

Dean Rusk Oral History Collection
Rusk WWWW: Part 1 of 2
Dean Rusk interviewed by Richard Rusk
1986 January

The complete interview also includes Rusk XXXXX: Part 2.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, we're asking for the reaction of Dean Acheson and Harry Truman to your famous Slavic Manchukuo speech on China Policy.

DEAN RUSK: Well, I met with Dean Acheson within a day or two after making that speech and he did not scold me. He went over the speech and agreed that I'd been saying in much terser language what we'd been saying all along in longer, more complicated language. The thing about it that I think he regretted was that he was about to go up to the Capitol Hill for the MacArthur hearings, and the speech would undoubtedly provoke some additional questions in the Senate which he could do without. That was the inconvenience of the speech. Now there was a somewhat sharper reaction from White House staff people. I forget which ones they were actually.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, despite the fact that in that speech you were restating what had been said many times in the past, was there not also a change of policy implying at least that we were taking a stiffer stance towards the Chinese Communists? After all, the Korean war was in full force, I believe, at the time of that speech. I mean, weren't you also inferring that the recognition of the People's Republic was no longer possible, that we would defend and support Chiang Kai-shek and Formosa, and that in a sense it did involve us in this Chinese Civil War to some extent? And is it not fair to--

DEAN RUSK: Well, the Chinese had involved themselves in Korea. And that itself postponed indefinitely any possibility of our recognition of the People's Republic. As I indicated on an earlier tape, these people in Peking were blasting us from the housetops all over the world, day after day, and I thought the time had come to sass back a bit. And there was an element of propaganda in that speech, taunting the Chinese about their masters, the Soviet Union, appealing to Chinese pride on that particular point.

RICHARD RUSK: Yeah. Did that speech and that kind of approach, in which you were deliberately trying to encourage the Chinese, to shame them away from such a close alignment with the Soviet Union and encourage them to act more Chinese, with that kind of rhetoric in that speech and other speeches made during those years, were we not in a sense misleading the American people? Did it contribute to the confusion that developed over the Asian Policy? Any regrets about that speech from that point of view?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I saw no prospect under those conditions that our relations with the People's Republic would improve. And this speech in part, represented that. It also, I think, quieted some of the conservative critics of the administration who had taken up the cause of

China as a partisan matter. And from that point of view it seemed to settle down some of the domestic political aspects of the matter in Congress even though there was a considerable outcry about it in the news media. But the news media always are lying in wait for anything that seems to be said in different wording. And they're just ready to seize, in a moment's notice, on anything that sounds like a change in policy or which they can make sound like some change in policy. And that must have been a sort of a slow period as far as news was concerned because they made much too much of a speech made by an Assistant Secretary of State. I wish they'd paid more attention to a lot of the other speeches I've made. (laughter) On something like that speech, people poring over it later, particularly in academia, tend to write in all sorts of complicated, devious, possible explanations which are simply not in my mind. My thoughts were relatively simple and they were set forth in that speech. This idea that somehow we'd been trying to woo Peking might have come from the distance we'd put between ourselves and the Chiang Kai-shek regime on Taiwan, but if we were wooing them, people in Peking just kissed, kicked us in the butt. And that's not conducive to any further wooing for a time, (laughter) And so, no, I think it's a mistake to try and read all sorts of complicated things into a speech like that. I just was asked to make a speech. I made it. My motives were relatively simple. And all these attempts to weave all sorts of webs of complication into it, I think, are beside the point. Very often what turns out to be important about a speech is not what was said or what the speaker had in mind but interpretations that are put upon it by others, very much like the Dean Acheson speech in which he left Korea out of our defense perimeter in the Pacific. It was not what he said, but how it was interpreted that came to be of some importance. One further comment about that speech as far as Harry Truman was concerned. If Harry Truman had opened himself up and addressed himself to the subject, with his feisty spirit and "Give 'em hell" attitude, he would have made a speech even stronger than the one that I made. (laughter) Compared to what Harry Truman might have said, this was a temperate speech.

RICHARD RUSK: What about the truce talks at Panmunjom? What was your position in respect to those talks?

DEAN RUSK: Well, to begin with, I've always felt that serious negotiations have to be confidential in nature even though the results of negotiations must be made public. We cannot have secret agreements resulting from negotiations. Now that was true at Panmunjom. After all, the troops were still there on the line shooting at each other, and we did not want to give any impression to the other side that if they just resumed major military operations that somehow we would collapse. But then, there are times when your entire case is not worked out at the very beginning of such negotiations, that you have to make adjustments along the way depending upon the attitudes of the other side. But in any event, we kept those cards pretty closely held during those discussions and it took a long time to eventually work them out. As a matter of fact, they weren't finally worked out until the Eisenhower administration.

RICHARD RUSK: Were you under some pressure to make the American side known to the public?

DEAN RUSK: Well, in negotiations we're always under considerable pressure, part of it in Congress, but a lot of it from the press. The press uses every technique known to man to try to discover and make public the hold cards you're using in negotiations. The ordinary espionage is

not nearly as competent in digging out such information as our own press people. (laughter) You know, that's a major problem for us in our kind of system.

RICHARD RUSK: You felt the need at one point to reassure the congressmen and the senators that we simply could not make our position known, though.

DEAN RUSK: Yes, I think the members of Congress pretty much understood that, and the Congress is usually pretty good about keeping their mouths shut in the course of such negotiations. This is particularly true of the House Committee. It had a very great tradition of keeping quiet about discreet information which you shared with them. And the Senate was a little less rigorous in that matter, but nevertheless, even in the Senate they respect the importance of confidential negotiations. Now we didn't always tell the Congress well in advance any particular move that we might be thinking of as a possible move in the future. Again, you expose your hold card and--It's like playing poker with your hold card exposed. You give away an awful lot to the other side of the table when you do that. Although we knew that the North Koreans and the Chinese had decided that they would come to the table and talk, that's a very different thing from having them say the things which could make an agreement possible. During the negotiations we had to maintain a military position which would make it unattractive for the Chinese and the North Koreans to simply undertake major military operations aimed at driving us out of the peninsula. And they thought that they could get away with it. They might well have just scorned the talks and tried to get what they want by military means. And so we had to maintain a strong military position during the Panmunjon talks. As far as allies were concerned, our general posture was that we were negotiating to end the Korean war on the basis of the status quo ante. And our allies accepted that central position, central point. I think the fact that Douglas MacArthur was not conducting the negotiations helped to keep them more or less calm, and had he been conducting the negotiations there would have been great nervousness on the part of the Allies. But no, I don't recall that we had much difficulty with our allies during the Panmunjom talks.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, in response to your review of John Foster Dulles' *Life* magazine article that he sent to you just before becoming Secretary of State, do you have an additional comment on the subject of Dulles' views and your reaction to his views?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I'd like to comment on one aspect of it. When we, when President Truman intruded the Seventh Fleet fleet between Taiwan and the mainland, which was theoretically a neutral position. But given the military forces available to the two sides, it was an action very much in favor of the people in Taiwan. If you have a Great Dane and a Pekingese growling at each other and you put them both on a leash, it's the Pekingese that comes out with the better end of it.

RICHARD RUSK: The Great Dane.

DEAN RUSK: No, the Pekingese because the Great Dane could chew up the Pekingese.

RICHARD RUSK: Both on a leash you say. Oh, I got you.

DEAN RUSK: Yeah, you put them both on a leash. Now, a little amusing thing was that when the Eisenhower administration came in, at one point they made a big point of unleashing Taiwan, of taking the Seventh Fleet out of the straits there. Well, that was simply laughable because Taiwan had no capacity whatever for landing on the mainland and making a military advance into the mainland. But the Eisenhower administration made quite a fanfare out of unleashing Chiang Kai-shek, (laughter) He wasn't going anywhere. I mean--

RICHARD RUSK: Probably the last one who wanted to go anywhere.

DEAN RUSK: Again, if the Great Dane and the Pekingese were both on a leash and you took the leash off of both of them, the Pekingese is not going to be the one to go after the Great Dane. This idea of the competence of the Chinese Nationalist forces was something about which a lot of myth grew up. I remember one of our American generals--I forget his name now--had been on a visit to Taiwan. And he came back and told me about a military demonstration which Chiang Kai-shek's forces had put on for him. They were in the field and the Chinese artillery were told by their Chinese commander to hit a particular tree out there about a thousand yards away. And the artillery opened fire and came very close to it. It did, in fact, hit it. So this American general who was there observing, pointed to another tree about five hundred yards away over in another direction and suggested that they hit that one. They couldn't do it. (laughter)

RICHARD RUSK: Is that right?

DEAN RUSK: They had been practicing on that particular tree, (laughter) And they had it in pretty good shape. (laughter) They couldn't change their fire to another tree a few hundred yards away. (laughter)

RICHARD RUSK: Oh, that's funny!

[break in recording]

RICHARD RUSK: Okay go ahead. We're now talking about an article that Chester [Bliss] Bowles had sent you, Pop. This would have been the late 1950s, I guess.

DEAN RUSK: Well one curious thing that most people would simply brush aside as a technicality was that the Charter itself referred to the Republic of China as a member and as a permanent member of the Security Council. It didn't refer to the People's Republic of China. Of course the People's Republic of China had not been declared at that point. And the Republic of China, the Chiang Kai-shek China, was one of the big five at the end of the war which was one of the victors in World War II. The argument could be made from a legal point of view that by naming the Republic of China, it was that government which was entitled to the seat in the U.N. Now, to argue the other way, you'd simply have to brush aside the fact that there was a named China in the U.N. Furthermore, during the war the Soviet Union had agreed to continue to recognize and deal with the government of the Republic of China, the Nationalist government of China.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, was it your feeling that the U.N. membership itself had to come up with a solution that would represent both sides?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I was strongly in favor of a two-Chinas approach to the U.N. seat. After all, it was unreal to have the Nationalist government of China sitting in that seat as though it were all China. That was unrealistic. But on the other hand, it was also unrealistic to seat the People's Republic of China without taking into account that there was such a place as Taiwan, with an existence recognized by many governments and with a population larger than many members of the United Nations at the time. And so I was in favor of according the theory with the facts. But again, as I point out several times, that was a solution that both Chinas strongly rejected, [interruption] I've long had a strong opposition toward biological warfare. I don't claim to be much of a scientist, but I was very much aware of the possibility that you develop these biological warfare materials, and even develop your own defenses against them, that Mother Nature could come along and cause one of these things to mutate. Then you'd turn something loose to which there was no answer, and we'd all suffer. So I've been opposed to biological warfare all along. As a matter of fact, I've been in favor of these international agreements on the subject of biological warfare, without the kind of verification that would require you to go into every test tube in every country, simply because nature itself could take the play away from you. Then there was another element in my thinking at that time and later, and that is that we ought to have, perhaps through the World Health Organization, a top international research facility in which scientists from many countries would participate doing fundamental research on defenses against biological warfare. Now, when the Rockefeller Foundation conducted its thirty-year effort to find the answer to yellow fever, it was successful in getting that answer in terms of a vaccine. But in the process, the Foundation picked up a large number of insect borne viruses which have not yet attacked the human race with any virulence, but given a mutation could do so. And the Foundation itself had its own laboratory for a long time over on the East River, later moved to Yale University, in which it was working on these various relatively unknown viruses and trying to develop vaccines to beat them if one of them got out of control by mutation. So this whole complex of biological problems has long been a matter of great interest to me, and I'm still sorry that we have not established somewhere in the world a really first-class international laboratory for the purpose of doing fundamental research in responses to any kind of biological attack on the human race and that might come down the pipe. You see, there's almost a race between Mother Nature and the human race in a good many things. Wheat rust: the wheat breeders are racing against mutating wheat rust just to keep our wheat crops going and so we ought to have much more international cooperation in that kind of research. I think I've told you the story about the new wheat rust that appeared on the North American continent in about four different places simultaneously. Well, the fact that they hit four places pretty much at the same time suggests that they had not simply come from a mutation on the North American continent but had come in from the outside. And we thought it possible that they had been blown by high altitude winds, say, from other wheat producing areas such as Siberia. Not with the idea that the Russians had deliberately done it, but that nature had done it. Well, I remember when I was at the Rockefeller Foundation, we inquired of the--

RICHARD RUSK: This was back during the sixties, Pop? This particular problem?

DEAN RUSK: During the fifties, during the fifties. Well, I remember when I was at the Rockefeller Foundation that we made some inquiries to the Russians as to whether they would be interested in some first-class exchange on wheat rust, pointing out that wheat breeders and wheat rust were in a constant race with each other. But at that time they had no interest in exchanges in that field, and one of the Russians suggested that it was because this was too close to biological warfare for them to want to get into it with us. Over the years I've had some contacts with military people who are involved in chemical warfare, biological warfare. And I must confess that they've given me a kind of a spooky feeling because those fellows think that they can handle the problem of war all by themselves: chemical weapons, biological weapons. And they get a kind of glazed look in their eyes and they go off into outer space when they talk about it. And I personally have tried to bring both these things under control because it's the kind of devastation that the human race has got to do without, somehow. In World War I we didn't use poison gas very effectively and it wasn't used at all in World War II, partly because if you'd launch poison gas not only would you get retaliation from the other side's gas weapons but your own gas could blow back on you depending on how the winds behave. And so, I think these are two methods of warfare that we ought to just abandon. Biological warfare is a rather complicated subject, because we ought to be alert to preventive research to try and be in a position to deal with any attacks, whether from another human society or from nature. And it's very hard to work on defense without getting into things which might have an offensive capability. So it's not a simple problem, but I would hope that we would go as far as we can in eliminating this kind of threat or exposure.

RICHARD RUSK: Again, your attitudes on China in the early 1960s.

DEAN RUSK: Well, it seemed clear to me that the People's Republic of China was there to stay, as far as any outside effort to knock over the regime that might be considered. On the other hand, there was always the possibility of changes within China. But whoever had the capability of bringing about changes within the mainland of China would give no thought to calling Chiang Kai-shek back to the mainland because whoever had that kind of power on the mainland would exercise it themselves. Now we did look for clues as to what the situation might be throughout China under the Mao [Tse-tung] regime. For example, we wondered whether any kind of traditional warlordism might develop in China and we found by and large that Mao Tse-tung was pretty cagey about that by continuing to rotate the regional commanders so that no one could establish an independent base of power that would not be under the control of Peking. I wondered a good deal about to what extent the communist revolution was making any impact in those large numbers of villages way out in the back country, whether the centralized approach from Peking was really touching them in any way. And that is something which the regime in Peking has worked very hard on over the years, just to consolidate its position among those hundreds of millions of people who largely had been more or less self-sufficient and independent all through the back country. I still am not sure just what the situation is about these remote villages in the back country of China. I was always in favor of the idea of having a channel of communication with the People's Republic of China. And I supported the bilateral talks that came into being, first in Geneva, then in Prague, so that we at least had a way to talk to each other, even though we might not like what we heard from each other or we could not find major points of agreement with them. You must always have communications, even with your enemy in wartime. And so I welcomed these bilateral talks we had with the People's Republic,

[interruption] Much has been said over the years about the so-called Committee of the Million claimed by the China lobby. Well, I'd be surprised if the Committee of a Million ever had in it more than a few tens of thousands of people. It was not nearly as large and as strong as it claimed to be or as some politicians feared that it was. A lot of good friends were connected with it: Congressman Walter [Henry] Judd for example, Senator Paul [Howard] Douglas of Illinois, a former professor at the University of Chicago, very able man, distinguished senator for whom I had a high regard. But he was very strongly in support of Chiang Kai-shek and opposed to the People's Republic.

RICHARD RUSK: Are there additional reasons why a two-Chinas policy was not proclaimed or advocated publicly by the government or people within the administration?

DEAN RUSK: Well I think the principal reason was that it would set off a great controversy here in the United States with the proponents of both Chinas, and we wouldn't get anywhere. So it was one of those things where it was not very attractive to take on a fight that could have no possible constructive end to it. It would be controversy, a kind of feudal controversy. We talked to the Nationalist Government at times about a two-China policy because I felt that the strategies we were using in the United Nations to keep the Nationalist Government of China in that seat would eventually run out of gas. I thought they'd run out of gas sooner than in fact they did. It was not until the [Richard Milhous] Nixon administration that we lost the vote in the U.N. And so I really thought it would be to the advantage of the Nationalist Government of China and Taiwan to have a situation in which at least they would retain their seat in the U.N. Of course in the Security Council, with the veto on such matters, there might have been some difficulty, but I think the Russians just might have come along with a two-Chinas policy if the two Chinas had accepted it. But on that matter, they were at a match. You see, the very claim of Chiang Kai-shek's government on Taiwan was rooted in the notion that the Nationalist Government was the government of all China. I don't think President [John Fitzgerald] Kennedy himself had a so called "hard line" on China. He was very much involved or very much impressed with the idea that any change in China policy would lead to a bitter controversy here in the United States. And since he did not think he had a mandate in the election--

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BEGINNING OF SIDE 2

And President Eisenhower had told Kennedy before Kennedy's inauguration that on this subject that he, Eisenhower, would oppose Kennedy, strongly and publicly. Now, it's my own impression, following my very private talk with Kennedy early in the Kennedy administration, that had Kennedy lived and been reelected in 1964 with a good majority that he would have been willing to take another look at China policy. So he wasn't--

RICHARD RUSK: Say that one more time.

DEAN RUSK: Now, it was not that John Kennedy was passionately opposed to any kind of movement towards the People's Republic of China on ideological or other terms. For example, his attitude toward [Fidel Ruz] Castro's Cuba was much harder and harsher than was his attitude toward the People's Republic of China, [interruption] The Indian-Chinese conflict along India's northeastern border during the early sixties started, I think, largely as a border dispute. The old McMahon line which had been negotiated by the British at the beginning of this century was not all that satisfactory to the later Chinese. But I myself did not believe that the Chinese would press that operation deeply into India. Among other things, they would run into hundreds of millions of Indians and they'd be buying into the desperate circumstances in which many Indians found themselves. But nevertheless, it was a pretty hot political issue at the time. And we tried to give substantial support to India both politically and in military terms. We sent them a good deal of military equipment and airlift. Our ambassador acted like a field marshall in terms of visiting the troops and making himself evident there. But had the Chinese really pressed it, and come down into Assam and moved on toward Calcutta, it could have been a pretty serious thing. Now, we did not believe that the Chinese had very many nuclear weapons at that time but had they started using what nuclear weapons they had, it could have caused a great deal of destruction. Whether we would've assisted India in replying with nuclear weapons is a question no one can answer. But I think it came out about the way that we expected it to come out. It was kind of a stalemate.

RICHARD RUSK: You anticipated from the beginning, from the opening of the conflict, that it was a border dispute and it would remain pretty much--

DEAN RUSK: That it would remain a fairly limited war as far as geography was concerned. The Indian forces up in that area on the ground did not give a very good account of themselves. They perhaps were mishandled from a strategic point of view. But also they were rather lightly equipped and at the beginning were no real match for the Chinese. But we did not see in China itself a mass mobilization of forces moving to the Indian border. And so we didn't think that this was going to go very far.

RICHARD RUSK: Yet at the time--This was the early sixties--China was seen as a real menace in Asia and legitimately so.

DEAN RUSK: Yes.

RICHARD RUSK: Are you suggesting that you really didn't see this as evidence of Chinese aggression?

DEAN RUSK: I had no thought that the Chinese were looking toward the conquest of India. After all, the Chinese have their own several hundred million people to worry about, and to take on another several hundred million down in India must have been a very unappetizing prospect for them. Because there were more people in India than the resources of India could support and I just didn't see any possible gain from the Chinese point of view in driving deeply into India. But I don't really know--

RICHARD RUSK: Were you and John Kenneth Galbraith in accord on that point? On that assessment of Chinese intentions?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, I think so, by and large. See, I was familiar with that terrain because I'd been out there during World War II and knew the terrain in which they were operating in detail. In fact, the Chinese never really seized the strategic points even within the range of their forces. But it was--

RICHARD RUSK: What was the terrain like?

DEAN RUSK: Mountainous, very difficult communications, and the Chinese had to bring their people a very long distance and feed them and supply them under the most difficult circumstances from their own point of view. Fighting forces through the Himalayas there is not a very appetizing prospect to start with. So I thought that it had, for all sorts of reasons, limited possibilities. I didn't take it as a dramatic change in the international strategic situation. Well, our support for India in that India-Chinese clash in the early sixties did improve our relations with India rather dramatically for a relatively short period. But you know, gratitude from one government to another or one nation to another is pretty thin and short-lived. And there are times when we found the Indians pretty difficult to live with. For example, they did not want to ask us for help in terms of food and things of that sort. They expected us to provide help but they expected us to provide it without their asking for it. Actually I think [Jawaharlal] Nehru's attitude toward the United States was a bit on the snobbish side: sort of the attitude that you would expect among very conservative members of some of the old Tory clubs in London. He was very high caste Hindu, and I'm not sure that he accepted us in any way as equals.

RICHARD RUSK: From the caste point of view, from the point of view of his own personal religion?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. You can look this up, but he was a member of the second highest caste of the Indian caste system, the caste just below the Brahmins. So I think there was kind of a, as I say, a snobbishness in this attitude toward the Americans. And then when you talked with Nehru, you found that you had to take into account whether he was in mood A or in mood B. If he happened to be in mood A that day, he could engage in a very lively and interesting and productive conversation. But if he was in mood B, he would simply stare out the window and you wouldn't even know that he was aware that you were even present, and it was very difficult to get through to him or to exchange any ideas with him. I once had an interesting talk with him about why they had maintained a colonial system of administration after they became independent. And he was intrigued about why I called it that. I pointed out to him that--

RICHARD RUSK: Why you called it a colonial system?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. I pointed out to him that in a colonial system, decisions have to trickle far enough upward to encounter a member of the colonial caste, a colonial nation, a Britisher as far as India was concerned. And therefore, so many decisions that could have been made down the line had to trickle up very far toward the top with an independent India and that meant that the desks of people like Nehru and his cabinet ministers were just stacked high with details that they

should have delegated. Secondly, in a colonial administration, you don't trust those whom you're ruling. For example, when I was at the Rockefeller Foundation, we discovered that if the Minister of Agriculture or the Minister of Health wanted to make--

RICHARD RUSK: In India?

DEAN RUSK: In India--wanted to make an expenditure under funds that had been appropriated that they had to get the approval of someone in the Ministry of Finance before they could make such an expenditure. They didn't simply appropriate the money to major departments and have an ex post facto audit of the integrity of the expenditures. They had to get advanced permission. And that delayed and gummed up the works. When I would go into a sari shop there in New Delhi--

RICHARD RUSK: S-A-R-I?

DEAN RUSK: S-A-R-I--to get Mom a sari. One person would show me the saris, another person would then make out the ticket to cover that sari, another person would collect the money at a cash register on the basis of that ticket, and a fourth person would wrap up the sari and stick a copy of the ticket in it.

RICHARD RUSK: That's called full employment.

DEAN RUSK: They simply didn't trust each other, as happens in a colonial administration. Well, he was somewhat amused but a little taken aback that I used other examples of this colonial administration. But I think it's largely true that they continued British colonial administration even after they'd become an independent nation. They did not make any effort to streamline their procedures. Nehru himself was badgered by all sorts of petty detail that he should not have been bothered with. It should have been delegated to people down below. But by and large--

RICHARD RUSK: Were there examples of him being badgered with this kind of detail during your talks with him or while you were in India?

DEAN RUSK: Well, we knew. For example, I learned when I was at the Rockefeller Foundation that when we were trying to work actively with the Indians in medical matters, public health, and in agriculture, that it was a very time-consuming thing to get decisions out of them or to get action out of them because their procedures were so complicated and clumsy and muscle-bound. Whether they've improved that since, I just don't know.

RICHARD RUSK: I have a question about the Chinese Civil War and our unwillingness to intervene or our inability to intervene. What about the question of will? Was there really a sufficient will by the American people to get involved in that?

DEAN RUSK: It would have been very difficult to call back to the colors millions of men who had just gotten home from World War II. It would have taken a lot of time to retrain others on the basis of a draft. But in any event, those of us who'd had any experience in China were

convinced that even millions of men would not have made a decisive difference in that situation. So whether you call it will or whether you call it judgment, there was simply a conclusion that we should stay out of it and not try to use military force in connection with it.

RICHARD RUSK: During the early sixties, when we were encouraging the Red Chinese to at least conduct some exchanges of scientists and academics, was Edgar Snow denied a visa or permission to travel in China?

DEAN RUSK: I think it entirely possible, because we were trying to discourage travel at that time in countries where we had no diplomatic representation and where we could not give any kind of protection to Americans traveling in those countries. That list was shortened almost to zero later on. But I think also Edgar Snow was generally looked upon as a propagandist for Peking. I thought unless we had an agreement with Peking for such exchanges, they were hazardous and we really couldn't tell whether we'd get any performance by the authorities in Peking on such exchanges. So we were discouraging travel by Americans to China and I suspect we refused a good many visas.

RICHARD RUSK: You refused more than Edgar Snow's?

DEAN RUSK: Oh yeah.

RICHARD RUSK: You think so?

DEAN RUSK: Oh yeah sure.

RICHARD RUSK: The fact that he was very sympathetic towards Peking, would that have been a factor?

DEAN RUSK: It's possible. I don't remember the details because I didn't personally handle those cases.

RICHARD RUSK: You weren't involved in Snow's visa?

DEAN RUSK: No.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, after you volunteered for Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs in the midst of all that conflict back in the early fifties, Dean Acheson in his memoirs said, "We kissed him on both cheeks and gave him the job." Do you recall that?

DEAN RUSK: That was figuratively. (laughter) He didn't kiss me on both cheeks. But he was very glad to have me volunteer because he thought that might help ease some of the tensions because I had not been involved in the [Joseph Raymond] McCarthy controversy and was not branded as one of the old China hands that were the center of a lot of controversy at that time. And also I had pretty good relations with the Republicans in the Senate.

RICHARD RUSK: You told me earlier that you can't imagine Dean Acheson kissing anyone on both cheeks.

DEAN RUSK: That's right.

RICHARD RUSK: Except perhaps his wife.

DEAN RUSK: No, no. Any remark he made in that was entirely figurative. I'm not even sure he shook my hand at the time. (laughter)

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, Richard [Milhous] Nixon was able to make his famous trip to China and recommend relations be established and President Carter did go ahead and formally establish relations. They did so at the cost of derecognizing Taiwan. And just what does that mean: "derecognizing" Taiwan? And the second part to that question is: How were they able to do these things in a fashion that did not surrender those thirteen million people on Taiwan that you and Presidents Johnson and Kennedy were so concerned about in the early sixties?

DEAN RUSK: In the discussions with Nixon and [Gerald Rudolph] Ford [Jr.] and with the Carter administration, the authorities in Peking more or less took the view that they were not anticipating any early military action against Taiwan, that there was time to work out that kind of relationship, that problem. But when Nixon made his visit to China and joined in issuing that Shanghai communique, he practically promised to regularize, normalize relations between the People's Republic of China and the United States. One condition for normalization on the Chinese side was that we'd break relations with Taiwan. Perhaps that that was the principal reason why Nixon just didn't go ahead and normalize relations, but he left that problem open for President Ford to deal with when he made his trip to Peking. And finally it was up to President Carter to decide whether we would in fact go ahead with the normalization or just let the matter hang in suspense. President Carter and Secretary [Cyrus Roberts] Vance made the judgment that we should go ahead and normalize. Under our constitution, the President has a special constitutional power with respect to the recognition of states and governments. That's almost entirely an executive decision in our system. It stems from the phrase in the constitution saying that the President shall send and receive ambassadors and that kind of thing. Carter, in the process of normalization, simply withdrew our embassy from Taiwan, dropped them from the diplomatic list and gave notice to the Republic of China on Taiwan, the one year's notice required to terminate the security treaty with Taiwan. And then we had special legislation in the Congress approved by the Carter administration establishing another kind of contact with Taiwan, largely for the purposes of trade and exchanges and things of that sort. The Chinese did not like that legislation which maintained their relationship with Taiwan, but nevertheless they agreed to go ahead with normalization. So the Republic of China on Taiwan has representation in Washington and certain places like Atlanta, and I'm sure San Francisco, under a name other than that of consulate. From the office I'll get you the technical name of the kind of committee they set up to monitor those relationships. But anyhow, the normalization of China was left for Carter by both Nixon and Ford. I supported that entire effort despite the fact that I had dug a line to maintain our relations with the Republic of China and to deny the People's Republic of China their seat in the United Nations.

RICHARD RUSK: Well, was Jimmy Carter not in fact surrendering the thirteen million Taiwanese?

DEAN RUSK: No, he didn't surrender them. After all, they're still there. They aren't controlled by Peking. He didn't surrender them. And from the point of view of what happens to them, if the people on the mainland--which I think is very improbable--If they were to launch military operations against Taiwan, it would still be open to the President and Congress of that day to decide whether or not the United States takes any hand in it.

RICHARD RUSK: Well, if derecognition in the seventies was not surrendering thirteen million Taiwanese, why was derecognition in the sixties a form of surrendering thirteen million Taiwanese? Another way of asking the same question is, how could you support it in the seventies if in fact it didn't enlist your support in the sixties?

DEAN RUSK: Well, again, there had not been the discussion in the sixties indicating or giving the impression that the people on the mainland were not contemplating military action. Remember that Mao Tse-tung's government was a very different government on such a question than was Deng Xiaoping and his successors. No, I've already explained on another tape why President Kennedy did not want to reopen the question and also that the attitude of the Chinese in Peking in making it so difficult with respect to Vietnam, in effect, postponed any real consideration of normalization of Peking. We couldn't have lived forever with this myth that the Chiang Kai-shek government was insisting upon, that somehow they were the government of all China and that they would someday go back to the mainland. That just became an impossible diplomatic burden for us to bear.

RICHARD RUSK: Right. And Taiwan had lost its U.N. seat in the early seventies on top of that.

DEAN RUSK: In the early seventies.

RICHARD RUSK: The rest of the world had taken it--

DEAN RUSK: They still had their seat when I left office. (laughter)

RICHARD RUSK: What about this thinking of the Oriental, this so called inscrutability, the idea that east and west can never meet? A quotation from Frederick Stueben's thesis on you, Dean Rusk, in Asia: "Do not waste your time trying to discover what is at the back of the Oriental's mind. There may, for all you know, be nothing at the back. Concentrate all your attention upon making quite certain that he is left in no doubt whatsoever in regard to what is at the back of your mind."

DEAN RUSK: Well, that strikes a responsive chord in my mind. I've always been skeptical, at least since my experience out there in World War II, about the inscrutable Oriental. They may have some manners that are different than ours, but when you get around to doing business with them, they do business just like anybody else. Now in some countries you may have to watch such things as propitious days and unpropitious days that are related to their culture, but I don't

myself look upon Orientals as having a subtle kind of mind that one cannot fathom and that one cannot understand when you sit down and talk about particular things that you want to discuss.

RICHARD RUSK: You didn't feel necessarily that they were the Middle Kingdom and that you were the representative of the Barbarians?

DEAN RUSK: Oh no, I didn't feel like a Barbarian at all when I was dealing with the Chinese. (laughter) But that notion of the inscrutable Oriental is something of a myth and we ought to put it aside and get on with the world's work.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, John Kenneth Galbraith made a favorable reference to you in his own diary, his own journal. Do you have any comments on that?

DEAN RUSK: He referred to me as eclectic I think--

RICHARD RUSK: He also said your foreign policy does seem to me to show "increasing evidence of thought." That's high praise from a guy like John Kenneth Galbraith. (laughter)

DEAN RUSK: Well, from a Harvard professor. When I think of John Kenneth Galbraith, I myself tend to be eclectic because I pick and choose the things about him that I agreed with and did not agree with. But I'm confident in my own mind that from experience, that my thinking of foreign policy matters was closer to that of John F. Kennedy than was John Kenneth Galbraith's. I mean for example, John F. Kennedy was very anxious not to have the China question change in the United Nations. Well, John Kenneth Galbraith made very little if any effort to persuade the Indians to abstain or even to vote with us on the Chinese seat in the U.N. because he didn't agree with the policy. Well, that's just one instance where he and I had different views and mine were the views of Kennedy.

RICHARD RUSK: Galbraith's reference was on page--journal entry of May 7, 1962. "While I still do not find him the easy, confident, forthcoming eclectic and commanding figure with which in my imagination I associate diplomacy on the new frontier, our foreign policy does seem to me to show increasing evidence of thought."

DEAN RUSK: Well a comment like that is based in part on John Kenneth Galbraith's view that my views were not his own. (laughter) That's a euphemistic way of stating it. (laughter)

RICHARD RUSK: Do you have any comments on why it is that John Kennedy refused in the early months of 1961 to send food to the Chinese who were undergoing a famine at the time?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I think there was one curious slant on that. We were in the mood to send some food to China. They were in great difficulty and we were concerned about the Chinese people, but the question first came up in terms of our selling food to China. We went down to talk to people in the Senate about this, and somewhat to our surprise, they objected to our selling food to China and they said that if you send food to China, give it away: Give it to them. Apparently they wanted to be in the position of the patron assisting the poor starving people in China. They did not want the--

RICHARD RUSK: Rather than dealing with--

DEAN RUSK: Rather than dealing with the Chinese government and having them take the credit for having bought the food. It's one of those strange things that maybe that's the inscrutable western mind at work. (laughter) But it didn't come to anything because our relations with Peking at that time turned, as I've indicated earlier, almost wholly on the question of Taiwan.

RICHARD RUSK: And were we requiring them to make adjustments in their public rhetoric or their public policy towards us in order to receive this food?

DEAN RUSK: No, no it didn't get that far. When that matter was open in these bilateral talks that we were having with their people, they just didn't respond in any way.

RICHARD RUSK: They weren't interested in receiving this food?

DEAN RUSK: Didn't want to ask us for it, one way or another.

RICHARD RUSK: Did we make the offer?

DEAN RUSK: I'd have to check the record on that as to how far we went. But [U.] Alexis Johnson--Maybe give him a ring and see if he remembers.

RICHARD RUSK: You don't recall what our position was as far as offering the food?

DEAN RUSK: Well, the question did come up but it didn't get anywhere. First, the Chinese weren't interested and secondly, some of our key senators thought that if we sent food to China we ought to give it to them instead of selling it. Threw a strange slant on it.

RICHARD RUSK: Yeah. Pop, when the Red Chinese attacked India, what influence did that have upon the American liberals and the critics of our China policy who wanted us to take a softer line toward the People's Republic? People like John Kenneth Galbraith and Chester [Bliss] Bowles, for example.

DEAN RUSK: Well, people like that--And of course Bowles and Galbraith both were influential in the liberal community in this country. They had deep attachments to India. After all, Bowles had served out there. And as a matter of fact, we sent him back to India as ambassador, and Galbraith was indeed our ambassador to India at the time of the Chinese attack. And so I think there was no question that in a direct choice between the People's Republic of China and India, most liberals in this country would side with India. After all, the fighting was occurring in India and that indeed » indicated that on the face of it, the Chinese were the aggressors. After all, the Indians weren't invading China; China was invading India.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you take that occasion to send any memos back to John Kenneth Galbraith or?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, we had pretty good working relationships with Galbraith during that period. We were sending arms out there to the Indians, and indeed flying them out there. And Galbraith would meet these planes at the airport and he was living it up out there at that time. Then he became very popular in India. He would visit the front and visit with Indian troops near the battle. He'd stir himself pretty hard to channel American support for India during that period.

RICHARD RUSK: Did Galbraith ever concede that there may have been some wisdom in maintaining a rather hard stance toward the Chinese?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, I think if he did have during that period, he got over it pretty quickly.
(laughter)

RICHARD RUSK: I have a question about this speech that Roger Hilsman gave at the Commonwealth Club several weeks after John Kennedy's death. That speech was the first official statement of American willingness to concede that the People's Republic was likely to endure and that the U.S. was interested in reaching an accommodation with Peking on a two-Chinas basis--

END OF SIDE 2

