism in Germany. There have been little fringes here and there, but I think this has been expunged from their political ethos. But you see, Hitler was able to capture the German people because of the bitter days of the Weimar Republic. Almost anything else looked better than what they had lived through. And that was a kind of--when I first went to Germany as a student, I had the feeling that there were a lot of Germans who were just ashamed of Germany and the Weimar Republic. And I think I've said somewhere else on tape that I'm convinced that a good many of the German students of my own age at that time supported Hitler for what we might call idealistic reasons. They were trying to restore the public morale of Germany, and that sort of thing. And it was not until later that they discovered that he really did mean what he said in Mein Kampf, and that they had been betrayed. But the Germans are great people with great talent. If we can guarantee that this rather mystical romanticism back in there has been exorcized, then things will make a lot of sense. And I think that has been largely accomplished.

END OF SIDE 2