

Dean Rusk Oral History Collection

Rusk V

Dean Rusk interviewed by Richard Rusk and Thomas J. Schoenbaum

circa 1985

RICHARD RUSK: You have seen--printed an essay in September 1982 on the tenth anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis, coauthored by six of the participants of that crisis. Did that article summarize your views on the lessons of the Cuban Missile Crisis?

DEAN RUSK: I think so. The authors were all participants, members of the executive committee of the National Security Council, EXCCM. And although if each one of us had done a separate piece it might have shown some variations. But on the whole I think that was a pretty good digest of our reflections.

RICHARD RUSK: Who drafted the missile article?

DEAN RUSK: It was a group draft, but I think McGeorge Bundy took the lead in drafting.

RICHARD RUSK: And the rest of you commented on it?

DEAN RUSK: And made some changes. We talked with him extensively before he started his drafting.

RICHARD RUSK: Very good. I see no need to cover that ground again. We have talked at great length upon the lessons, and that article should sum it up for anyone interested in this issue. Anyone who is interested in this issue should be referred to that article.

DEAN RUSK: One remark ought to be made about that crisis. There were sixteen members of EXCCM, the executive committee that President [John Fitzgerald] Kennedy drew together to work with him on the crisis. Now if you ask each one of those sixteen to write his own account of the Cuban Missile Crisis, you would have sixteen rather different stories because each one of us necessarily saw it from where we were, what we did, how we lived through it. And someone would have to take those sixteen accounts and make a composite story for the whole.

SCHOENBAUM: Maybe we could start with what I guess would be the beginning of the crisis, the discovery of the missiles sites. Can you tell us where you were, and your reaction?

DEAN RUSK: Well during the spring and summer of 1962 we had quite a few reports of missiles in Cuba, most of them coming from Cuban refugees. We checked out every rumor that we could pick up, to run them down. Our conclusions were that these people were reporting surface-to-air missiles, so called SAM missiles. If any layman who does not know anything about missiles walks up alongside of a SAM missile, he would think he is looking at a hell of a missile. Senator Kenneth [Barnard] Keating in New York charged during the summer that offensive missiles were in Cuba, but he was very naughty and would not share with us any

sources that he allegedly had so that we could check them out. But I am convinced that--

RICHARD RUSK: Did he give any idea where his source of information was coming from?

DEAN RUSK: None. My hunch is that it was probably from Cuban refugees.

SCHOENBAUM: How did you check out the reports? Overflights?

DEAN RUSK: Well, overflights and putting together such things as measurements and things of that sort: also with a certain amount of espionage in Cuba, things of that sort.

SCHOENBAUM: Given the importance of the introduction of satellite missiles to Cuba, why had not Keating himself come forward on his sources and made it quite clear? Did you ever talk to him about this after the thing blew over?

DEAN RUSK: No, I did not really. I, myself, am convinced that the medium-range and intermediate-range missiles were brought in at the very end, and very quickly. The Soviets brought in all that equipment and everything was prefabricated, including even the concrete covers for the cables running from the radar sites to the firing positions. It was quite a superb technical job from the Soviet point of view. We could see an empty cow pasture become a missile site day by day. I remember one site we looked at pretty carefully for a couple of days and it turned out to be tennis courts. We had really close examination as soon as we saw the first sites. One thing the Soviets did, which turned out to be an error on their part from their point of view, was that they put these sites in Cuba in exactly the same configuration that they had used for such sites in the Soviet Union. Had they used a different pattern which they could have easily done, it might be that we never would have discovered them until they were all ready. But they used exactly the same patterns as we had photographed in the Soviet Union for a long time. I forget where I was, I think the first reports came in, if I'm not mistaken, on a Sunday night. I had a telephone call about it.

RICHARD RUSK: From Roger Hilsman [Jr.]?

DEAN RUSK: Probably Roger Hilsman, yeah. I knew at once that we had a major problem on our hands. See, our judgment was at the time--and in retrospect one might quarrel with this. But at the time we felt that there were two very important and very damaging aspects to these missile sites in Cuba. On the military side, if the Soviets had put something like a hundred of these missiles into Cuba, that would have put them in the position to knock out our strategic air command bases with almost no advance warning, whereas missiles fired in the Soviet Union would at least give you fifteen to twenty minutes and you could get your planes in the air and things of that sort. Secondly, on the political side we estimated, and I think correctly, that for us to sit here and allow those missiles to be installed in Cuba would have had a devastating effect on the Western Hemisphere and upon our NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] allies, and upon the American people. Although, I must confess that in our group discussions we did not discuss this matter in partisan political terms. I do not recall any discussion of the November elections which were coming up a month later. Now it may be that President Kennedy had such considerations in mind and in his talks with Bobby [Robert Francis Kennedy] and others he

might have discussed it. But there is a difference between partisan political thoughts and real attention to what the American people think or would think about the issues that are being presented, because every President must take that fully into account. We had the attitudes of the American people very much in mind as well, but I still say not in strictly partisan terms.

SCHOENBAUM: Yeah, well I remember that was my impression too. You must have been at home then, on the Sunday night you got the call?

DEAN RUSK: I forget, maybe I was out somewhere.

RICHARD RUSK: You were at a party.

SCHOENBAUM: So it was a dramatic thing: the discovery of the phone calls were rather dramatic and very impressive.

DEAN RUSK: Well, of course, a thing like that the first thing you want to do and have to do is to try to get all the facts you can, so we intensified our aerial reconnaissance and set everything else to work to find out exactly what was going on.

SCHOENBAUM: Did you confer with Kennedy or talk to Kennedy that same night?

DEAN RUSK: Not that same night. It was not until the next morning.

RICHARD RUSK: Most of Kennedy's top advisors knew about it before John Kennedy did. They got the word that night and McGeorge Bundy thought it best not to wake the President because the best preparation would have been to get a good night's sleep.

DEAN RUSK: We knew that we had a major crisis on our hands. We never knew to my satisfaction why [Nikita Sergeevich] Khrushchev felt that he could put those missiles into Cuba without any strong American reaction. It may be the fact that John F. Kennedy did not follow up the Bay of Pigs with American forces that might have made some impression on him. It may be that he thought that even if there were 20 percent chance of success it would be worth taking because of the enormous advantage that would accrue to him if he succeeded in getting these missile sites in. We had some indication from one of the top- ranking Russians after the crisis that what they had in mind was that they would get these missiles into Cuba, secretly and quickly, and then, after our elections of November, would then return to the Berlin issue, and after that, point to the missiles in Cuba as additional leverage on us with regard to Berlin.

RICHARD RUSK: Who was that Russian official?

DEAN RUSK: I do not remember his name, actually. I think there may be some plausibility in that because somehow the Cuban missiles were related to the Berlin question. President Kennedy made an early decision not to make public the information that the missile sites were being built in Cuba until we were prepared to announce what we would do about it. He thought that just to announce them would create panic and consternation and all sorts of things. One could even imagine thousands of small boats taking off from the coast of Florida headed for Cuba, and

things like that.

RICHARD RUSK: Getting back to Soviet intentions just for a minute: Taking Khrushchev at face value for a minute, and Fidel [Ruz] Castro, it would seem that we have continued to be somewhat provocative towards Cuba after the Bay of Pigs, at least with allowing or supporting certain exile activities against Cuba, certainly with our language with respect to Cuba. What would you say to the argument that we may have inadvertently given both Castro and Khrushchev some reason to think that Cuba itself was in jeopardy.

DEAN RUSK: Well, after all there was the Bay of Pigs, and there were a series of rather pointless dirty tricks being pulled on Castro after the Bay of Pigs. If the Russians thought that we were about to invade Cuba with American forces, all they had to do was come and talk to us. We would have told them that we had no intention whatever of invading Cuba. You see, even our Latin American friends who were most strongly opposed to Castro were also opposed to an invasion of Cuba by U.S. forces, because they said that the large casualties that would be inflicted on Cuba in such an operation would create a scar on the relationship between the U.S. and Latin America that would take a long time to heal. So we had no interest in invading Cuba with American forces.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you think Khrushchev was considering Cuban missiles as sort of a shortcut to nuclear strategic parity with the United States?

DEAN RUSK: It is possible. After all, at least one of the steps, because we did have a fair superiority over the Russians in missiles at that time. The missile gap that President Kennedy talked about in his campaign of 1960 proved not to be true. (laughter)

SCHOENBAUM: Did he know that then or did he find out?

DEAN RUSK: I'm not sure. We did get, in 1960 and 1961, additional sources of information coming on line which gave us a much more accurate account of the missiles.

RICHARD RUSK: Wasn't it the defection of the Soviet spy--intelligence person--there in 1962--wasn't that really the conclusive evidence that this missile gap did not exist?

DEAN RUSK: I think we were relying more on such things as satellite photography and various telemetry operations, so that our intelligence on missiles in the Soviet Union took a dramatic step forward at the very beginning of the Kennedy administration. That was not through anything the Kennedy administration had done; that was simply something coming on line that had been started before.

RICHARD RUSK: Did the Soviets have sufficient strategic and nuclear forces to really devastate this country?

DEAN RUSK: Oh sure. That began to be true at the beginning of the [Dwight David] Eisenhower second administration. That began to be true in the mid-fifties.

RICHARD RUSK: The detonation of a hundred cities?

DEAN RUSK: Oh yeah, sure.

SCHOENBAUM: On Monday morning then, you must have had a very tense meeting with Kennedy and high officials. And at that time was the EXCCM group formed?

DEAN RUSK: It was formed that Monday.

SCHOENBAUM: Can you describe the meeting?

DEAN RUSK: I would not call it tense, but it was serious. Let me make a brief comment about the emotional side of this. In Bobby Kennedy's book *The Thirteen Days* there is a reflection of a good deal of emotion, but that was largely personal to Bobby Kennedy. This had been the first serious crisis he had ever lived through; most of the rest of us had been through crises before. That emotional factor was very much present in Bobby's own approach to thinking about it. But John F. Kennedy was as cool as a cucumber in these meetings. That program "The Missiles of October" showed more emotion on the part of John F. Kennedy, than in fact he showed as President during the crisis. His greatest contribution to Cuban Missile Crisis was to keep his own cool. He did that magnificently. What he said privately to his wife or to Bobby, I do not know. It was very serious. And if you call "gravity tension" tension, then tension might be a usable word.

RICHARD RUSK: I have a question about the EXCOM Committee. Kennedy set up this special task force, the executive committee, to handle this thing. And by doing this he bypassed the existing bureaucracy and agencies, at least at the start of the crisis. Do you think this was the proper way for him to proceed, and especially organizationally?

DEAN RUSK: I think in retrospect it was. He drew together the Secretary of State; Secretary of Defense; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs; National Security Advisor; the Attorney General, Bobby Kennedy; Secretary of the Treasury, Douglas [C.] Dillon; my own Undersecretary; and Ted [Theodore Chaikin] Sorensen, who was his own very close associate; and the Head of the CIA, Llewellyn [E.] Thompson, former Ambassador to the Soviet Union, who was our Soviet expert in that group; and a number of people. I don't know if you ever saw it, Richie, afterwards, he sent each of us a wooden block with the calendar of November on it, with those days in November especially marked on it as a memento of those days.

RICHARD RUSK: I asked the question, in light of what happened with the Bay of Pigs, when you felt that the decision-making was too closely handled.

DEAN RUSK: No, we immediately drew in the talents and resources of the government. For example, I had my own bureau of intelligence researchers fully involved and the Bureau of European Affairs was fully involved.

RICHARD RUSK: And yet security remained tight?

DEAN RUSK: It was really quite remarkable that security remained so tight. I think it was

partly because everyone knew that this was one hell of a crisis and there was no point in going around shooting off your mouth about it.

SCHOENBAUM: Why were some of the people--It's obvious why they were involved. It's not obvious why people like Sorensen and perhaps even George [Wildman] Ball were involved in the EXCCM committee?

DEAN RUSK: Sorensen had been very close to Kennedy from the days when Kennedy was in Congress, and had been with him during his campaigning, and was just a very close associate. George Ball was a man of great experience, a man well thought of by Kennedy, although not by Bobby Kennedy. Well, Bobby Kennedy was looking for people in government who were dedicated Kennedy people, so I had to wrestle with Bobby on a few occasions about certain appointments, like George Ball, [James] Harlan Cleveland, George [Crews] McGhee, and people like that who were not sworn fiefs of the Kennedy dynasty. Bobby was very active in trying to insure that as many Kennedy people as possible were in the administration. He would have even liked to have sent one fellow from the Justice Department to be my Undersecretary for Administration, partly to be his eyes and ears in the State Department. I soon took care of that.

RICHARD RUSK: Who would that have been?

DEAN RUSK: I will try to remember his name. He went on to be a judge in California after that. I will get his name.

SCHOENBAUM: At the Monday meeting, was it discussed and decided to form the EXCCM committee? Was that the main product of the Monday meeting?

DEAN RUSK: I do not recall that there was a single moment when Kennedy said, "Now here is the group I want working on this," then named everyone in the group. It sort of developed over a day or two.

SCHOENBAUM: What was discussed then?

DEAN RUSK: We had some broad discussions over what these things meant. We talked about the military implications, the political implications and things like that. Then we decided pretty early to form certain working groups within EXCCM to take a look at different alternatives. The one alternative that we did not examine through a working group was to do nothing, because we felt that was something that we just could not accept. But there was a working group established to look at the question of bombing the missile sites. Another group looked at the question of invading Cuba. Another group looked at the so-called Quarantine Plan.

SCHOENBAUM: Did you have a group?

DEAN RUSK: I did not, myself, join any one of the groups. I dropped in on groups. But I felt as Secretary of State I should in effect hold myself in reserve and hear from all the groups before I gave my own recommendation, as Secretary of State, to the President. Also, early that week on a Monday or Tuesday, President Kennedy decided that he and I would continue to meet our public

appointments. We had some distinguished visitors from abroad; for example, the German Foreign Minister was in town during that week. And he had some schedules; and we decided that he and I would meet our schedules so as not to create a premature sense of panic around the country that some great crisis was on. So that meant that I could not sit in hour by hour with these working groups.

SCHOENBAUM: Who decided who was to be on each working group? Kennedy?

DEAN RUSK: I think Kennedy basically did that.

SCHOENBAUM: Who decided the alternatives if--

DEAN RUSK: That came out of our discussions as a full group. It was curious at the very end, each one of these working groups came back with pretty good arguments as to why their particular line of action was no good. The arguments against any of these actions seemed to be pretty strong, so Kennedy did not have a good choice to make. He had a choice among poor and worse.

SCHOENBAUM: How did the Quarantine idea first come up as even an alternative? Did it come out at the Monday meeting? Did somebody raise that?

DEAN RUSK: Quite apart from the meetings of the full EXCCM and the working groups, there was an enormous amount of private consultation among members of the group. For example, I talked a great deal with Bob [Robert Strange] McNamara, Llewellyn Thompson, George Ball, sometimes with Bobby Kennedy. And I personally think that all that one-to-one consultation probably had more to do with the outcome of the crisis than the formal action taken by working groups and the Executive Committee as a whole. During that week, Bob McNamara, McGeorge Bundy, Bobby Kennedy, and I had formed a consensus among us that the Quarantine method was the best course of action, realizing that if that did not work one of these other alternatives were still there, such as an air strike, or an invasion of Cuba, and things of that sort. Now we had some arguments in the EXCOM about certain points. For example, the lawyers in the Justice Department thought we should invoke the Doctrine of Self Defense in the action we took about these missiles. We and our lawyers in the State Department did not think that we should broaden the Doctrine of Self Defense in that fashion. After all nobody had fired a shot. We were not under attack.

RICHARD RUSK: Really, Cuba had every right as a sovereign country to embark on these alliances. And if they wanted defensive weapons--

DEAN RUSK: Subject to the fact that they were a member of the Organization of American States, they were bound, in our view, by the charter of the Organization of American States, and indeed by the Rio treaty, not to create a threat to the peace in the Western Hemisphere.

SCHOENBAUM: Was there anything in the treaty outlawing the installation of defensive weapons?

DEAN RUSK: No. But the language was broad enough to clearly cover anything that would be construed as a threat to peace in the Western Hemisphere. So we decided fairly early that we would deal with this as an OAS matter, from the point of view of the law. We would go to the council of the Organization of American States and get them to take a look at it in reasonable confidence, that they would declare this to be a threat to the peace and call on Cuba to get rid of these missiles and things of that sort.

SCHOENBAUM: Who had that idea? Is there someone who brought up the OAS and put forth the ideas?

DEAN RUSK: In the group, I myself pressed that point pretty hard as an alternative to the use of the Doctrine of Self Defense. There are those who would brush legal matters aside, in this instance Dean [Gooderham] Acheson. But some of us believed, and I still do, that your legal case has a lot to do with public opinion and the attitude of other governments. I remember during that period that one of the problems the British, the French, and the Israelis had in Suez in the mid-fifties was that they had not presented a feasible theory of the case. They did not give anybody anything to support. So we thought the legal case of it was pretty important. I refer you now to Abe [Abram] Chayes' little book on *International Law and the Cuban Missile Crisis [The Cuban Missile Crisis]* which he did for the American Society of International Law, and it is a very revealing little book, because legal issues played a major role in the Missile Crisis, whereas they were brushed aside with the Bay of Pigs.

RICHARD RUSK: I have not read his book, and I know I should. But obviously you anticipated someone out there would make the case that Americans have in fact ringed the Soviet Union with military bases and installations. Now why should we be upset over the fact that the Cubans and the Soviets are trying to install one in the Western Hemisphere? What was the argument that you were trying to put together to deal with that? And in fact it was an issue with a few countries in Europe, and I believe a few countries in Asia as well, that they made this comment.

DEAN RUSK: In the first place, this was a major change in the underlying strategic situation. The placement of these missiles, in a position to knock out our strategic air command bases with no advance warning, was itself a considerable change in the underlying strategic relationship. Second, is that they were doing it in this hemisphere. In this country there is a strong attachment to the general notions we refer to as the Monroe Doctrine. During World War II and the immediate postwar period, we multi-lateralized the Monroe Doctrine in the charter of the Organization of the American States and in the Rio Treaty, but that idea was still important. You might remember that when the U.N. Charter was drafted, it was our Latin American friends who insisted upon that chapter of the charter which provided for regional arrangements. They did not want the affairs of the Western Hemisphere to be, in effect, turned over to the U.N. Security Council where the Soviets were sitting there with a veto. They wanted the affairs of the Western Hemisphere to be handled in the Western Hemisphere.

RICHARD RUSK: We supported that petition?

DEAN RUSK: We supported it, thanks to the diligence of Nelson [Aldrich] Rockefeller, who was on our delegation to San Francisco when the charter was drafted. There were some in our

government who did not particularly care for that. You see we had expelled the Fidel Castro government from the Organization of American States in January 1962 at a meeting of the OAS foreign ministers in Punta del Este, Uruguay, on the grounds that Marxism and Leninism were simply incompatible with the political institutions of the Western Hemisphere. So there was a strong hemispheric sense about such a matter as the intrusion into the Western Hemisphere of a substantial number of Soviet missiles.

RICHARD RUSK: You were satisfied with our legal case?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. After all, the NATO forces had been organized because of all these stirrings by Joseph Stalin after WW II when we were disarmed. As Dean Acheson put it, "The one thing that NATO cannot do is commit aggression." It was a defensive organization. So we drew a fairly sharp distinction between NATO on the one side and Soviet missiles and Cuba on the other. One could say that Khrushchev might have been concerned about the close end defense of Cuba, but he could have talked to us about it. He did not. And this is a heck of a change in the underlying relationship that rested solely on the self-defense of Cuba. My guess is that he had other considerations in mind, such as Berlin.

SCHOENBAUM: That is very interesting. Another theme seems to be collective security. I remember I was a law student at the time and I followed it very closely and was very worried about it. I remember in my own mind that the turning point came when I saw the newspaper reports that NATO and DeGaulle had supported the American position in the OAS. I took great comfort in collective security at that time.

DEAN RUSK: I think there is one aspect that helped Khrushchev not to make a major mistake. The vote in the OAS--I personally went over to the council of the OAS for that meeting--was unanimous. There was one delegate in the OAS that voted yes, but made it subject to being confirmed when he established contact to his President. He later confirmed that the vote was yes. The vote of the OAS was unanimous. Now in the case of Mexico, they normally vote against things like this traditionally. But Mexico was one of the first to come to us to ask how they could be helpful, Antonio Carillo Flores, the ambassador in Washington--then NATO was solid on this, particularly after we made the decision after the suggestion of the British that we had to make public the air photos of the missile sites in Cuba to meet any problems of credibility that might be involved. Then on the Monday evening of President Kennedy's television address, I myself met with the ambassadors after the address. I met with the ambassadors of about sixty or sixty-five nonaligned countries. I met with them in the State Department, showed them the air photographs, and went over with them the steps that President Kennedy was taking. After that meeting, about forty of these ambassadors lined up to come by and shake my hand to wish us well. Now the strong support that we had during that crisis, I am sure made an impression on Khrushchev. Had the OAS been in disarray, had NATO been in disarray, then he might have done something different. Also remember that we were impressed that the American public was so relatively calm during that period, and at the time we even wondered if that was because the American public did not understand the gravity of the crisis. But as I have talked to people in different parts of the country since then, I am convinced that most people did realize that it was a serious crisis, but were nevertheless calm. This was quite a reassuring and encouraging factor.

RICHARD RUSK: To what extent was the unanimous vote of the OAS attributable to the fact that you stayed in close touch with those people prior to that? You seem to have established good personal relationships with a lot of these foreign ministers.

DEAN RUSK: Let me say that when I went to that meeting of the council of the OAS, contrary to what some of the writers have said, we did not have to twist arms. We did not have to go around bludgeoning people to vote. I think there was just a strong consensus that this was a major development for the Western Hemisphere and that something had to be done about it.

RICHARD RUSK: So you attribute this less to personal diplomacy than--

DEAN RUSK: I would not attribute it personally to my skills. I think that this is one of those situations that they realized that it was a real crisis and rallied around.

SCHOENBAUM: But still the real triumph--I think this is one of the State Department's finest hours. It is true that they did not need any arm twisting, you did not have to make any deals: We will give you three million dollars in aid if you support us on this. At the same time you had to go through the process, and you had to draw them into the process, and they saw that they were drawn into the process. That was a real skillful negotiation to me.

DEAN RUSK: I think that it was handled well. Let me say that when President Kennedy decided what he was going to do, we asked [U.] Alexis Johnson to prepare the diplomatic scenario. It was a very complex diplomatic scenario, close consultation with people in this hemisphere and then NATO, putting our case to other governments all around the world. Alexis Johnson did a brilliant job of organizing the diplomatic scenario that went along with the Cuban Missile Crisis, one of his finest hours.

SCHOENBAUM: Then you had to draw up the plan for the diplomacy, and then you had to manage the implementation of the plan, didn't you?

DEAN RUSK: That's right.

SCHOENBAUM: Was that a complex task?

DEAN RUSK: Well it was complex but we reported on that to the EXCCM. But President Kennedy more or less left it to the State Department to work out the details of such planning, although he himself sent some personal emissaries to key people in Europe: sent Dean Acheson to President DeGaulle and sent some others over.

RICHARD RUSK: Acheson, (unintelligible)?

DEAN RUSK: For that particular mission, yes, although he opposed the Quarantine strategy. He wanted an immediate strike on Cuba.

RICHARD RUSK: What about Dean Acheson's comment afterward that we were lucky.

DEAN RUSK: Yes, he said it was just dumb luck. I would hasten to point out that you can--Of course we were lucky. The Russians were lucky, the whole world was lucky. But you can give yourself a chance to be lucky. This is the thing that Dean Acheson tended to overlook, because had we just started with a strike on Cuba, what would Khrushchev have felt he was compelled to do? You back him into a corner with something like that and his own position was clearly at stake. And that would have lifted the crisis to a new level of urgency. Now I think I mentioned this on an earlier tape, but there is one very important factual point that has not been discussed very much, and that is that we never saw nuclear warheads on missiles on launchers ready to fire. There was some indication that the actual warheads were on certain ships that were coming through the Strait of Gibraltar at the time we imposed the Quarantine, because they were the first ships to turn around and head back to the Black Sea. But we felt that we had to get this crisis settled before these missile sites became fully operational, because then the existence of places like Miami and Washington and other places might very well have been at stake and it would have been just another ball game. Now no one can possibly say what kind of ball game that would have been, because only Kennedy could have made that decision and he never had to face it, thank God. We knew there was limited time before these missile sites became fully operational.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, I guess the real point of this crisis is not so much the implementation of the blockade, and the arrival of the first Soviet ships, although that is a critical point, but really afterwards when the Soviet buildup continued. You became aware that these things could become operational very shortly and they had not yet agreed to pull these things out. How close did we come to an air strike at that point? Were we within a day?

DEAN RUSK: Well on the Sunday following President Kennedy's television speech, Khrushchev announced that the missiles would be withdrawn. We had the capability of going into Cuba on the following Tuesday. There is about a forty-eight-hour gap there. Florida was about to sink under the sea with the weight of military power we had assembled there. Khrushchev could count sixteen American troopships coming through the Panama Canal on one day headed for Florida, so it got to be pretty short.

RICHARD RUSK: We had given him notice that we had to take action on these things by that same--

DEAN RUSK: We had made it very clear to him that time was running out. In his book *Khrushchev Remembers* he said something about Bobby Kennedy telling [Anatoly F.] Dobrynin that the military might take over in this country and the situation might get out of hand. Well, what Bobby Kennedy did tell Dobrynin was that if those missiles were not withdrawn immediately that this could move into an additional military phase which could be very dangerous. Now that was either a genuine or deliberate misunderstanding by Khrushchev as to what Bobby Kennedy had said or meant. There was never, never, never any question of any kind of military takeover in this country.

SCHOENBAUM: Can we ask about de Gaulle? Is there a story behind de Gaulle? I remember being at the time just amazed and thankful that de Gaulle and France at that time were being so truculent.

DEAN RUSK: Well, de Gaulle could be very great at moments of crisis, could be very petty at other times. For example, his conduct during the Summit meeting in Paris with Eisenhower, just after the shooting down of the U2, his own conduct was superb. Well, Dean Acheson reluctantly agreed to go over and tell de Gaulle about this, even though Dean Acheson himself personally wanted another line of action. The essence of his discussion with de Gaulle was, "Here is the situation. Here is what President Kennedy feels he must do." Apparently toward the end of the conversation Acheson said, "Mr. President I have with me the aerial photographs of the missile sites. Would you like to see them?" And contrary to what the "Missiles of October" program showed, de Gaulle said, "No, Mr. Acheson. The U.S. would not deceive me on a matter of such great importance. Tell President Kennedy he must do what he has to do, and if this leads to WW III France will be with the U.S." And that was it.

RICHARD RUSK: Although after his announcement he did look at those photographs, and was flabbergasted by the technological aspects.

DEAN RUSK: Do you know that?

RICHARD RUSK: Yeah. Well, it was in [Elie] Abel's book. But after Acheson and he had had their discussion, and he pledged French support, he did look at them then and was flabbergasted by what he saw.

SCHOENBAUM: Can we talk about some of the one-to-one conversations, particularly with Kennedy? I think the part of the--as you say, everybody has different stories. And I think that the part that has never been told is the conversations that you had with Kennedy and with other people that were involved.

DEAN RUSK: I did not myself have very many personal conversations alone with President Kennedy during this period. But he did with Lyndon Johnson. They spent a good many hours together in the Oval Office talking this thing over. And Lyndon Johnson's role in this has been left out of Bobby Kennedy's book and the "Missiles of October" program, and things of that sort.

RICHARD RUSK: Johnson did play a significant role in this?

DEAN RUSK: Oh yeah.

SCHOENBAUM: Can you tell us about this?

DEAN RUSK: He attended most of the meetings.

RICHARD RUSK: Did he speak up in a good many meetings?

DEAN RUSK: Yes, but I remember that on the Saturday morning when the final decision was made, President Kennedy asked me, as the senior person, to begin with a recommendation. And I had written on a very small piece of paper a recommendation that we use the Quarantine method. And then I added the sentence that, "We should not suppose that this will be an inconsequential

action," that "This will produce a crisis of the gravest importance."

RICHARD RUSK: Now was this your memo labeled Top Secret that you presented?

DEAN RUSK: It was not labeled Top Secret, it was just written in my own handwriting. And I was sitting right next to the President and I offered that piece of paper to the President. But he did not want anything in writing from that meeting, so I kept it. And it is now in the archives of the State Department. A little piece of paper that could be worth a great deal if it were out on the market.

RICHARD RUSK: You did present a memo outlining seven reasons to support--

DEAN RUSK: Yeah, but not at that Saturday morning meeting.

SCHOENBAUM: When did you write that memo? At that meeting?

DEAN RUSK: When we got to the Cabinet room, we were waiting for the President.

SCHOENBAUM: You then were the first to propose this course of action?

DEAN RUSK: Right. Then Bob McNamara followed. And at one point Kennedy turned to the Vice President and asked if he had any comment. I remember Lyndon Johnson saying to the President, "You have the recommendation of your Secretary of State and your Secretary of Defense. I would take it."

SCHOENBAUM: Did you expect any opposition from any quarter when you made that recommendation? Did you expect something would come out of the woodwork? You know how the meetings are.

DEAN RUSK: Sure, there was some. I don't think Dean Acheson was at that meeting, because he wasn't officially there before at other meetings. I think there were still some who wanted to start with an air strike of some sort. But Kennedy had already ascertained from the Chief of Staff of the Air Force that there was no way that the Air Force could guarantee that we would knock out all of the missile sites. Also we knew that knocking out the missile sites would kill a lot of Russians who were actually manning those sites. Bob McNamara, Bobby Kennedy, and I had a pretty good idea that JFK would accept our proposal through the consensus being developed in the days leading up to that Saturday morning meeting.

RICHARD RUSK: In your more elaborate memo you stated seven reasons supporting the blockade. One of them was the irreversibility of an air strike, whereas a blockade would allow more options. Do you remember what your other reasons were?

DEAN RUSK: You don't have that memo?

RICHARD RUSK: No, I don't have that memo. It is referred to in Elie Abel's book.

SCHOENBAUM: The formal memo was written before the meeting, obviously. Was that circulated to everyone?

DEAN RUSK: It might have been prepared in connection with the working group. Bear in mind that we call this a quarantine, not a blockade, and for a very specific reason. Over the years, as you know Tom, the idea of a blockade has developed all sorts of rules in international law, all sorts of barnacles. It has got to be a fairly rigid concept about what is required for a blockade to be applied in accordance with international law. In order to get rid of all these barnacles we call this a quarantine, partly because no one knew what the hell quarantine meant. That again would give us maximum flexibility in how we would treat it. We had to be a little rough with our own Navy at some point because they proceeded on the basis that this was a blockade. McNamara and the President had to take charge of the Navy during this thing.

RICHARD RUSK: They sure did. Now, McNamara had a quite a session with a fellow named [George W. ] Anderson [Jr.] in the Pentagon about the implementation of this quarantine. Did you, yourself, have some fears about the Navy's ability to follow policy with all these ships?

DEAN RUSK: No, I left that to McNamara. I was involved in some of the discussions of it with Kennedy during that week at the White House. No, Bob McNamara handled the Joint Chiefs.

RICHARD RUSK: Were you aware of McNamara's exchange with Anderson at the time that all this happened?

DEAN RUSK: I have some doubts about it. For example, if it is true that the Chief of Naval Operations had said to McNamara, "Now you just go on away; the Navy know how to run a blockade," my hunch is that we would have had another Chief of Naval Operations. I doubt that story very much.

SCHOENBAUM: How did this distinction between blockade and quarantine arise? And you said you had some discussions with Kennedy one-on-one with that?

DEAN RUSK: No, this came up in connection with a working group on this kind of action. This was part of the work of the Legal Advisor's office in the State Department, myself. See, we were looking for flexibility because we did not think that Chairman Khrushchev would launch a nuclear strike over this issue, but we did not know it. You never can predict exactly how any living, breathing, human being is going to react to the circumstances in which he finds himself. We had to take that into account. I remember after Kennedy's television speech and my meetings with the ambassadors of the non-aligned countries--I was up very late that night. I got home about 2:00 a.m. I went to sleep and got up about 6:00 a.m. And I remember thinking to myself, "Ah, I am still here. This is very interesting!" That meant that Khrushchev had not immediately responded with a nuclear strike. So it was serious business.

RICHARD RUSK: You fellows were very careful with the implementation of this quarantine. And one of the first things you did was to reduce the radius from five hundred miles out to closer back in.

DEAN RUSK: Somewhat closer back in.

RICHARD RUSK: Another step that you took was to stop a ship from another country rather than start with a Soviet ship. Were those your initiatives?

DEAN RUSK: The quarantine was applied to offensive weapons. So we allowed, in effect, ships that were engaged in normal trade, not in weapons, to go on to Cuba. We let a Soviet tanker go through the blockade because it appeared to be carrying nothing but oil. We wanted to give Khrushchev plenty of time to sort out his own situation over there in the Politburo, in the Kremlin, and not force than to act on the spur of the moment, irresponsibly, but to give us a chance to work it out. Several of his ships had in fact turned around and headed back to the Black Sea. You see, when two nuclear super powers are at each other's jugular veins, it is very important that one side not drive the other side into a corner from which there is no escape, because then you could get the Samson syndrome: pull the temple down around yourself and everyone else at the same time. And Kennedy had that in mind during the Cuban Missile Crisis. We used Llewellyn Thompson as our in-house Russian during this period. He was a very able, skillful fellow who had deep understanding of the Russians and their system, and the way they operate and so forth. He was invaluable during this period in terms of exposing to us the possibilities and probabilities as to what Khrushchev's reactions might be and others' in the political role. He made a major contribution by acting as our in-house Russian.

RICHARD RUSK: Getting back to the decision to have the quarantine rather than the air strike, Cohen quotes you as having some "misgivings" about this decision in the aftermath, when it was taken. Do you recall what that meant?

DEAN RUSK: No, I do not recall any misgivings on that part of it. We could not be sure it was going to work, so we knew that we faced the possibility of something more drastic. Let me make one comment about Adlai [Ewing] Stevenson [III] at those meetings. He had proposed a reference of this matter to the U.N. Security Council. Well, that was his business. He was our representative at the U.N. but we felt that referring this matter to the Security Council standing alone would not be enough, because the Russians not only had a veto at the end of the day up there, but the methods by which they could delay, postpone discussions in the U.N. Security Council until these missile sites became fully operational. So we felt that although it was certain to go to the U.N. Security Council, we ourselves took it there, that standing alone would not get the job done. Adlai Stevenson did a brilliant job of advocacy in presenting our case to the U.N. Security Council.

RICHARD RUSK: It seems to me that was an act of real courage on his part, due to the fact that he was the only one presenting that. And yet he is accused of advocating Munich.

DEAN RUSK: JFK did not take that view of Adlai Stevenson. He pointed out that that was Stevenson's job, that he should have made such proposals, and that we were very fortunate to have Adlai Stevenson in the Security Council to represent us during this crisis. But now there were some others who thought that somehow Adlai Stevenson might be a little weak-kneed on this matter, so they did ask John J. McCloy to go up there and work alongside of Stevenson to advise him and help him out.

SCHOENBAUM: There is a story you told once about some incident when you were in a car going to a White House meeting, and you looked out and saw somebody with a sign out in the street. Do you remember that? It was something about some old catechism.

DEAN RUSK: Oh, when I was a small boy growing up in the Presbyterian Church, I memorized the Westminster Shorter catechism. My church gave me a Bible for having done so. The first question of the Westminster Shorter catechism is, "What is the chief end of Man?" Now in the catechism, it has a theological answer. "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever." But during the Cuban Missile Crisis, as I drove around the streets of Washington and saw people on the sidewalks and in cars, I could not help but remember that first question of the Westminster Shorter catechism: in effect, what is life all about? And I realized that this first of all questions had become an operational question before the governments of the world. And that I found very sobering. This crisis did raise the ultimate question, "What is life all about?"

RICHARD RUSK: What did you share with Mom on this particular thing? And specifically, did you go along with the government's arrangements that they had made for the evacuation of, not only Dean Rusk, but his wife and supposedly his children? (laughter)

DEAN RUSK: Well, they put some security men in our basement who lived there during the Cuban Missile Crisis to be available to maintain communications at all times and to assist in case, under obsolete and unsatisfactory plans, the so-called leadership of the government would be evacuated to some place out in the hills. I personally think those arrangements were simply psychologically impossible, but that is another question. Mom took it in stride.

RICHARD RUSK: You told her just how rough this thing was?

DEAN RUSK: Oh yes, but she was calm. I remember about the Thursday following Kennedy's speech, before we had any prospect of a settlement, I came into the office one morning and my secretary said to me, "It is going to be all right Mr. Secretary. I feel it in my bones. It is going to come out all right." (laughter)

RICHARD RUSK: Were you the one that insisted that the government, not only be serious about evacuating the officials but they had to do something about their families too?

DEAN RUSK: No, that was part of the plan, but--This is a diversion. I am convinced that as a result of experience during the Cuban Missile Crisis, that a lot of those people in government there are not going to say goodbye to their colleagues and possibly to the members of their family, and get on a helicopter, and go out to the hills. To hell with it. Just as your own personal reaction when they asked you for your class schedule and you said, "Don't come for me, I'm not going to leave my teammates and my buddies." And also, if we had a full nuclear strike, if the President and the Secretary of State survived, the first band of shivering survivors who got hold of them would hang them to the nearest tree. (laughter) You have to have an alternative government. You can't suppose that a government that allowed such a thing to happen is going to be able to function after the strike occurred. So I just think this whole program of evacuating top officials is psychologically wrong.

RICHARD RUSK: And impossible.

SCHOENBAUM: Can you tell us about your widely quoted remark about, "We were eyeball to eyeball and the other fellow blinked"?

DEAN RUSK: Well, that was the only leak in my eight years that really infuriated me because here in the middle of a crisis, when any consideration of face or prestige just might have made some differences, for some stupid colleague to leak that remark, I thought was just intolerable.

SCHOENBAUM: Do you know who leaked it?

DEAN RUSK: No, I do not know who leaked it. I made it at the time when the first Soviet ships turned around and started back to the Black Sea. It came from a child's game we used to play down here in Georgia. We would not stand about two feet from each other and stare into each other's eyes and the first one to blink lost the game. It is not an easy thing to do, you should try it sometime. But that remark came out of that child's game we used to play down here in Georgia.

SCHOENBAUM: What context did you make it in? Was it a meeting?

DEAN RUSK: It was a meeting. In the "Missiles of October" they misrepresented that to some extent because they had people sort of jumping around and clapping as their high school team had just scored a touchdown. That was not the mood at all, it was a very serious business. We knew even when that remark was made that we still had a heck of a crisis on our hands.

SCHOENBAUM: Can you tell us more about these one-on-one conversations during that week? Do remember some specifics of your one-on-ones with Kennedy? Did you have some meetings alone with Kennedy?

DEAN RUSK: Bobby Kennedy occasionally, and Bob McNamara, Me George Bundy, Llewellyn Thompson, George Ball, people like that.

SCHOENBAUM: But not with President Kennedy?

DEAN RUSK: Not very many with President Kennedy. I do not recall.

SCHOENBAUM: What did he do during that? He kept his daily schedule. But did you have the impression that he was meeting with other people?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, I am sure that despite meeting his public schedule, he changed around his private schedule a good deal. I am sure this was a total preoccupation with him. He thought about it all of the time. I really do not know how much sleep he got during that week. When you are President with a crisis like this on your hands, you think about it all you can.

RICHARD RUSK: Were you able to sleep nights?

DEAN RUSK: I averaged, I suppose, three or four hours sleep during that week following the President's speech.

END OF SIDE 1

BEGINNING OF SIDE 2

DEAN RUSK: --In the Cuban Missile Crisis, I think I can truthfully say that people on our side in the EXCCM were really quite cool and contained about the thing. There was no panic and no great excitement. As I indicated earlier, Bobby Kennedy showed a certain emotional quality during the crisis. After the crisis was all over I did speculate a little about the question as to how long can mere human beings sustain a crisis at that level, over against such factors as sleeplessness, weariness, suspicion, ignorance about exactly what the other fellow was going to do. At what point, how long would it be before somebody in a top position would, in effect say, "Oh to hell with it," and push the button. Now, we sustained that for thirteen days at a good level of calm and prudence.

RICHARD RUSK: You were still quite tired toward the end of that period?

DEAN RUSK: Oh yeah, we were tired.

SCHOENBAUM: Was there any way you could get away to blow off steam, get away from it, turn on the television and watch some stupid program?

RICHARD RUSK: We are talking about the fate of the Earth as we now know it.

DEAN RUSK: No, we were not trying to get away from it. We were living with it.

SCHOENBAUM: Afterwards did you go out and have a good meal?

DEAN RUSK: No. President Kennedy, by the way, told us when Khrushchev announced he was going to take the missiles out, Kennedy told all of us that he didn't want us to gloat about a diplomatic victory. He said, "If Khrushchev wants to play the role of the peacemaker, let him." He didn't want to make life much more difficult for Khrushchev, or make ourselves look silly by gloating.

RICHARD RUSK: To follow up Tom's question about what specifically you did, who you met with: Cohen called your performance a "virtuoso" performance and far superior to your role in the Bay of Pigs, (laughter) would you agree with this assessment? Can you recall what specifically you were able to bring your influence to bear upon? A related question would be, is there anything you could have done to either improve on it or--

DEAN RUSK: Of course all of us had learned a good many lessons in the Bay of Pigs. My

concern was to develop a consensus among the top leadership of the government as the week wore on in favor of the Quarantine beginning. And I did that through private talks with individuals. I think we were all virtuosos during that period. I wouldn't claim personal credit for it, although from where I sat, I think I had a very substantial influence on the way the thing was handled.

SCHOENBAUM: Was there a feeling, consciously I mean--did you say to McNamara, "Let's do this one right. Remember the Bay of Pigs and we're not going to--" Did you say that up front?

DEAN RUSK: We did not have to say that aloud because we had all been living with the disaster of the Bay of Pigs. And by that time, you see, we had the Bobby Kennedy-Max [Sherred] Johnson-Maxwell [Davenport] Taylor report on the handling of the Bay of Pigs, and that was all very fresh in our minds. I do not think you should use this so long as Dobrynin is alive. It is one of the reasons I am not writing memoirs. But an hour before President Kennedy made his television speech, I called Dobrynin into my office and gave him a copy of the speech and went over it with him and told him what we planned to do.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you recall anything else about the exchange?

DEAN RUSK: No, I wanted him to be able to get back to his embassy and get the speech on the wire before Kennedy started speaking. I have some doubt that Dobrynin himself knew about the missiles in Cuba. I can't be sure about that, but I am inclined to think that he did not.

RICHARD RUSK: It's probably that reaction alone was something of a key too. What about [Andrei Andreevich] Gromyko? Do you think he was fully aware?

DEAN RUSK: I am inclined to think so. On the Thursday before Kennedy's television speech, Gromyko came to Washington and spent some time in the afternoon with Kennedy. And then I gave him a dinner and we had a long talk after dinner. But in the talk with Kennedy, Kennedy gave Gromyko every opportunity to confess to the missiles in Cuba. And at one point Kennedy took out some quotes from his own recent press conferences indicating that should such weapons appear in Cuba, this would be a very grave situation. Kennedy was sitting there with a desk full of pictures of the missile sites in Cuba and Gromyko kept assuring him that they only had defensive weapons in Cuba. Of course, there is an ambiguity about offensive and defensive weapons, because if the Soviets were to argue that the weapons were there for the defense of Cuba, then they were defensive weapons from their point of view. From our point of view, since they could hit almost all of the U.S., they were offensive in character. So there is an ambiguity there.

SCHOENBAUM: Why didn't Kennedy take the pictures out and show them?

DEAN RUSK: Well, we had not yet decided what we were going to do. And we did not open up such a subject with the Soviets until Kennedy had decided because, among other things, we did not want to give the Soviets an opportunity to put out an ultimatum, which would have made things much more difficult to resolve. Now I do think that Kennedy's reaction to the missiles in Cuba caught Khrushchev somewhat by surprise. I think we caught him with his scenarios down.

I don't think he had worked out scenarios for what his attitude would be, or what he would do, if there was a strong American reaction.

SCHOENBAUM: Do you think he had a scenario if there had been an air strike or an invasion?

DEAN RUSK: Well, he would have been forced to get himself one very quickly if there had been an air strike or an invasion.

RICHARD RUSK: Just in terms of sheer idle speculation, how might things have developed with respect to hindsight had we gone with the air strike?

DEAN RUSK: One of the real possibilities we were thinking about was that Khrushchev might have seized West Berlin during this crisis. Had he done that then, a good many of our NATO allies would have looked at us across the Atlantic and said, "Oh damn you. Look at what you've done to us in getting us into this crisis over Berlin because of Cuba." That would have created a considerable disarray in NATO, in my judgment.

RICHARD RUSK: What was the state of our congressional buildup in Europe and NATO solidarity at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis? Could we have effectively blocked or seriously contested Soviet moves?

DEAN RUSK: I think had they delivered a major--Well, we could not have defended West Berlin as it stood because they had a good many Soviet and East German divisions surrounding Berlin and we had only a token task force in Berlin. The NATO planning for such an event moved from one stage to the next, and it could have really worked itself into a whale of a crisis.

SCHOENBAUM: Where were you when you heard the news, the resolution of the crisis when the ships turned back? Or do you remember where you were?

DEAN RUSK: No. The resolution of the crisis did not come until Khrushchev announced from Moscow that the missiles were being withdrawn, on the Sunday following Kennedy's Monday television speech.

SCHOENBAUM: But when the ships turned back, was that an important turning point?

DEAN RUSK: It was. As I put it, the other fellow just blinked. In other words, we were not just coasting; the sled wasn't moving inevitably down the glacier with no steering capability.

SCHOENBAUM: But you didn't regard it really as over until--

DEAN RUSK: Oh no, not until they announced it. You see, toward the end of the week time was such a factor that we or the Soviets tended to resort to public statements to each other in order to save time, because sending messages through embassies meant translations and coding and decoding and all that stuff. So I think Khrushchev's final announcement was simply a public statement.

RICHARD RUSK: Is that why Khrushchev resorted to John [Alfred] Scali in the third party channel to get a very important message to the President?

DEAN RUSK: I don't know exactly. John Scali's contact was a man in the Soviet embassy that we considered to be a member of the KGB [Komitet Gosudarstvennoye Bezopastnosti (Soviet State Security Committee)]. It was rather useful to us to have that additional channel, KGB channel, because that tended to confirm the validity of what Khrushchev was saying to us through official channels. John Scali handled that very well, I might say. He waited a year before he wrote a story on it, at our request. (laughter)

RICHARD RUSK: How about that personal letter from Khrushchev to JFK? It's sort of a rambling thing that very much laid out his own fears.

DEAN RUSK: Well, along about Thursday, I think it was, President Kennedy got a long message from Khrushchev which seemed to us clearly to have been written personally by Khrushchev. It bothered us a bit because it was distraught, emotional, and it seemed to us the old fellow might be losing his cool in Moscow. Then the next day we got another long message which was clearly a collected message from Moscow, Foreign Ministry kind of message, State Department kind of message. The second letter raised the red herring of the missiles in Turkey. We looked at these two letters and, although most people think that it was Bobby Kennedy, it was Llewellyn Thompson who came up with the idea of ignoring the second letter and picking up a phrase that was in the first letter, that held open the possibility of taking the missiles out in exchange for an assurance not to attack Cuba. We replied to the first letter and ignored the second one. That proved to be a useful thing to do.

RICHARD RUSK: You recall Thompson as coming up with that idea first, not Kennedy?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah, in our private talks. But then Bobby Kennedy was aware of the idea, and it might have been Bobby Kennedy who brought it up at the meeting.

RICHARD RUSK: Abel says in his book that Khrushchev's letter read like "the nightmare and outcry of a frightened man." How do you remember the letter? I believe Cohen thought you saw some reason for hope in that letter, at least Khrushchev was taking the issue seriously.

DEAN RUSK: The thing that concerned us about it was that it was a letter that was distraught and emotional. I would not use the word fright because maybe he was frightened in the sense that everybody realized what an abyss we were looking over. He did have in it a sentence or two that sort of held open the possibility that the missiles might be removed if there was an assurance that we would not attack Cuba. We picked up on that, expanded it, and attributing the idea to him, went back to him on that. And that turned out to be the thing that unlocked the--

RICHARD RUSK: In your response, do you relate credit for the swap of the missiles for the pledge not to invade to Khrushchev?

DEAN RUSK: Well, we picked up his own words.

SCHOENBAUM: That letter must be important.

DEAN RUSK: I think that letter has not been made public.

RICHARD RUSK: That is true.

SCHOENBAUM: The Khrushchev letter?

DEAN RUSK: Yes, the first one.

SCHOENBAUM: Is that classified?

DEAN RUSK: I think it still is.

SCHOENBAUM: Was that in Russian or in English?

DEAN RUSK: It came into us in Russian but we translated it.

SCHOENBAUM: Did someone like Llewellyn Thompson look over the Russian to make sure the translation was correct?

DEAN RUSK: We had a very expert Russian interpreter in the Department.

SCHOENBAUM: So that came into the Department, the State Department?

DEAN RUSK: Yes, that's right. Well it came in first to the White House, the message center. It came through our code room and went immediately to the White House, so that the White House got it as soon as I did.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, apparently John Kennedy became quite upset over the fact that we still had missiles in Turkey, and actually he had made his decision on those missiles to remove them two months prior to the missile crisis.

DEAN RUSK: Much earlier than that. When Kennedy took office, he had in front of him a very negative report from the Congressional Joint Atomic Energy Committee about the missiles in Turkey and Italy. These Jupiter missiles were first generation, medium-ranged, missiles. They clearly were not only obsolete, we even joked about wondering where they would go if we fired them. (laughter) They also were vulnerable, both in Turkey and in Italy. Any casual traveler along the highway with a .22 caliber rifle could travel along the public highway and shoot holes in these missiles and put them out of action. So the Joint Atomic Energy Committee was very negative about the deployment of these missiles.

Kennedy and I discussed the matter and we decided that we ought to move to get these missiles out. I went to a Foreign Ministers' meeting in Ankara, Turkey in the spring of '61, and in a walk in the garden with their Foreign Minister one night, just the two of us, I raised this question with him. He expressed great concern. He said that they had just gotten through the Turkish

Parliament the appropriations for the Turkish side of the cost of putting those missiles in, and it would be very embarrassing to them to have to go back to the Parliament and say that they were going to take them out. Secondly, he that it would have a very serious effect on morale in the southern flank of NATO if these missiles were taken out without something to substitute for them, like Polaris submarines in the Mediterranean. Well, Polaris submarines were not going to be available until the spring of '63. I came on home and talked this over fully with President Kennedy and he understood. And he regretted any idea of delay, but nevertheless he understood the Turkish point of view. So the idea that he blew his top, at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis that they had not already been taken out is phony because he knew perfectly well why they were not already out.

RICHARD RUSK: This was a decision that you and John Kennedy took not to renew those missiles back when he earlier wanted to?

DEAN RUSK: Well, we had no way of--we could not really take them out unilaterally. This was, among other things, a NATO question; it had to be taken up in NATO. Clearly, he regretted the fact that the missiles were still in Turkey because had we had to strike the missile sites in Cuba, and the Russians were looking for a tit-for-tat kind of retaliation, these missiles in Turkey would have been the first object. So Kennedy had them remove the warheads from the missiles in Turkey during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

RICHARD RUSK: Was that communicated to the Soviet government?

DEAN RUSK: Well, we knew they would know about it. But that point was greatly exaggerated in the program "The Missiles of October."

RICHARD RUSK: And in all the accounts since then.

DEAN RUSK: Kennedy never spoke one word of rebuke to me that the missiles had not already been taken out, because he knew why they were not out.

RICHARD RUSK: He was in, or he made the decision not to go ahead and delay in taking those out until the other things worked themselves out?

DEAN RUSK: He understood the reasons why the Turks would not want these missiles out until Polaris submarines became available.

SCHOENBAUM: Was there a decision on his part to wait until Polaris submarines became available?

DEAN RUSK: It did not turn just on a decision of Kennedy. This was a Turkish matter, a NATO matter; there were several involved. You see, not only were we taking the Jupiters out of Turkey and Italy, the Thors were being taken out by the British because they were obsolete too. You see, the Eisenhower administration had built these missiles, the medium-range missiles and did not know what to do with them. They could not be based in the United States; they would not reach the Soviet Union; and so they managed to persuade the Turks and the Italians to accept

some of these in their countries. But the Joint Atomic Energy Committee was very critical of their deployment in those two countries.

SCHOENBAUM: Right from the beginning?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. And Kennedy was very much aware of that when he became President.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, according to the first Rostow-Nitze study that claims John Kennedy and his advisers exaggerated Soviet ability and willingness to start a nuclear war from the Cuban missiles, this is Cohen's particular thesis. He does refer to the study. Do you recall the study?

DEAN RUSK: Not particularly. The important thing about the Cuban Missile Crisis was that we had overwhelming conventional superiority in the area of Cuba, so the nuclear decision was in Khrushchev's hands. Now, the situation would be reversed if they seized Berlin, where they had the overwhelming conventional superiority.

RICHARD RUSK: I have a general question here. Some observers have called the Cuban Missile Crisis "John Kennedy's finest hour." Critics of the thing have claimed that it was an avoidable crisis and that Kennedy's earlier mistakes with the Bay of Pigs and other things lead directly to it. How would you assess this overall? Do you think of it as Kennedy's finest moment?

DEAN RUSK: I personally think that the Cuban Missile Crisis was the most dangerous single crisis the world has ever seen. The two nuclear powers were at each other's throats: not through satellites or proxies. We were at each other's throats directly. The fact that we came through it should be recalled, if you like, as a triumph, both for the United States and the Soviet Union, to come through it without a major explosion. When a crisis like this is resolved without violence, then it is always easy for people to say, "Well, was this trip worth it after all? Was this trip really necessary?" So it is tempting for some of the bastards who like to approach things from that point of view to take that view. After all, Kennedy did not put the goddamn missiles in Cuba. We did not start the Cuban Missile Crisis. This was done by Mr. Khrushchev. I don't, myself, agree with those who want to blame President Kennedy for a crisis that need not have happened. Sure it need not have happened. Khrushchev didn't have to put the missiles in Cuba!

RICHARD RUSK: What is the situation today with Cuba and with respect to the Soviet military build-up? I think I recall during the Carter administration that there was talk about Soviet troops in Cuba?

DEAN RUSK: Well, there was a phony flap during the Carter administration over a so-called Soviet brigade in Cuba. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Soviets built up their forces to about 35,000 troops. They were troops who were there to man and to protect those missile sites, even against Castro. There is no way the Soviets were going to turn over to Castro any capability of firing these missiles. When the missiles were removed, most of those Russian troops went home. Now, they have three battalions down there. One of them is specifically there to guard and operate a sensitive listening station, listening to American radio broadcasts and communications and things of that sort. But they aren't going anywhere. I think that flap that grew up during the

Carter administration was pretty phony, myself.

RICHARD RUSK: Are there Soviet offensive weapons there now? Ones that could carry bombs?

DEAN RUSK: I suppose. Well any plane, including an old fashioned passenger plane can carry a nuclear weapon. All you have to do is kick it out the door. In that sense, I suppose they have some capability there. The strategic situation has changed in one very important aspect since 1962: the Soviets now have a substantial number of submarines in the Atlantic, which they did not have in 1962, which could fire missiles into the U.S. from relatively close range. I think the psychological and political aspects of having long-range bombers in Cuba, or medium to intermediate missiles, looked very different in 1962 than it might look in 1984, although I suspect if they put such missiles back there we would still have a hell of a crisis.

RICHARD RUSK: It is interesting that Robert McNamara's initial reaction to all this was that, strategically, it was not all that important, and in any case had the Soviets--

DEAN RUSK: No, in boxing the compass, which we were all doing, McNamara pointed out that the Soviets had a lot of missiles in the Soviet Union that could reach the U.S. Therefore, from that point of view this isn't all that big a deal.

RICHARD RUSK: He was boxing the compass at that point?

DEAN RUSK: Sure. But he also pointed out that the military importance of these missiles would be that they could knock out site bases with a minimum of advanced warning.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you care to discuss [Anastas Ivanovich] Mikoyan's trip to Cuba right in the aftermath of Khrushchev's decision to take the missiles out, and his comments to you having made the trip back to Washington?

DEAN RUSK: Mikoyan, who was the last of the old Bolsheviks in the Soviet government--

RICHARD RUSK: Not quite. They're still there.

DEAN RUSK: No. I am talking about the first-generation old Bolsheviks: the real old Bolsheviks. He went down to Cuba just after the Cuban Missile Crisis to apparently try to pacify Fidel [Ruz] Castro, because Castro was furious with the Russians and us and everybody else over the Cuban missiles. We thought he was staying down there a long time. He was down there almost two weeks. His own wife died in Moscow and he did not even go back for her funeral. On his way home he came through Washington. He said--and I forget to whom he said this--"You know, that fellow is crazy, that fellow Castro. He kept me waiting there for ten days without seeing me, and I finally told him if he did not see me the next morning I was going home and he would be sorry. He finally saw me. You know the guy is crazy." But then, among other things he said on that occasion, and I was present for this, was that, "You Americans must understand what Cuba means to us old Bolsheviks. We have been waiting all our lives for a country to go communist without the Red Army, and it happened in Cuba. And it makes us feel like boys

again."

SCHOENBAUM: Did he use the word "old Bolsheviks?"

DEAN RUSK: Yeah.

RICHARD RUSK: That is a pretty good paraphrase of what he said?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah.

RICHARD RUSK: That never made the press.

SCHOENBAUM: What kind of a nan was Mikoyan? Was he that joking usually, or was he the dour--

DEAN RUSK: He was a man of the world. He was fairly sophisticated. He was a dedicated Bolshevik, no doubt about that.

RICHARD RUSK: It seems like one of the real heroes of this crisis, if there were heroes, at least someone who gave or turned in a fine performance, when you excuse or overlook his initial deployment of these missiles in Cuba, was Nikita Khrushchev. He too was under enormous pressure, (unintelligible). And yet he took the actions that had to be taken to defuse this thing.

DEAN RUSK: I think that you're right. Khrushchev managed at the end to keep his own cool and make a sensible decision. I suspect that the entire episode of the Cuban missiles, putting them in, then taking them out under those circumstances, helped to undermine his position and contributed to his eventual overthrow. When he was in power, he was in power; he was in charge. He was unpredictable and impulsive, and sometimes took unexpected actions for the good, as well as for the bad. For example, he turned the key that unlocked the Test Ban Treaty of 1963 on the question of whether it would be a comprehensive treaty or whether it would be limited to the atmosphere out of space and under water and omit underground tests. While the last three Soviet leaders have been old and ill, policy tends to sink into the bureaucracy and gets to be a committee function over there. When the leadership is genuinely collective, you see some of the sociology of any committee, wherever you find them, here or anywhere else. You find a much higher degree of inertia, and a much higher degree of ideological dogmatism. My own way of expressing that is that my hunch is that had there been a collective leadership in '61 and '62, they would not have put the missiles in Cuba, but had they put them in Cuba, they would not have taken them out. That is the difference between a collective leadership and an individual, to me.

SCHOENBAUM: At that time were there other negotiations going on? Were the Test Ban negotiations going on at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis, or did they start seriously after that?

DEAN RUSK: No, they had started by then.

SCHOENBAUM: Did the Cuban Missile Crisis have an effect on the spectrum of Russian-American relations?

DEAN RUSK: I think both we and Moscow came away from the Cuban Missile Crisis a little sobered, prudent. And on our side President Kennedy and Vice President Johnson, the Secretary of State and Defense, and a few other, took the view that it was just too late in history for the two nuclear superpowers to pursue a policy of total hostility across the board, and that we ought to probe each other to see if we could find points of agreement, on large matters or small, that would help to broaden the base of common interest in preventing nuclear war and reduce the range of issues on which violence might occur. We set in motion things that produced the Test Ban Treaty of 1963; a Civil Air agreement providing flights between Washington and Moscow, a Consular Agreement which made it somewhat easier for us to give better protection to Americans traveling in the Soviet Union, two important outer space treaties, a Nonproliferation Treaty regarding nuclear weapons on which we and the Soviets worked very closely together, in full agreement. In the aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis we tried to pick up some of the pieces and make some headway on several points. Now it is also true, in retrospect, that shortly after the Cuban Missile Crisis the Soviet leadership must have made their decisions to build up their missile forces, if you allow for such things as time they had taken for decisions, the lead time in developing such weapons, manufacturing and deploying them, and so forth. My hunch is that a good bit of the Russian buildup we saw in the seventies came from decisions taken shortly after the Cuban Missile Crisis. And one of the senior Russians said to John J. McCloy in New York just after the Cuban Missile Crisis, "Well, Mr. McCloy, you got away with it this time, but you will never get away with it again." I have no doubt that the missile crisis spurred them to build up their missile forces.

SCHOENBAUM: Do you think building up their navy also had something to do with it?

DEAN RUSK: Oh probably not so much that, because anything related to Cuba--We have such overwhelming power that their navy is more or less irrelevant to Cuba if things really came push to shove.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, I want to get one or two things left on my list straight. What about the reaction and the role of the press during this crisis? It took Scotty [James B. ] Reston five days to latch onto it. When he did, he held onto the story to some extent. You personally dealt with the press on a number of occasions. How would you assess their performance?

DEAN RUSK: Following the President's television speech to the nation, I personally would have a background meeting with the press corps covering the Department of State. That was a very special week in terms of the press, because they were tired, scared, haggard, and they more or less were leaning on me for support. And my necessity for supporting them helped to support myself. That was a relatively tame press corps. The press, in general, handled that crisis very well. There was not a lot of investigative reporting kind of motivation, and reaching out for the offbeat kind of thing to make a big deal out of, and things of that sort. I met with the press practically every day during that week.

RICHARD RUSK: What about U Thant's initiative in the United Nations to more or less pull

back from this Quarantine idea? That was his recommendation to us and also to the Soviets, to just sort of mutually disengage. And he did not come out endorsing the Quarantine, or play a major role. How would you assess his initiative and the United Nations in this crisis?

DEAN RUSK: Well U Thant was not my favorite Secretary General. Depending upon how the situation developed, it still might have been possible that the U.N. channel, including U Thant, might have been useful, depending on what President Kennedy decided he wanted to do. We tried not to offend U Thant during that business, but he was not able to produce. I think the crisis was directly resolved between Washington and Moscow. Although, it was very important, in my judgment, that the U.N. Security Council earned its pay for a long time to come just by being there during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

SCHOENBAUM: I want to ask you about Bobby Kennedy again. George Ball, in his memoirs, says Bobby Kennedy--that he had his differences with Bobby Kennedy, that Bobby Kennedy handled his role well. You said he was emotional. What way was he emotional? And what ways did he exhibit his emotions?

DEAN RUSK: Such things as, "My brother is not going to lash out in an American-made Pearl Harbor attack."

RICHARD RUSK: His brother would not be the Tojo of the 1960s?

DEAN RUSK: Not be the Tojo of the 1960s. Bobby's role was not anything near the Chairman of the Board thing he was pictured as having in the "Missiles of October." This program, "Missiles of October" was based pretty much on Bobby's own book *Thirteen Days*, which by the way was a posthumous book. I do not know who edited Bobby Kennedy's notes before it was published, but I suspect it was Ted Sorenson. But we do not know that *Thirteen Days* represents exactly what Bobby Kennedy would have said had he been alive and done it himself. I do not recall personal antagonisms and bitterness within EXCOM. There were differences of view, but we did not shout at each other. The discussions were relatively calm, and these differences of view were not translated into personal animosities, or a struggle for one's own pad, and things like that. The seriousness of the crisis kept us all pretty discrete.

SCHOENBAUM: What about George Ball's role? What was his role?

DEAN RUSK: We talked over a great deal. He was a very valuable fellow to have around. His counsel was always pretty calm and judicious. I do not know how many meetings he might have sat in for me while I was meeting my public appointments, but he was my alter ego during that period. He was a valuable fellow to have around.

RICHARD RUSK: Who fired the SAM [Surface to Air Missile] that knocked down the U-2? Would that have been a Soviet technician?

DEAN RUSK: I have seen a rumor that it was Castro himself who pulled the trigger on that SAM. Anyhow, when that happened, that excited a good many people in Washington. But Kennedy decided to keep his eye on the main ball game, not to have to shooting down of that U-

2 throw us completely off-kilter as far as our plans and scenarios. Khrushchev reciprocated in a way. We had a plane based in Alaska that made a flight to the North Pole for air sampling and weather reporting and things like that, and apparently when it made its turn to the North Pole to come home, it got the wrong star or something in its instruments, and the pilot found himself down over Siberia.

SCHOENBAUM: During that time?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah, right in the middle of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Fortunately, the pilot had good sense to get on his radio, and in clear English call back to his base and say, "Hey, I think I am lost. I think I may be over Siberia, for Christ sake; tell me how to get home." And he kept chattering to his own base. The Soviets put up some fighters. But they could hear him, and they apparently decided he wasn't there to drop any bombs or anything and they did not shoot him down. Kennedy was pretty annoyed that something like that could happen right in the middle of such a crisis.

RICHARD RUSK: His comment was, "Well, I guess there was always a so-and-so who does not get the word."

DEAN RUSK: That was simply a navigational error made by the pilot of that plane.

RICHARD RUSK: At one point, to keep the thing secret a whole bunch of you climbed into one guy's limousine to get over to the White House. Were you a part of that crowd?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. And I think we went to the Treasury Department and used the tunnel from the Treasury Department over to the White House. There is a tunnel connecting the Treasury Department to the White House. I think we had about eight of us.

SCHOENBAUM: There is a tunnel between the Treasury Building and the White House?

DEAN RUSK: Yes, an underground tunnel.

SCHOENBAUM: Who guards that tunnel?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, it is guarded. We tried to avoid a premature speculation of a great crisis and panic, and all sorts of curiosity, and things of that sort. Now, I have speculated as to what might have happened had there been time for a general public debate on this matter at that period. It is possible that in a public debate a good deal of disarray might have been exposed to the Soviet Union. People would be saying that, "Well after all they do have missiles in the Soviet Union that could hit the U.S." There might have been demonstrations here and there, and various peace groups. But there simply was not any time for that to develop, and it was over before that kind of thing could happen. I do not know what the impact upon the whole thing might have been had there been sweeping public debate throughout the country here on the issues involved, and what the attitudes in the Congress would have been.

RICHARD RUSK: Or had the crisis developed over a period of months.

DEAN RUSK: There is one element that I would like to make a brief comment on. About two hours before Kennedy went on TV to give his speech, he called in about thirty of the leaders of Congress to the Cabinet Room at the White House to tell them about it. Now, that was the first time most of those senators and congressmen had heard about the missiles, because we were trying to keep it very quiet. The facts were pretty shocking to them. I remember one old senator just groaned and fell over on the table with his head on his hands and stayed there for a while. This was not, in my judgment, consultation because these senators and congressmen had had no time to think about it, reflect upon it. We'd had a week to think about it. They had had no time to do that, or to talk things over with each other or that kind of thing. At the beginning of the meeting when it came their time to talk, some of the senators, Bill [James William] Fulbright, Richard [Brevard] Russell [Jr.], pressed very hard for an immediate strike on Cuba. And one very important point came up in that meeting: Despite the fact that the action to be taken by President Kennedy would create such a grave crisis, no one in the room suggested that he come to Congress for any kind of authorization. As a matter of fact, one senator said to me on the way out of the room, "Thank God I am not the President of the United States." The more serious the crisis, the greater are the powers of the President in a situation of that sort. No one there raised any question about whether President Kennedy had the constitutional authority to do what he was doing all by himself and without action by Congress.

RICHARD RUSK: Was that group itself supportive of the President's decision?

DEAN RUSK: Oh yes, they supported him when we all broke up and went home and Kennedy made his speech. Fulbright and Russell did not get up on the public hustings and criticize the President. Everybody had their fingers crossed.

SCHOENBAUM: Who was the old senator?

DEAN RUSK: He was a senior Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee. I'll think of his name. I mentioned that I wanted to make the point that this is not but I would call a consultation. The only real question before the senators and congressmen at that meeting, the only real question, was "Are you going to support your country in this moment of crisis?" That is not the kind of question that ought to be put to the Congress under those circumstances. We ought to have a much better way of consulting between the President and the leadership of Congress on such issues, and in between crises: to meet regularly once a month at least, just to try to maintain some kind of consensus about--

RICHARD RUSK: You're not saying that Kennedy should have taken congressional leadership into his counsel during that week?

DEAN RUSK: I do not think that he should have consulted people in Congress before he himself had decided what he thought we ought to do. Because if you just go to Congress with just a question, they would be all over the place: "Oh my God!" and that kind of thing. A President, in consulting Congress, needs to know what he, the President, thinks we ought to do. I would not have advised consulting the Congress before at least that Saturday morning when he made his final decision.

RICHARD RUSK: So de Gaulle's question to Dean Acheson at time that Acheson first showed up at his doorstep with Kennedy's decision was, "Are you informing me or are you consulting me?" Acheson told him point blank that, "I am informing you."

DEAN RUSK: That's right.

RICHARD RUSK: De Gaulle himself made the statement that, "In a situation like this, I prefer to be informed."

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. It was not until the second term of President Eisenhower that the Soviets had a substantial capability of unloading a lot of nuclear weapons on the U.S. directly. So that beginning with Eisenhower's second term, a President has had to think of something that other Presidents have never had to think of in their lives: that is the possibility of the virtual destruction of the U.S. Dean Acheson had never served as Secretary of State under those conditions. He tended to discount the nuclear side of things, because in his period we had a virtual monopoly in nuclear weapons.

SCHOENBAUM: To what extent did you have input on Kennedy's speech? The decision was made on Saturday and then the speech was on Monday. What happened in between?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, we worked on that very hard. Ted Sorensen took the lead in writing the speech because he was used to JFK cadences and ways of saying things. That was a very carefully constructed speech, and I worked with Ted Sorenson directly on it.

SCHOENBAUM: The two of you primarily?

DEAN RUSK: There was McGeorge Bundy and Bob McNamara. But that was a hell of an important speech.

RICHARD RUSK: Can you think of anything else you can say about the Cuban Missile Crisis?

DEAN RUSK: I think at the time, we and the Soviets left that crisis with some sense that we ought to do what we can to prevent such crises because they are just too damned dangerous. But whether that same sense moves automatically from hand to hand, as people in government change, is a big question. I would hope that President [Ronald Wilson] Reagan and Mr. [Konstantin Ustinovich] Chernenko would be infused with that same idea. But I cannot be sure of it because these things do not move automatically from hand to hand.

SCHOENBAUM: Do you think the Cuban Missile Crisis was the origin of detente or at least provided the impetus for the detente?

RICHARD RUSK: Some people have called this a watershed in American-Soviet relations.

DEAN RUSK: Well, it was a very strong reminder that we had better--You see, we and the Soviets do share massive common interests in preventing an all-out nuclear war. The Soviet

leaders have no more interest in destroying Mother Russia than our leaders have in destroying the United States. To me, all that the word detente means is the continuing and persistent search for points of agreement, on large matters or small, that can steadily over time build up the threads of common interest and reduce the range of issues in which violence can occur. For example, in the Nixon years, early in the Administration, we had a new Four Power Agreement in Berlin: Russia, France, Britain, and the United States. That was a very useful agreement because it has tended to reduce the role of Berlin as a flashpoint of possible violence among the great powers. We ought to keep working on it. I would compare it to the advance of infantry of a broad front: move where you can. If you find an obstacle that is more difficult, you take more time with it, but you keep moving; you move where you can. Whatever we think of the Russians or they think of us, somehow at the end of the day we and they have to inhabit this speck of dust in the universe.

SCHOENBAUM: This notion of detente being in favor or out of favor, you just think that is missing the question?

DEAN RUSK: We should not deal with this kind of thing on the basis of slogans. Is it detente or is it cold war? Both elements have been a part of our relations with the Soviet Union since 1945.

SCHOENBAUM: There is a philosophical problem that many Presidents have wrestled with about whether things should be connected. In other words, because the Russians are in Afghanistan, should we shut out all kinds of things including the Olympic Games and everything else, or whether you should take things--well, I guess your infantry analogy: whether things should be severable.

DEAN RUSK: I am pretty skeptical generally about the notion of linkages, but sometimes things get linked whether you want them to be or not. For example, on a certain Wednesday morning in August 1968, we and the Russians were all set to make a simultaneous and identical announcement in Washington and Moscow that T.B.T would shortly go to Leningrad to open what later came to be known as the SALT [Strategic Arms Limitations Treaty] talks. The trouble is that the very Tuesday night before that Wednesday morning, the Soviet forces marched into Czechoslovakia. I had to call the Soviet ambassador in Washington and insist that he call Moscow that same night and tell him not to make that joint announcement the next day. Had they marched into Czechoslovakia, and we would come out the next day with that announcement, that would have been taken right around the world as our approbation or condemnation or endorsement of the Soviet march into Czechoslovakia. Then a few years later, any chance of getting Senate approval of the SALT II Treaty was destroyed when Soviet forces marched into Afghanistan. Some things get politically linked whether you want them to or not; it is just part of the process. I think we ought to be careful of it because you start linking things, then you are faced with the idea of an overall settlement of all the differences between us and the Soviet Union. That kind of thing is impossible.

RICHARD RUSK: Harold Macmillan, in his role in the Cuban Missile Crisis: I understand that he was quite supportive from the beginning. The British press and the British public were somewhat more reserved about it.

DEAN RUSK: There was some skepticism in Britain until we released the photos. I think British influence on releasing the photos was important to Kennedy. You see, there was some people in the intelligence community who did not want to release the photos because they did not want to tell the Russians what our capabilities were. But when we were faced with a problem, Kennedy quite wisely decided that that kind of intelligence consideration was relatively in important compared to the overall problem of credibility, and so he brushed that advice aside and released them. The present administration has that problem with Central America. They have not made a strong, factual case on what Nicaragua and Cuba are doing in El Salvador. One of the reasons they give me is that they do not want to jeopardize intelligence sources. So if they go into the World Court with only the facts that they've put out thus far, they have got a weak case. But if they aren't willing to make a strong, factual case, or are unable to, then the administration is going to be tempted to thumb its nose at the World Court and say, "To hell with you."

There was a NATO Foreign Ministers meeting in Washington, and I made arrangements with two of these foreign ministers to go out to visit SAC headquarters. They went out there and went underground and saw all the stuff, and when they got back they came through Washington. And I asked them, "What was your impression of what you saw?" They looked at each other and smiled a bit, and they said, "We discussed that on our trip home, and we agreed that when we saw so much power, we marveled at the grandeur of American power." To me there is something quite moving about the fact that the U.S., in the broad, has acted as well as it has in this postwar period.

END OF SIDE 2