

Dean Rusk Oral History Collection

Rusk XXXX

Dean Rusk interviewed by Richard Rusk and Thomas J. Schoenbaum

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RICHARD RUSK: Pop, why don't we start off with weapons sales: the explosion--and this is your language--"the explosion of weapon sales abroad, both private and public, the implications for American policy and international law."

[break in recording]

DEAN RUSK: The United States has been a principal supplier of weapons for other countries for a good many years. There are many elements that have gone into that. To begin with we wanted very much to sell weapons to our NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] allies as an offset to the foreign exchange costs of maintaining our forces in Europe. You see, when we first put our forces in NATO in the early fifties, there was then something called the "dollar gap," as far as Europe was concerned and we were trying to find ways to move dollars to Europe: the [George Catlett] Marshall Plan, things of that sort. And we did not make arrangements, with particularly Germany, to offset the foreign exchange costs of our having troops in Germany. Well, then in later years we ran into some foreign exchange problems of our own. And the dollar gap moved in the other direction. And so we wanted very much to offset those foreign exchange costs by selling weapons, particularly to Germany, but to other NATO countries to balance off the costs of our troops in Europe. Then there were other allies that we were ready to sell weapons to: the Republic of Korea, the Nationalist Government of China, Pakistan, others. But there also developed another element of dynamism in this process, and that is the contribution which weapon sales made to our export balances. We had been running deficits in our foreign trade balance for some time, and one of the ways in which we could export would be to export military hardware.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you have any idea of the figures on that, Pop?

DEAN RUSK: No, I don't.

RICHARD RUSK: That's a multi-billion dollar industry.

DEAN RUSK: They're readily available. It's a multi-billion dollar business. At the same time we were trying to sell civilian aircraft all over the world. And we were quite successful in that, sometimes with the help of the Export-Import Bank to provide low interest loans to countries for purposes of buying civilian aircraft. But then we ran into the problem of having these weapons and related technology move into hands that we didn't want them in. And the idea of trade restrictions on such matters came up very early. We tried to organize--did organize--within NATO something called COCOM [Coordinating Committee on Export Controls]. That is a NATO-wide consortium to take a look at the kinds of things which we should not export to the Soviet Union, for example.

DEAN RUSK: Well there, there soon developed quite early some important differences between ourselves and our NATO allies on this COCOM list. Our people tended to take the very broad view of the things that should not be sold to eastern Europe, for example as a matter of national security. I remember at one point there were those in the Pentagon who wanted to put children's toys on the COCOM list on the grounds that toys contributed to the morale of the children, and therefore was an element of national security.

RICHARD RUSK: (laughter) Oh, you're kidding?

DEAN RUSK: No, I'm not kidding. But on the other hand, our friends in Europe relied pretty heavily on trade, particularly Britain for example, and they wanted to develop trade with Eastern Europe. And so we were often in a minority of one in trying to maintain a pretty broad COCOM list. And that has been a source of considerable irritation.

RICHARD RUSK: What was your position on COCOM? Did you get involved in that particular dispute within our government?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I thought that there were certain things that were of strategic importance that surely should be on such a list. For example, I've always been in favor of our not selling to the Soviet Union our latest generation of computers. Of course, computers that were two or three generations old I had no particular problem with. But the most recent computers I thought should be on that list. And then certain things in the field of metallurgy. In trading with the Soviets there was for many years a problem that was rather annoying, and that is their propensity simply to copy what we sold them. I remember at the Vienna Summit Conference in June '61 between [Nikita Sergeevich] Khrushchev and [John Fitzgerald] Kennedy. Khrushchev referred to a very new combination harvester machine that was really quite something, very advanced, a very remarkable performer. And Khrushchev asked Kennedy if he would sell him one of these machines. And Kennedy looked at him with a smile and said, "I won't sell you one, but I'll sell you a thousand," because he knew if he sold him one they would just copy it and go on from there, you see. But--

RICHARD RUSK: The Soviet Union is not susceptible to those same patents?

DEAN RUSK: Well, later they agreed to, in certain international patent convention. So it's not quite as bad as it used to be. But in the old days they would manufacture in the Soviet Union equipment with the same die stamps that we used here. So you would have a Soviet-made piece of farm machinery with "Moline Plow Company" stamped on it, because they would just copy the mold and produce it just as it was produced here. But in the case of Latin America--

RICHARD RUSK: Why don't you read that little joke you have about [Andrei Andreevich] Gromyko with the Bulova watch into the record?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, yes. When the Bulova watch first appeared, Omar [Nelson] Bradley, who was then head of--What was the name of the company that made the Bulova? Well, he was Chairman of the Board of that company, and he sent me one of the first Bulova watches as a test

watch. And I wore it; and it kept beautiful time. It works on a tuning fork, which vibrates in a magnetic field created by a small battery. The battery doesn't run a motor; it simply creates a magnetic field in which the tuning fork vibrates. It was a wholly new conception of timekeeping developed in our space program. So I decided to give one of these to Mr. Gromyko. At one of our meetings I asked him if it would be all right for me to make him a small present, and I described for him this watch. And he said, well, he'd be glad to receive it. And so I handed them the watch wrapped up a little box. And while he was unwrapping it he said, "Do you mind if I show this to our engineers?" And I said, "Oh, I've already taken care of that," because I had given him a watch with an open-face with all the works exposed so everybody could see how it worked without having to go inside of it. He looked at it and laughed. But there was a lot of that kind of problem with them in the early days. Now, in Latin America we had a somewhat different problem. You see, in many Latin American countries the military played a dominant role within the society. So that whatever government is in power has to give thought to satisfying the military, otherwise there would be a military coup. And the military were very anxious to modernize their equipment; they had early World War II kinds of weapons and equipment. Well, for a number of years, particularly during the sixties, we used a limited amount of modernization with these Latin American forces in exchange for a reduction of the overall military budgets.

RICHARD RUSK: That was a requirement?

DEAN RUSK: So when we would modernize we would get them to disband or to give up some of their out-of-date weapons and units, and things of that sort. And so the net effect was that the percentage of Latin American budgets that went for military purposes declined during the period when we were providing them with a limited amount of military aid. But then toward the end of the sixties, the Latin American military themselves became impatient with this sort of thing. And they moved to the point where, if we were unwilling to sell them what they were asking for, then they would go off and buy it from France, Germany or Sweden, or whoever would sell it to them.

RICHARD RUSK: Was that process working?

DEAN RUSK: It worked for a while. It worked for a while.

RICHARD RUSK: Whose initiative was that?

DEAN RUSK: Well, that was an American initiative. You see, we were pretty heavily involved in the Alliance for Progress and other forms of economic assistance for Latin America. And we felt that we had an interest in reducing the burden of the military budget in a number of these countries, which clearly had more armed forces than they really needed. There's only one country in the hemisphere, and that is Costa Rica, that did not have an army; they just had a police force. But, you see, Brazil is as large as the United States. And they're inclined to have a pretty substantial defense establishment. Well, Argentina watches Brazil very closely. So Argentina wants to match Brazil. Chile watches Argentina, and anything that Argentina does Chile gets nervous about and wants to build up. Peru watches Chile. And so you get into this cycling effect with regard to military forces. And so the impact of our military aid program for Latin America

dropped off as they began to turn to other suppliers and not rely completely upon the United States.

RICHARD RUSK: Specifically, who broached that idea? I presume it probably started in the Kennedy administration.

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. Oh again, Rich, when something comes out of group discussion it's very hard to assign specific ideas to specific individuals. It was a group approach.

RICHARD RUSK: What you're saying is Dean Rusk probably had the most to do with the idea, [laughs]

DEAN RUSK: It was a group approach. I had my share of it, but I can't claim to be the inventor of that particular idea.

SCHOENBAUM: How closely aligned was that policy with the Alliance for Progress? Was that looked on as one coordinative policy?

DEAN RUSK: No, the Alliance for Progress mechanism did not deal with military budgets. The Alliance for Progress actually built upon work that had been done in the [Dwight David] Eisenhower administration, particularly by Milton [Stover] Eisenhower, Ike's brother, and by [Clarence] Douglas Dillon, who was key in the Eisenhower administration and became Secretary of the Treasury for John F. Kennedy. We gave it a new name, a new slogan, and we set it in motion with a considerable amount of fanfare in order to develop some momentum behind it.

RICHARD RUSK: Hang on just a minute, Pop.

[break in recording]

DEAN RUSK: Of course, getting back to the arms trade, our own arms producers were very aggressive salesmen in the private sector. And they were very active in trying to get foreign governments to buy their particular weapons. And sometimes those private transactions gave us a little bit of a bother because they seemed to be going beyond what we thought would be wholesome under all the circumstances. But nevertheless, this was a major contribution to our export balances. And there were times when we would deliberately try to sell more arms as a contribution to the export balance.

RICHARD RUSK: Granted, there must have been some enormous economic advantages to extensive trade with arms and sale of arms abroad. To what extent does that contribute to overall instability in world affairs? You just alleged to the fact that some of these private arms transactions ran against the grain of American policy.

DEAN RUSK: Well, I don't belong to that school that thinks that arms fire themselves. People fight for something else, for some other reason. It's possible that the state of arms could affect judgments made by other governments; probably did. But I think it would be hard to find situations where war resulted from the arms trade per se. Now, another thing we should bear in

mind here, and that is that the third world countries have had a very limited interest in arms limitation as it applies to themselves. They applaud, and they think it's great if we and the Soviet Union find some way to limit the arms race. But when you get around to arms limitations that apply to themselves, they become very disinterested. I remember going to the opening sessions of the Disarmament Committee organized in Geneva, not strictly by the United Nations, but in close association with the United Nations. And there were about twenty-five or thirty nations represented at that conference. And in my opening speech I talked about the "big power" problem and relationships. But then I turned to the third world countries and suggested that they try to think of ways to limit arms races among themselves: in Africa, in Latin America, in other places: India and Pakistan for example. And I ran across colossal indifference on that subject. Indeed, the foreign minister of Nigeria came to me in the corridors, and in a rather chesty fashion said, "Well, Mr. Secretary, if we can get you and the Soviet Union to begin to disarm, then my country can buy arms cheaply can't we?" But, you see, again in many of these third world countries the military are the most organized and the most powerful element in the society. And their demands for more are very pressing on many of these governments. So it has not been easy. One of the major steps which was taken, on the initiative of Mexico, was the Treaty of Tlatelolco in Latin America to create a nuclear-free zone in Latin America.

RICHARD RUSK: How do you spell that?

DEAN RUSK: Well, you can look it up. T--

SCHOENBAUM: It's the Indian name.

DEAN RUSK: Yeah, but you'll have to get the spelling. But that was not totally successful because Brazil has not cooperated in the non-proliferation field. And because Brazil doesn't, then Argentina doesn't. Again, that cycle is set in motion. But I don't see why, for example, the continent of Africa could not constitute itself a nuclear-free zone. We ourselves encouraged that Mexican initiative for nuclear-free Latin America, and agreed to the protocol under which we ourselves would not put nuclear weapons in places like the Virgin Islands, the Panama Canal zone, things like that, as our contribution to that Treaty. We are not a party to the Treaty, but we did sign a couple of protocols which show our cooperation with it. But you have situations like India, Pakistan, Israel and its Arab neighbors, where arms limitations agreements are extremely difficult. I personally worked for years in trying to get some kind of understanding between India and Pakistan as to some kind of arms limitation agreement between them, maybe on a two-to-one basis: India two, Pakistan one.

SCHOENBAUM: This is while you were Secretary? You worked on this personally?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. But we just never got anywhere. The--

SCHOENBAUM: Can you describe your effort? Did you talk this over with [Jawaharlal] Nehru and [Mohammed Ayub] Khan at that time?

DEAN RUSK: Most of the time it was through ambassadors. But on my visits to the area I would raise it and talk about it. But the deep suspicion that these two countries had toward each

other was a great problem. And when Lord Louis [Francis Albert Victor Nicholas] Mountbatten arranged for the independence of India and the division of India into India and Pakistan, he did not stay with it long enough to resolve such questions as Kashmir. Kashmir was left over as a dangling issue of great dispute between India and Pakistan. In Kashmir you had a Hindu ruler and a predominantly Muslim population. And the Pakistanis thought that, under the general theory that Muslim areas would become a part of Pakistan, thought that Kashmir ought to go to them. But Nehru, whose own family came from Kashmir, was determined not to let Kashmir get away from him. And so that created continuing hostility between the two sides. And that in turn led to pretty keen competition on the military side. And finally, to a pretty good-sized war between India and Pakistan.

SCHOENBAUM: Can we change these?

RICHARD RUSK: Yeah, Pop, let me ask one final question. Pop, you made the point that weapons don't fire themselves. Nevertheless, the world community as a whole spends, what, upwards of a trillion dollars a year on arms? In terms of world peace, isn't it nevertheless a trifle obscene for the U.S., and all countries really, but we're talking about our country, to be participating in this massive arms trade to people who, surely in many cases, don't really need those arms? And yet, we go ahead and provide them.

DEAN RUSK: Well, you would have to separate out the countries involved. It doesn't bother me at all for us to sell arms to our NATO allies, for example, because we and they are in the same boat. And so we have an interest in their contribution to the alliance from a military point of view. I think there are other situations where selling arms could be looked upon with considerable skepticism and disapprobation. We've tried, in general, to stay out of much or many of those situations. But we get--There's a certain amount of blackmail involved, political blackmail. Remember, there are other arms suppliers.

RICHARD RUSK: So if we don't sell them--

DEAN RUSK: If we don't sell them, other people will. The French are very active in this field; the British to some extent; Sweden. Other countries are ready to step in and sell the arms that we might be unwilling to sell. But some of these countries pull a very distasteful trick on us by saying, "Well, if you don't sell them to us, then we'll go the Russians and they'll sell them to us." We try to ignore that as much as possible, because that's just plain, old-fashioned political blackmail. And we didn't let that play a major role in our own arms sales policies. No, there's a strong appetite for arms on the part of most of these third world countries, despite their own poverty and misery and the needs of their people. Their military play a very heavy role in deciding how they are going to use their resources.

RICHARD RUSK: Anything further on this particular topic?

DEAN RUSK: I think not at the moment. I may come back to something.

SCHOENBAUM: Let me change the subject and talk about another aspect of international law. And that is free trade agreements, economic unions, customs unions, which, of course, have been



very important and play a great role in the European countries. And the United States' policy during Eisenhower and also Kennedy- Johnson, which continues today, was to encourage these unions of states, especially for economic purposes, even when they had greater political purposes, as does the European community. I wonder, in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, what was our policy with respect to Africa and Latin America? Now the Latin Americans created a Latin American Free Trade Association, LAFTA, as you know. Did we have a policy concerning this? And also in Africa there are several organizations, economic organizations that have political implications. And, of course, during the Kennedy administration, [Kwame] Nkrumah was very active in the Organization of the African States. In fact, there was some talk at that time that he was ambitious and wanted to create a movement toward political union in Africa. How did you react to this?

DEAN RUSK: Well, let me comment briefly on Nkrumah. Yes, he threw himself into the leadership of a Pan-African movement, as it was called. But he clearly was looking upon a Pan-African movement of which he would be the leader. And the other Africans simply wouldn't buy that. And that didn't get very far. The United States, on the whole, in the postwar period has been in favor of larger groupings of countries for economic purposes. As far as western Europe was concerned, we have been hoping for something that might be called the United States of Europe, part of it through sentiment. It had been good for us, why wouldn't it be good for them? But also for very practical political and security reasons. The greater the consolidation of Europe, the better it would be for us. And more than that, it's been difficult for the United States to deal with Europe country by country. There is no European view on most subjects. And it isn't easy to deal with matters in which there are differences of view within Europe, for example on the ill-fated idea of a multilateral nuclear force. That came a cropper because essentially England and Germany could not themselves agree. It's very hard for us to relate ourselves to Europe if there is no Europe. And so we were in favor of consolidation of Europe to the maximum extent that the Europeans themselves would permit it. Now, we knew that if a unified Europe came about, that would create some economic problems for us because they would become strongly competitive as a group: exemplified in a common agriculture policy, for example, imposed upon the European community by France. And that led to trade restrictions on our sales of agriculture products to Europe. But we thought that the economic costs to us would be more than offset by the political gains. And so we were in favor of it. When President Johnson went to Punta del Este, Uruguay to meet with the presidents of all the western hemisphere countries, I think he caught them somewhat by surprise by coming out strongly in favor of a Latin American economic union or consolidation, because I think that they felt that our attitude had been divide and rule. But we felt that a European common market with its many associated countries in Africa and elsewhere, that that left the Latin Americans in a weaker bargaining position than they otherwise, might be in terms of world markets. And so President Johnson urged them to move as rapidly as possible towards great unity in economic matters. Another compelling element in this was the western colonial empire that broke up into such small fragments. We thought that in the immediate postwar period there would be a West African Federation, there would be an East African Federation, a West Indies Federation, and so forth. That didn't work out. These countries all broke themselves up into tiny pieces. And a good many of the resulting independent countries were simply not viable from an economic point of view. Whereas if they were part of a regional grouping, they might be in a better situation. But these steps toward

consolidation have been largely unsuccessful except for the European Common Market and its associating countries, with our special relationships to the Common Market.

SCHOENBAUM: Did we take any concrete steps besides just in speeches, in trying to urge them? Of course, I realize we can have very limited influence. In fact, our influence might be counterproductive in Latin America or Africa.

DEAN RUSK: Or even in Europe, because there were times when our friends in Europe advised us to remain silent on this question of greater cohesion in Europe, that our voice would make it more difficult, particularly in their dealings with [Charles Andre Joseph Mario] de Gaulle on such issues. And so there were periods when we simply held our tongue on such things. But I don't think that our support for it was the underlying reason for the difficulties in Latin America. Such disparities in Latin America between such countries like Brazil, on the one side, and Bolivia and Haiti, countries like that on the other, Paraguay. And it wasn't easy for them to get together with such diversity from an economic point of view within the grouping. See, after all, the European Common Market is made up of countries about the same level of development: more or less comparable. But that was not true in Latin America. I do think that one mistake was made along the way. There developed a kind of categorical division between developed countries and developing countries. If the per capita national income was below X level, we would call them a developing country. Well, now I think that division has been unfortunate in many ways. In retrospect, I would think that we should simply take the view that any country--

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DEAN RUSK: --in a position to be of any assistance to a less fortunate country should make the effort to give that assistance. If we have any obligation toward assisting Brazil, surely Brazil has an obligation to assist Paraguay, for example. And all these countries in Latin America ought to be involved in trying to find a way to help Haiti, which is the cesspool of the western hemisphere. And some of them do that. Mexico has done an extraordinary job of giving technical and other kinds of assistance to other developing countries. In their Graduate School of Agriculture at Chapingo, they've trained a good many agricultural scientists from other countries. The same is true of their Heart Center, Institute of Cardiology there in Mexico City. The same is true of their great Children's Hospital there in Mexico City. And Mexico has sent improved seeds to many countries to help increase food production. So we know that these countries can help each other. But because we have this rather categorical division between developed and developing countries, and now they've broken the developing countries into another category, the less developed countries, they have put the poorest countries in a little special category. We haven't mobilized to the extent that we should their ability to help each other.



SCHOENBAUM: Do you agree with Teddy [Theodore Harold] White who said recently on TV that, "There is no such thing as a third world"? He didn't find the term "third world" as being very helpful in any functional way.

DEAN RUSK: Yeah, I think we have to be careful about generalizing about groups of nations. In a sense there is no Latin America. There are individual countries, each unique, who speak Spanish or Portuguese. But there are very few generalizations that one can make about such groupings. Africa: The diversity within Africa is astonishing. So I think we have to be a little careful about using these generalized groupings of nations in our own thinking, because that's not the way the world is. You have one-hundred-and-fifty-nine members of the U.N. Each member is unique, with its own problems, history and background, institutions, ambitions, needs.

SCHOENBAUM: Speaking of regional groupings still, there was a very important regional negotiation that occurred during the Kennedy-Johnson years involving the United States and Canada. That's the Auto Pact Negotiation. Well, I guess at that time it was not possible to negotiate any kind of a general economic union between the United States and Canada, although there's now talk of doing just that. But you did negotiate the Auto Pact Agreement, and that has been extremely successful in the negotiation of a common market in automobiles and auto parts to unify the automobile industry in the central Midwest there that overlaps into Canada and is situated mainly in the United States, but overlaps into Canada. Did you have a hand in that negotiation? Or did you--

DEAN RUSK: Yes, I did, although I was not a part of the negotiating team and didn't get into details. But I thought that was a very positive and constructive step. From a purely economic point of view, it would make a good deal of sense for the United States and Canada to have the kind of open relationship, free market relationships, that members of the European Common Market have. But Canada itself has some reservations about this, because it isn't easy for them to live next to a giant. And the Canadians, many of them, are nervous about losing their identity as an independent country if we were to go to a complete free market, with them subjected to the great advantages of mass that we have in our own market here. So my general attitude on that is, "Let's go as far as we can toward economic association with Canada as the Canadians are willing to go." But we shouldn't suppose that they are going to be willing to accept a general free trade area between the United States and Canada.

SCHOENBAUM: Do you worry about the relationship between those, the proliferation of these regional agreements and the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade, which is, as you know, based upon the principle of most favored nation treatment and multilateral negotiations in trade: In other words, refusal to play favorites among your friends, treat all the nations of the world alike?

DEAN RUSK: Yes, that has been a continuing problem for a long time. As you know, Tom, we had some problems with British empirical preferences. We thought these preferences which they had established within the British Commonwealth of nations were discriminatory against people like the United States. And we worked very hard on that for a good many years. There is a conflict there, unless these groupings themselves would pitch in to help establish a workable general trade arrangement. And that theoretically is possible. And some progress has been made

in that direction. But if these regional groupings get to be highly protectionist in character, then you have a direct conflict between regional trade arrangements and general trade policy and practice around the world.

RICHARD RUSK: Anything further on that, Tom?

DEAN RUSK: I think not at this point.

SCHOENBAUM: Do you want to talk about environment and population? [interruption]

RICHARD RUSK: My question for you is: What implications has the "population explosion" for international law? And you might comment on your involvement with that issue, birth control and other measures to alleviate population with, as Secretary.

DEAN RUSK: Well, I still think that we are underestimating the impact of the population explosion. Before these present college students get to be my age, they face the prospect of from twelve to fifteen billions of people on this planet, with enormous implications for food and shelter and jobs and education, and all sorts of things. One of the oldest causes of war on the history of the human race, the pressure of people upon resources, is being revived in a world in which there are all these thousands of megatons lying around in the hands of frail human beings. You put alongside of that the communications explosion, which has let people right around the world know that starvation is not just a part of the environment in which Providence has put us, this is something that somebody can do something about. And so we cannot expect that millions of people are going to starve peacefully. They are going to raise a lot of hell in the process. And so--

RICHARD RUSK: History has shown that people under conditions of starvation tend to starve. They don't embark on political revolutions. Political change often occurs when conditions are improving.

DEAN RUSK: Well, that's not going to be--We can't count on that, because I think you are going to find that starvation will give rise to violence, and turbulence, and all sorts of problems at the political level. Now, I personally began to become very much involved in this problem when I was at the Rockefeller Foundation. We could see this problem coming, and we began to work on it. However, American public policy in the fifties and early sixties was against family planning, birth control, that sort of thing. I think it's still true. It was true in those days, Tom, if I remember correctly, that you could not send contraceptives by mail.

SCHOENBAUM: That's right.

DEAN RUSK: You had to send them by express.

RICHARD RUSK: Bizarre.

DEAN RUSK: And if any senior member of the Kennedy administration in 1961 had stood up and started talking about birth control, he would have had his ears knocked off. But with a great

deal of work, both in the private sector with people like John D. [Davison] Rockefeller, III and others, and with a good deal of work in the government, including the Congress with the help of people like Senator [James William] Fulbright, American public policy on this matter turned around one-hundred-and-eighty degrees within ten years. And it became possible for President [Richard Milhous] Nixon to sign a family planning bill for the United States with an appropriation of some three-hundred-and-fifty million dollars in it, or something of that sort.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you try for a bill of that type, perhaps later In the sixties? How close did you come to getting some public policy of behalf of population?

DEAN RUSK: Well, what we tried to do was to bring this change about quietly, without stirring up all the cardinals and people like that. But back in the Rockefeller Foundation days we were doing some work on family planning in places like the northwestern frontier of India, providences of India, in order to find out more about what kinds of family planning techniques would be appropriate to particular societies. This was before the "Pill." As an economic problem, it was what kind of devices these poor people could afford. But there were also some cultural factors. For example, in India it is very important that there be a son present at the funeral of the father; there's a special role for the son to play at the funeral of the father. So they tended to have large families. But we were a little nervous, when I was at the Rockefeller Foundation, that we would get caught in activities that would seem to be contrary to the public policy of the United States. And so there was a period of nervousness there on our part as to how far we could go. I remember visiting a village in northwest India. We had a family planning project there, and the village head of the family planning was a man who was very active and energetic, interested. And I asked him how many children he had. And he said he had eleven! And I said, "Well, how does this fit together?" He said, "Well, I had ten daughters first. And then I had a son. And I joined family planning." (laughter) But if you had taken a poll of the governments of the world in the early sixties as to public policy toward family planning, you would have found maybe twenty percent in favor and eighty percent against. All the Catholic countries were, as a matter of principle, opposed to family planning. But if you take a poll of the governments of the world today you would find the figures reversed: eighty percent in favor, twenty percent against.

SCHOENBAUM: Do you think coercion can ever be justified under international law: coercion in family planning and towards a sterilization? I mean, it may at a certain point come to that, and already has in some countries such as India where they did have a course of--They had a law, as I understand it, that required sterilization of any woman who had more than three children. And they enforced that for all. And I think there were some complaints under international law, that it was the denial of human rights: the right to reproduce.

RICHARD RUSK: Well, China has the rights--

SCHOENBAUM: China has a very strict program now.

DEAN RUSK: Well, for a time there riots developed in India because Mrs. [Indira] Gandhi was caught in forcible sterilization programs and things like that. And there was a great public outcry. One hears reports in China that they have gone as far as infanticide in trying to limit population. I am inclined myself to think that the United States government should not enter such questions

on its own; that we should, in effect, leave that to the individual societies concerned, and to the broad impact of public opinion; that we should not take it upon ourselves to make these decisions. For example, there was some movement in Congress to connect our foreign aid program with effective measures of family planning. Well, we opposed that in the administration on the grounds that that was reaching too far on the part of the United States, that we should not put ourselves in that position. And also we were "blipping" along in those days with a pretty good birthrate ourselves. And with that in the background we could not go to these other people and say, "You are having too many babies!" But on the other hand, these birthrates tend to frustrate the relatively modest amounts of foreign aid that we can provide. A prime minister of Jamaica once came to visit me in Washington and said that unless we took thirty thousand of his people every year, that Jamaica would just sink under the sea with this population. And I said, "But, Mr. Prime Minister, we cannot make ourselves responsible for excessive population in Jamaica." He said, "Well, I can't do anything about that." But it is a real problem for a good many of these countries. Now, the Catholic countries' general attitude has changed considerably, partly because when it became known that the princes of the church were seriously debating this issue, that tended to release the laymen to make their own judgments and to proceed in their own fashion. Although the official attitude of the Catholic church is still against family planning as we generally understand it, Catholic laymen around the world are much more relaxed about church doctrine, and most of them, in fact, practice it in one way or another. But it's a big problem.

SCHOENBAUM: You brought up the question of population. And there's another issue. That's interesting that you had the pressure from Jamaica. Now, there's a pressure from Mexico. And the border, as you know, is out of control in terms of illegal immigration. And there may be as many as fifteen or twenty million illegals in the United States. That was a problem that was beginning in the Kennedy-Johnson years. Did you have some meetings about that?

DEAN RUSK: That is an extraordinarily difficult problem, because I'm convinced that the United States cannot make itself to take on the residual responsibility for the world's population increase. The slogan on the Statue of Liberty, as a practical matter, just won't work anymore.

RICHARD RUSK: And the slogan on the Statue is "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses."

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. You see, in the nineteenth century we had open immigration, for all practical purposes, into this country. Now, today, we are taking a little over four hundred thousand immigrants a year through legal process. At any given time there are more than two-and-a-half million people standing in line all over the world to get entry visas into this country as immigrants. So there is enormous pressure even through legal channels. The illegal problem is difficult, not only because it is very hard to patrol these long frontiers we have with Mexico and Canada, but also because Mexican workers, for example, are willing to come up here and do work that Americans no longer want to do, particularly out in the vegetable fields at harvest time and things of that sort. And so there are those who want these Mexican migrant workers to come here at the right season to help out from an economic point of view. So it's not an easy problem. We've tried to think of ways in which we could help Mexico with its own development so that it could provide the jobs for its own population, but the population is growing at such a rate that

that's not easy to contemplate, and cut down on that migration from the point of view of the incentives for people to leave. I think we could probably do more in that direction. But it isn't easy to handle this problem. I'm inclined to think that we might ease the problem somewhat by issuing what are now being called "Guest Worker" cards to Mexicans who would come up here for part of the year to work.

RICHARD RUSK: To a specific job, to a specific place?

DEAN RUSK: And then go on back. Well, to particular types of employment, because you can't--it's very hard to get hand work in the fields from Americans or domestic servants.

RICHARD RUSK: Particularly with the kind of wage scales that these growers can afford to pay.

SCHOENBAUM: Did you worry at all in the Kennedy--Was there any long-range idea in the Kennedy-Johnson administrations of the enormity of this problem? And also, it seems to me, a threat to the--I'm not against Spanish culture, and I hesitate to say this, but I think the bilingualism that is incipient in the southwest and in Florida, is a danger to the fabric of American society.

RICHARD RUSK: At least in other parts of the country, yeah.

SCHOENBAUM: From the part of the American tradition that we all had to learn English. My forefathers came from Germany, and we all had to learn English. And that's not happening today.

DEAN RUSK: Well, it seems to me that we ought to--well, I would be opposed to adopting any other language as an official language. We ought to maintain English as a lingua franca. And we ought to expect all who come here to live to learn the lingua franca. Everybody ought to learn English simply to make themselves a working part of our society. But I also think that we should encourage, rather than discourage, the maintenance of other cultures within our system: Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, whatever they might be. Jewish. I mean, after all, the people of the Jewish faith have their own Jewish schools where they go after the kids attend public school, very often. But I wouldn't like to see us develop large groups here who speak only a foreign language. They all should be trained in the lingua franca, which to me is English.

[break in recording]

RICHARD RUSK: As Secretary did you raise this issue of population explosion and the idea that these countries and us should be doing something about it, in the meetings with foreign ministers, foreign heads of state, at conferences? Was it an issue that you brought to the floor, that you personally talked about?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I didn't publicly get out in front of what seemed to be the then public policy of the United States. Now by the end of the sixties I began to get more into this. But I thought that if you were going to make headway on it, you could make headway best, quietly and behind the scenes, rather than by kicking off major public controversies. And so I tried pretty



much during the Kennedy years to stay within the discretion of our public policy. But behind the scenes we were encouraging people in the private sector to work on it and people in other countries to pay attention to it. And we also helped to develop the studies of demography, because if people really looked at this and began to think about it, then they would be inclined to do something about it. Because the demographic prospects seemed to be inevitable. So we did a fair amount of that. When I was at the Rockefeller Foundation we put a good deal of money into demographic studies, and into the population council organized by John D. Rockefeller, III.

RICHARD RUSK: You say that the facts more or less speak for themselves in the issue of population.

DEAN RUSK: Now in the United States we've just about cut our population growth to a sustenance level. That is, we are not on a growth curve now in terms of population in any significant way. So we are in a somewhat better position to talk about this issue with other governments. One interesting thing to me is that when the United Nations called a world conference on population--I think in Bucharest a few years ago--the General Secretary of that conference was my old friend, Antonio Carillo Flores of Mexico, one of the great human beings and a long time Mexican Ambassador in Washington, and for a time the Mexican Foreign Minister. And to have a Latin American take the leadership of this worldwide consideration of population issues, I thought, itself was very much a plus and made a substantial difference.

RICHARD RUSK: If the world itself has made progress on this issue, it looks like here in this country we've lost some progress; we've actually gone backward in terms of population limitation and family planning. How do you account for the fact that we seem to be, during the years of the [Ronald Wilson] Reagan administration, more or less going backwards on this question?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I don't know what the statistics will show yet. I gather there has been some increase in birth in recent years here in this country. Whether that is because the children of the baby boom are now having their children, which may account for part of that.

RICHARD RUSK: What about the fact that the government itself has cut back on funding of some programs?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I think there is a fair amount of that. And then the abortion controversy has unsettled it a bit. We still have not yet, I think, developed a wholly inexpensive, effective pill without side effects that could be put in the hands of people on a widespread basis. But you've got to have something that is very inexpensive if you expect the Third World to make all that much use of it because they can't afford condoms and things like that. As a matter of fact, there are so many social factors that enter into this. During our studies in India, for example, it became relevant for people to know how much advanced time the woman has--how much advanced warning she has of sexual intercourse. Well, out there in the villages they live very publicly. They sleep on the roofs of their huts. It's a very open kind of situation. And it turned out that in some of the villages that we studied, that the woman has only about five minutes warning time. You know, they sneak around and "catch as catch can." Well, that presents a problem for the



type of contraception, contraceptive methods one uses, you see. And then in some countries, the "macho" tradition is very much present. And that gets in the way of family planning attitudes. The women of the world, I'm quite sure, are very much interested in family planning by and large. But that's not always true of the menfolk. (laughter)

RICHARD RUSK: Were you ever involved in this abortion controversy? Have you made any public statements on abortion?

DEAN RUSK: Well, on this abortion issue, I myself have never been pregnant. And I would be very surprised if I ever became pregnant. And I'm inclined therefore to leave this issue to the womenfolk. I would like to see, for example, in some national election at the polling booths a table where the women would be asked, on their way out, to sit down and fill out some questionnaires with thoughtful questions, not just silly generalizations but thoughtful questions, about family planning and abortion to find out what the women themselves think about it.

RICHARD RUSK: And do it in a national poll?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah, it seems to me--

RICHARD RUSK: And let that be the basis for national policy.

DEAN RUSK: I personally would like to know what women think about it before I come to my own conclusion about it. I have no doubt for many women that the idea of abortion is abhorrent. There's sort of an instinctive desire to bring to full life a baby that's in the womb. But on the other hand, there are many situations where children are not wanted: teenage and unmarried girls, for example; victims of rape, incest, and things of that sort. But I am not discontented with the present Supreme Court decision on this subject. But again I would be inclined to take my own personal direction from the womenfolk, because they are the ones who get pregnant. I don't care for the idea of a constitutional amendment on the subject of abortion, primarily because I don't want us to load down the constitution with all sorts of things which could be done by legislation. I don't want to see our Constitution become a jungle like most state constitutions are. So I am opposed to a constitutional amendment on abortion. But I would hate to see us go back to a situation where abortions were uniformly illegal; where women who want them have to sneak into back alleys and get abortions from incompetent, unhealthy clinics where real dangers are present.

RICHARD RUSK: Yeah, there's a line of thinking in the Reagan administration that population growth is really not a negative factor in development. I forget the name of the individual who has pushed this idea. But apparently it has been adopted within some circles in Washington. Are you familiar with that little controversy?

DEAN RUSK: Yes. And, of course, the official view of the Catholic church is in that direction. But when you look at the numbers that are coming down the road, and look at the capacity of this thin skin around the earth's surface in which the human race must live, the ability of the earth to maintain unlimited population is not infinite. And we are approaching a period when that ability of the earth, in terms of its topsoil, its fresh water, its clean air, its mineral resources and all the

rest of it, will be outstripped by the pressure of people. And when that time comes we are going to have great turmoil in the world. And some major, major issues--

[break in recording]

RICHARD RUSK: On the issue of oil dependence, can the western world strictly adhere to international law regarding past, present, and potential and future threats to its energy lifeline? To what extent were you involved with that question as Secretary?

DEAN RUSK: In 1985 we see a temporary glut in the world oil markets. And that has encouraged us to live, in what I would call, a fool's paradise.

END OF SIDE 2

