

Dean Rusk Oral History Collection
Rusk Y, Side 1: Part 2 of 2
Dean Rusk interviewed by Loch Johnson and Richard Rusk
circa 1985
Rusk Y, Side 1 is a continuation of Rusk P.

Rusk Y, Side 2
Dean Rusk interviewed by Richard Rusk
1985 January 18

DEAN RUSK: This business of reading mail is a somewhat curious one. If you want to find the people who read mail assiduously you'd go back to our founding fathers. They really did search the post. They were looking for Tories and for traitors of intelligence, things of that sort. It was not until about the middle of the eighteenth century, or the nineteenth century that we began to move toward the privacy of post, privacy of mail.

JOHNSON: Of course the founding fathers did that during the time of war, I presume.

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. And in the postwar period. But the privacy of the mail was a fairly recent development in our history. And I personally have no problem about some of the things we do: for example, in noting the addressees of mail coming in from particular places or organizations.

JOHNSON: That's legal. But actually opening the letter.

DEAN RUSK: Well, yeah, since I have lived so much of my life in a goldfish bowl, I personally don't find that horrifying. I personally do not believe, do not have any sense of privacy that would get in the way of our government doing what it felt it had to do: for example, to run down terrorism. They can tap my phone or do anything they want to, if they are trying to find some terrorists. But that's not the general view, I think, in this country.

JOHNSON: Well, I don't think much of Jane Fonda, but if one begins to open her mail for political purposes, then it runs counter to what our country stands for--

[break in recording: audio deleted from original tape at Mr. Rusk's request; 0:45 of silence that resulted from this audio deletion has been edited out of the digital recording]

DEAN RUSK: But, um--

JOHNSON: Would you apply that reasoning to the use of polygraphs in our government? Do you think we ought to use them more extensively?

DEAN RUSK: No. I personally have no confidence in polygraphs. I don't need a shrink playing the "gimmicks" to tell me whether or not I am telling the truth. I know when I am telling the truth.

RICHARD RUSK: Hey, Pop. Your life is a little unusual in that it doesn't really seem to be any aspects of it that have to stay secret. At least that's what I am finding in my research. But what about the rest of us unfortunates that have things in our past that damn well not better get out. I think the issue of privacy is a lot stronger with some of us. Also, for philosophical reasons, that is a fundamental right, I think.

DEAN RUSK: Dunn and Bradstreet, these credit bureaus, all sorts of organizations have an enormous amount of information about each one of us. Only recently have we made it possible for you to find out what Dunn and Bradstreet is saying about you, for example, or what these credit bureaus are saying about you. But they develop an enormous amount of information based upon the people you do business with, based upon information they pick through telephone calls to people that know you.

RICHARD RUSK: And the consequences of improper information, inaccurate information, can be quite severe.

DEAN RUSK: Yes, that's true. That's true. I am in favor of our ability to require credit agencies to tell us what they are saying about us. Things of that sort.

RICHARD RUSK: I've got a related question regarding a lot of these measures that came to light in the [Edmund Sixtus] Muskie and [Frank Forrester] Church hearings where government actions were taken partially in response to the various tensions and political movements of the sixties and early seventies, some of this related to Vietnam. There were groups of people in this country advocating the overthrow of our institutions. And there were some bombings of public buildings. There was some political terrorism going on here in minor ways. So, again, maybe this was the case where the government had some legitimate notion that they really should take actions to counteract some of this. But did the government overstep, overreact, to this threat? Obviously LBJ was concerned about it. Especially Richard Nixon was concerned about it. But did the federal government just go overboard in its efforts to suppress this opposition to protect itself? Its institutions?

DEAN RUSK: Depends a little bit on the organization and how it conducts its affairs. To begin with I think that if the Congress ever got to the access to take action, like Vietnam again, they are going to have to deal with the problem of censorship at the very beginning. We did not have censorship in Vietnam that was of any consequence. [It] was not our country; we're not in complete control there. And we, ourselves, did not impose censorship on any scale. But if you have an organization that is out to disrupt our society, by violence and things of that sort, I think that is another thing. If we had in this country, in proportion, the amount of terrorism that some countries have, the first victim of that in our own system would be the Bill of Rights. Because we would in effect go on to a martial law footing, if we had terrorist running around the country shooting sheriffs, and school teachers, and doctors and blowing up railroad trains, and things of that sort. The action that we would take would be very strong and, in effect, would brush aside the First Amendment. See, both Thomas Jefferson and John Locke pointed out that there may be times when a government must act beyond the law in order to maintain the legal system.

RICHARD RUSK: Based on the findings of these Senate subcommittees and everything that came out, did we in fact overreact to the problems of the sixties?

DEAN RUSK: You would have to be specific on that.

JOHNSON: One thinks of the Houston Plan. That seems like it was excessive and had a major blueprint to spy on student dissenters: open their mail, tape their telephones.

DEAN RUSK: Student centers?

JOHNSON: Student dissenters.

DEAN RUSK: Dissenters. Well, I am not familiar with the plan.

RICHARD RUSK: That was the one that Nixon cooked up that came out with this Watergate business. Do you remember LBJ or John Kennedy talking to you at any length about any of this type of thing: antiwar movements or measures that we perhaps should take to deal with it.

DEAN RUSK: Not very much. I mean, LBJ's general attitude was not that one should suppress this kind of expression of opinion. He regretted some of it. But he didn't take action to try to suppress it.

RICHARD RUSK: He was the fellow who nominated [William] Ramsey Clark to be his Attorney General, who was a very libertarian-type of fellow.

JOHNSON: Didn't he wiretap Madame [Anna Chan] Chennault? Is that how you say her name? There certainly were some clear-cut instances of Johnson and Nixon and others using wiretaps for political purposes. Johnson apparently wiretapped the Goldwater people, to find out what Goldwater was going to do in his campaign.

DEAN RUSK: I am not aware of that, quite frankly.

JOHNSON: Do you think there are times when it is legitimate for the government to lie, in its way, of misleading the Soviets to our advantage? Is there a place for lying?

DEAN RUSK: Well, you shouldn't make that a matter of principle. You may remember that during the Cuban Missile Crisis, President Kennedy returned to Washington instead of meeting a couple of campaign appointments. And his staff put out the word that he came back because he had a cold. Well since, the Secretary of Defense [Arthur] Sylvester--very soon after that--tried to translate that into principle of justifying lying. Well, you mustn't do that. But this question of truth and lying is more complicated than it sounds. When we were children we used to play a game called "truth." Eight or ten of us would sit around in a circle and the idea was that each one would tell the complete truth about each other. It always ended up in a fight. I mean, if you told the "complete truth," the divorce rate would triple. I mean civilization depends upon suppressing many of your glandular reactions and not putting everything you think on top of the table. As a matter of fact, it's probably a hallmark of civilization that people restrain themselves on these

things. So, also bear in mind, that our society is filled with advocacy: car salesmen, real estate agents, columnists, commentators, ministers of the gospel. They are advocates. And somehow we do have to leave some room for people in government to advocate the policies that they are supporting. Now, there is such a thing as advocacy with integrity. But there are people who sort of take the--see themselves as a man from Mars, who looks at everything on an equal keel, balancing off one against the other. Well, as far as the Secretary of State is concerned, his client is the United States of America. He is going to keep that in mind. Now, you can search Congressional hearings, press conferences, public speeches throughout my eight years and you will find it very hard to find a single instance where I thought one thing and said another. So there is such a thing as advocacy with integrity.

RICHARD RUSK: Loch, a question: whether or not it was ever permissible for the government to lie on behalf of the national interest. A case for that might have been Henry [Alfred] Kissinger's assurances to the South Vietnamese government, to Saigon, that we would come back in and support them if the Paris Peace Accords fell apart and the North Vietnamese resumed their offensive to the South; that we would back them up. Would that be an example of where Kissinger knew it was probably impossible for us to go back in there?

DEAN RUSK: I don't know what was on his mind on that, but--

RICHARD RUSK: Yet he went ahead and made those assertions for the sake of peace in Vietnam. Here's somewhere where we really needed--

DEAN RUSK: Remember that in World War II he went to an elaborate effort to produce a great lie for Hitler's benefit, namely that General Patton was going to invade the continent through the Calais area instead of down at Normandy. But there is such a thing also as not telling the whole truth, then there will be people who will try to translate that into a lie. But no, I think lying is bad policy. I'm not going to say it should never be done. Here's a small example: [Anatoly F.] Dobrynin and I used to exchange oral communications with each other. The technical nature of oral communications was that it was oral, but very frequently he or I would hand each other a piece of paper which said in writing what was to be said orally, for his convenience in reporting this to his own government. Now, if a reporter would ask me, "Did you hand him a piece of paper?" This was an oral communication. What was I going to say? Usually, I wouldn't say, "No," but would say, "This was an oral communication." I would simply repeat that and stand on it.

RICHARD RUSK: Let me hang with this for just a minute and just ask the general question, was it possible for you to go through eight years of government service as an American Secretary of State and not feel that somewhere along the line that you had personally violated your own conception of what is meant by the word "integrity," in this firm commitment of yours to telling the truth in all cases?

DEAN RUSK: Again this gets into--

RICHARD RUSK: (speaking at the same time) This is one of the great questions of public service today, Pop, whether or not people can go into public service for the government and do so in an ethical way.

DEAN RUSK: Well, George Marshall was once asked what his personal opinion was on a particular matter. He said, "Personal opinion? I don't have personal opinions on matters of public policy. My opinions are those of the Secretary of State. And I reach those through constitutional process." Now, there were times when I would support the President, when he had done something that I, myself, would not have done had I been President. But I wasn't President. Now, does that involve integrity?

JOHNSON: If you felt the President was doing something detrimental to the national interest--

DEAN RUSK: (speaking at the same time) This appeal of higher law is a very dangerous business. That may be nothing more than an appeal to your own glandular reactions.

RICHARD RUSK: Of course World War II was fought over that issue and the question of Nuremberg relates directly to it. Obviously the issue of Yalta was established and maintained there: personal guilt.

JOHNSON: I was thinking of a British example where we have a number of cabinet members resigning there in protest over the cabinet policies. It's fairly common.

RICHARD RUSK: It's common in Britain?

DEAN RUSK: We have that here occasionally. Cy Vance resigned over the helicopter raid in Iran, for example.

JOHNSON: Where there any close calls in your service? Did you ever contemplate that?

DEAN RUSK: Not seriously. I did tell President Kennedy in 1963 and President Johnson in 1967 that if they wanted to have a fresh start in my job before the forthcoming election, that they should feel free to do so. Both of them rejected that in peremptory terms. But, no, I was not in a situation--I don't recall being in a situation where I thought that I ought to resign as a matter of policy.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, what about your comment you made to me over at the house regarding this issue of surveillance and the proposition you put to John Kennedy in the presence of J. [John] Edgar Hoover? Do you care to read that into the tape or leave that out?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I did comment, but I am not sure that you ought to use this, but I did comment when I was in the Cabinet Room with President Kennedy, a few others, and J. Edgar Hoover, where they had reported on some kind of bugging that had been done on somebody. And I made the remark that if I found anybody in my own government bugging me, I would resign and make a public issue of it. And, it was seen by me that the walls in the ceiling of office were a network of electronic equipment to prevent anybody from bugging me. And I had that

apparatus checked regularly by different agencies of the government, so that no single agency would have complete control of my situation. And I did not have in my own office any capability of recording a telephone call, or bugging a conversation that I was having with any visitor: didn't have the capability. I am sure that some of my visitors thought I did, but I didn't.

JOHNSON: I would like to have a clarification, if I may, on something that was on the tape. I probably just misunderstood it. Did you never attend a 303 committee [Oversight of US covert operations] meeting?

DEAN RUSK: I personally did not.

JOHNSON: Personally never did?

DEAN RUSK: No, that was below cabinet rank. I had my representative there. And I usually talked to my representative, both before and after such meetings

JOHNSON: I just have a couple of final questions in the general area of oversight. Do you remember PFIAD, the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board? Did it ever do anything that you remember?

DEAN RUSK: Oh, it was a pretty "cold war" kind of group.

JOHNSON: Was it listened to at all?

DEAN RUSK: And, they also tended to take the view that intelligence gathering is a thing in itself. But, yeah, I would listen to them. But I didn't always buy some of the things they said.

JOHNSON: But I had the sense that they were a rather feckless organization in the government-

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DEAN RUSK: They didn't really play a very important role.

JOHNSON: I also wondered what, in your opinion, could be done to improve the supervision of the CIA, either by the executive or the Congress?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I think two things are critical. One is that the statutory members of the National Security Council know what is being done by the CIA. That's first and foremost. And secondly, I personally would prefer a joint committee of Congress to Intelligence, as I indicated before, similar to the old Joint-Atomic Energy Committee. But I think one intelligence committee in each house is a great improvement over a period we went through after the Church hearings, where about eight committees of the Congress asserted the right to be fully briefed on intelligence matters.

JOHNSON: That was ridiculous.

DEAN RUSK: Now there are times when it works in the other direction. I once brought the Appropriations subcommittee of the State Department down to the State Department and gave them a full briefing and demonstration of how far this electronic contest was going: espionage, counterespionage, and things of that sort. We had become very sophisticated indeed. Well after the meeting, a couple of these congressmen said to me, "Well this is very interesting, but I wish you hadn't told us. I would rather not know." Now, there is some of that involved in this business.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you support the idea of a statutory limitation on the length of term for a CIA director.

DEAN RUSK: Yes. I personally believe very strongly that those who exercise the raw power of a state should be on terms of office. You see, we already do that for a President and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. And because it is true of a President, it tends to be true of cabinet officers. But I think the Director of CIA and the Director of the FBI ought to be on terms of office, not longer than say six years, so that nobody can sit there year after year and accumulate invisible power, so that he knows that soon somebody will be in there to take his place. I think the J. Edgar Hoover experience taught us that, in spades.

JOHNSON: Wyche Fowler [Jr.] has a bill to go to Congress, which would require, believe it or not, congressional approval of advanced and paramilitary operations, presumably in the secret session. Does that make any sense?

DEAN RUSK: Congress as a whole?

JOHNSON: Yeah.

DEAN RUSK: Not really.

DEAN RUSK: I think the Congress has got to equip itself with people who the Congress is willing to allow to speak for the Congress.

JOHNSON: Do you think it would make sense to allow the two intelligence committees to vote formally on paramilitary operations in advance? And, if that approval was not forthcoming on the paramilitary operations, should it be cancelled?

DEAN RUSK: Not necessarily. It depends on the circumstance. There are times when--well for example, have I talked about the sending of these transport planes to the Congo?

RICHARD RUSK: On another tape, but not on this particular tape.

DEAN RUSK: During the mid-sixties, during Lyndon Johnson's administration, about two hundred white mercenaries in the Congo who had been working for the Congolese government rebelled and set up their own area out in Eastern Congo, and this created a great anti-white furor all over the country. Our Ambassador there said it was very important that some major white country, such as the United States, demonstrate its solidarity with the Congolese government, to

give it a chance to control its own people on this manner. Well, the situation continued to deteriorate and our Ambassador urged that three transport planes be sent there, just to be visible. And then the government could get on loud speakers and radio and go around the country to use this as a demonstration of white support against these white mercenaries. Well, President Johnson, at the time that he moved three transport planes to Ascension Island to get them closer to the Congo, asked me to talk to Senator Fulbright and Senator Russell about it. I did. And each one of them was strongly opposed to it. They didn't like it at all. And I reported that back to President Johnson. But then the situation in the Congo deteriorated further. They called mass meetings and were telling people to come to the mass meetings with their machetes because there would be some things to do after the meeting, such as massacre whites. So President Johnson moved these planes on into the Congo. And the government made maximum use of it. Radio, loudspeakers, things of that sort, calmed the situation down. Now let us suppose that President Johnson had not moved those planes into the Congo, and there had been a massacre of whites in the Congo. Think of his next press conference:

"Mr. President, were you aware that these kind of things might happen?"

"Yes, we thought it possibly could happen."

"Did you do anything to try and prevent it?"

"No, not really."

"Did anybody suggest to you what you might do?"

"Yes, our ambassador down there thought that if we moved three transport aircraft in there it might help."

"Well, why didn't you?"

"Well, Senator Fulbright and Senator Russell didn't think it was a very good idea."

Now, at that point people would say, "What in the hell is going on here? Who's our President?" Well, now both Senator Fulbright and Senator Russell got up on the Senate floor and bitterly criticized the President for taking that action. A little postscript on that: the foreign minister of one of the principal European countries sent me a message saying that he hoped that we would leave those planes in the Congo for a period because a good many of his own nationals were down there. And I said to him, "Well, then why don't you send some of your own planes down there?" He said, "Oh, we can't do that!" (laughter) Well, what's next?

RICHARD RUSK: Loch, do you want to try to finish this thing today or let it spill over?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I think we ought to let it spill over a little because it's already 12:20 and I've got some things to do. Go by the bank and get your mom some money.

RICHARD RUSK: We've been at it for an hour and fifteen minutes.

DEAN RUSK: Don't forget the President is having a press conference tonight at eight o'clock. I just hope he doesn't retract what [George Pratt] Shultz said to [Andrei Andreyevich] Gromyko in this communique on Star Wars. That would really set this whole business back.

RICHARD RUSK: What exactly did Shultz say?

END OF SIDE 1

BEGINNING OF SIDE 2

RICHARD RUSK: Testing. Testing. Testing.

Pop, this is a continuation of the interviews we have had on intelligence and intelligence gathering. The date is January 18, 1985. Good policy depends upon good intelligence. How would you rate the press and communications media as a source of intelligence gathering? For example, John Kennedy used to read extensively the morning newspapers as an alternative source of information on things. And Carl [Thomas] Rowan had quite an interesting story on Iran where he, himself, went there on a media assignment and wrote an extensive story on developments there when the Shah [Mohammed Reza Pahlavi] was still there in trouble. And yet his story was denied by the Ambassador. How would you feel the press stacks up, and the media stacks up, as a source of intelligence?

DEAN RUSK: We get a great deal of information from the American and foreign press. Now, one has to take that as simply one source of information to be collated with all the other sources to figure out exactly what is happening. There are also times when we get press flashes about some event somewhere which will reach us before official channels through our own embassies or other governments. And sometimes that is quite useful. But the intelligence community has to keep close eye on the news media, both here and abroad. That is one of their major sources of information. But it's not any monopoly source and it's not any especially assured source. One has to check out a lot of things to see whether or not the press is reporting accurately the facts. One has to be careful, of course, about the built-in distortion, which I mentioned earlier. The very answer given by the news media to the question "what is news?" tends to distort the picture of the world in which we live.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you ever recall bringing the press in, bringing perhaps individual journalists in on a story and inviting them to look into a situation on behalf of the American government. Say, for example, if you didn't really have staff in the area, or press people seemed to be especially knowledgeable about what was going on?

DEAN RUSK: I don't think I ever asked news media representatives to take on a job of investigating a particular situation. But I had many private talks with individual reporters and often, in those talks, I would mention to them some story that might be worth covering which

they were not giving attention to. And I would also ask them for their own judgment about various things. You see, the Washington press corps is made up of a great many able and experienced people who have been watching world affairs for some time. And it didn't bother me at all to ask them for their own judgment and advice about particular aspects of foreign policy. Sometimes you will get a reporter like Carl Rowan's story on the Shah in Iran where you must not expect the American ambassador, who is accredited to the Shah, to confirm the accuracy of a story like that by Carl Rowan. That's not his job. The policy of our government at that time was to maintain proper relations with the Shah, and indeed to support him up until the time he was overthrown. And so, reporters and ambassadors have somewhat different responsibilities in a situation like that. One illustration of how this works in the other direction, when George [Frost] Kennan was Ambassador to Moscow, he came out to Germany for some leave. And while he was in Germany he compared the regime in Moscow to the regime of Adolf Hitler. How in the world a Russian expert could think that he could make that kind of remark, particularly in Germany, and remain as Ambassador to Moscow is a little beyond my ken. And he was promptly declared persona non grata by the Soviet government and sent home.

RICHARD RUSK: We got into this question before, but it was--I think we need to bring it up one more time here. And my question is, critics of government intelligence make the claim that bad news is often filtered out in the bureaucracies, or any information that tends to discredit existing policies. And these messengers bearing bad news are sometimes treated roughly because of it. The old saying where people are more inclined to shoot the messenger than act upon the implications of that bad news.

DEAN RUSK: Well, it's very bad business if that happens. Those who have come to the top in the foreign service, people like Llewellyn [E.] Thompson or Charles [Eustis] Bohlen or [James W.] Jimmy Riddleburger and [U.] Alexis Johnson, people like that, did not rise to the top by pulling their punches. They always expressed their own views frankly and candidly to Secretaries of State and to others. And it's a primary duty of a professional officer to call it like he sees it. Now it's a mistake on the part of the leadership in Washington to penalize anyone for speaking out, frankly and firmly, about the way he sees things. They should value that kind of judgment, even though it may not fit their own ideas or their own policies. I think that aspect of it has been substantially overrated, exaggerated.

RICHARD RUSK: For example, what happened to the China experts back in the early fifties was more of a fluke phenomenon very tied to domestic policies.

DEAN RUSK: Well, some of the old China hands were unfairly penalized during that bitter controversy over China. People like John Paton Davies [Jr.] and John [Stewart] Service, and a few others. But, on the other hand, you would not suppose that all the old China hands would have wound up as Ambassador to London. Some of them had limits on their own capabilities, which meant that they would not rise to the very top. And some of them, one or two of them, had simply a network of very difficult personal problems which limited their career. It had nothing to do with policy. I think the job that [Joseph Raymond] McCarthy did and some of the others did on so called old China hands was a vicious and evil thing which we have no room for in our society.

RICHARD RUSK: Now, [William] Averell Harriman took quite a different view. I remember one point he came into the government--I believe it was on an issue of his involvement in the Far East of an Asia desk of some type--and took a look around at the staffers who were in his office, and was very dismayed by what he found there, and more or less cleaned house and brought some new people in and everything. He took a very different point of view on that. He felt that it was a problem.

DEAN RUSK: Well, any man who is carrying any kind of a heavy responsibility will want around him people who generally will share his own approach to things. You have some of that, but that happens every time you change the Secretary or change the President. So that is more or less normal.

RICHARD RUSK: Carl Rowan told a story about you and Robert [Strange] McNamara in Vietnam. He had accompanied you on one of your early trips there back in the sixties. And we were talking about the war in general, and intelligence, and I asked Carl if he felt that intelligence was distorted a bit in these briefings. And he seemed to think that based upon your questioning and McNamara's questioning of the briefers at these very sessions in Vietnam, that you, yourselves--you fellows yourselves--had some doubt or some skepticism about what you were hearing along the lines of this field intelligence coming out of Vietnam. That was his impression. Would you comment on that?

DEAN RUSK: Well, it was our duty and our practice to question people in the intelligence community rather sharply: try and probe for what things they really knew and what things were pure speculation so that the questions themselves should not betray a policy point of view rather than an attempt to get at the truth.

RICHARD RUSK: Those who control the flow of information, appointments and scheduling, perform a critical function in government. Walt [Whitman] Rostow has come under quite a bit of criticism in this respect from people who felt that he was too restrictive in what he determined Lyndon Johnson should see. Would you care to comment on that? Did you--And who controlled the flow of stuff for you over at the Department of State?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I never had the impression that Walt Rostow was somehow putting blinders on the President in terms of what he would see. Because, among other things, other people have access to the President. I, myself, talked to the President many times about Vietnam and other such questions. I showed to the President every day a report on what we had done during the day and how it looked as to what we might be doing in the next few days for the President's evening reading. And Walt Rostow never held up any of those. Those all went to him. I just don't believe that Walt Rostow censored what went to the President, from any policy point of view. Now, there was simply a question of mass, and the President's time, things of that sort. And some of these things had to be digested for the President's benefit. But--

RICHARD RUSK: Ben [Benjamin H.] Read would have been the one who controlled the flow toward you to some extent?

DEAN RUSK: Well, Ben Read was head of my own Secretariat in the secretary's office. And he did prepare things for me to see, for example the morning intelligence reports, and things of that sort. Somebody on his staff would go through and underline in a yellow pencil the things that they thought I particularly ought to see. But the rest of the material was there so that if I wanted to turn to it and get more detail on it, I was free to do so. But someone like Ben Read would be so close to the Secretary and the Secretary's own thinking and needs that they could do a very accurate job in deciding how much of this vast flow of materials ought to be passed on to my desk. But normally they would err in the direction of giving me an opportunity of seeing too much rather than too little. And then I would do a fair amount of selecting from the materials on my desk.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you see it as a potential problem or an actual problem in government? Take Nixon, for example, and the roles performed by [Harry R. (Bob)] Haldeman and [John Daniel] Ehrlichman in more or less controlling the flow of material and visitors to him.

DEAN RUSK: Well, there could be a problem if the staff people try to keep the President in a cocoon and not let him be fully informed on matters that really deserve the President's attention. And one must be particularly careful and not withhold from the President bad news just because you think the President might not want to hear it. That is a very dangerous thing to do. But a President must always have and be available to his Secretary of State, twenty-four hours a day if need be. And it's a great mistake for staff people to try to intrude themselves between the Secretary of State and the President in order to try and cut down on that relationship or narrow the range of issues on which the President would be informed.

RICHARD RUSK: Regarding the performance of intelligence services, the ones that advised you, were you ever disappointed or misled by these services? We talked about the Bay of Pigs. There is no need to repeat any of that. I suppose the Tet Offensive was in magnitude in that it must have been a surprise. But do you recall any other instances?

DEAN RUSK: Well, in reading the output of the intelligence community, the top policy people must always be just a little skeptical, because they themselves have to make some judgments as to whether or not this intelligence is accurate and factual, or whether it is speculation. There is another thing that comes into it. A President and Secretary of State usually know things, which are not passed on to the intelligence community to be taken into account when they make their estimates. For example, in my own very private talks with Andrei Gromyko, there were times when we would talk about certain things over in the corner somewhere and I would not write a memorandum on it and circulate it all through the government. But I would take those talks into account when I was making my own judgment as to the product of the intelligence community on those same issues.

RICHARD RUSK: Can you think of any specific examples of that, involving policy or events?

DEAN RUSK: At the moment I don't have a for instance in mind. It's important for a President and Secretary of State to have very private communications, particularly with our ambassadors abroad. I remember once receiving a telegram from one of our ambassadors of an important country, marked "Eyes Only--Secretary of State." As I looked at this I noted the notations at the

bottom of the cable as to where it had gone in government. Well, I did a check on that particular cable and found that my "Eyes Only" cable had been circulated to forty different departments and agencies in Washington. And then by the time the Xerox machine got through, that would mean several hundred copies of that would be lying all over town. So I invented a special channel, called the Cherokee Channel, where I could give a message to an officer from the code room and he would put an instruction on it to the code room in our embassy abroad that it must be delivered by the code room, by hand, to the ambassador. And that meant that it was possible for me to have a really private talk with an ambassador with only code room people involved in it. And they still have that channel, I gather.

RICHARD RUSK: Cherokee, huh? Still called the same thing?

DEAN RUSK: Yeah. The Cherokee Channel.

RICHARD RUSK: Were you ever caught by surprise in a situation where the intelligence people and the intelligence services should clearly have had adequate warning or advanced warning? You told me about Afghanistan and how that was a case where the Russians themselves did not know until a couple of days before-

DEAN RUSK: No, that was the move on Czechoslovakia. Well, if anything, the policy officer has to be aware that the intelligence community will cry wolf. That they will talk about bad things that are going to happen, many of which never happen. Because they don't want to get caught having something bad happen which they have not anticipated and called to your attention. And so you have to make some judgment of your own as to which ones of these things are for real.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you ever bring that point up to these fellows? And have them try to filter down that great mass of intelligence input?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I am not sure that you want to do that because they may filter out the wrong things. Now I would rather let the flow continue, knowing that I had to make my own judgment as to which things are for real and which things are not.

RICHARD RUSK: And work those seven day weeks.

DEAN RUSK: Yeah, sure.

RICHARD RUSK: That's not the way Ronald [Wilson] Reagan would do it. Okay, I've got a good question for you here. Now the third world countries in the last two decades especially have claimed that the CIA has had a large hand in the domestic policies of their own countries. Based upon the findings of the congressional committees of 1975 and your own surprise with these findings, and by this we mean the assassination plots and some of these other things that really caught you by surprise, do you think that these third world countries have reasonable grounds for these suspicions of CIA involvement? How would you handle that one?

DEAN RUSK: Well, that's a rather difficult problem because the normal function of one of our embassies abroad is to report on the situation in that particular country. That includes keeping in touch with members of the opposition elements in the country, to see what they are thinking. Now, there are some countries where, if you tried to do that, the government greatly resents it because your ambassadors are accredited to the government. For example, when what is now Bangladesh was East Pakistan our principal diplomatic officer there was a consulate general. Well, we had the government in West Pakistan declare one or two of our consulate generals persona non grata because they were meeting socially and having some contacts with opposition parties, opposition leaders. It's easy to translate that into interference in their internal affairs. But all diplomatic exchanges involve some degree of interference in the internal affairs of a particular country. You see, influence on American policy is a primary object of almost every foreign officer in the world. And sometimes that effort uses channels outside of the official channels of diplomacy. For example, embassies in Washington court the Congress, they court the press. They get their own information activities busy throughout the country trying to influence American policy and the attitudes of the American people toward their point of view. So, a fair amount of this is simply normal.

RICHARD RUSK: Right, and legitimate.

DEAN RUSK: And legitimate.

RICHARD RUSK: Okay. What about the potential for illegitimate activity? Did you ever have the feeling that perhaps the CIA was out there doing things in some of these countries that either did not have your sanction or over which--

DEAN RUSK: (speaking at the same time) Well, I heard some things from the Church Committee which I had not known about before, particularly these assassination plots against [Fidel (Ruz)] Castro. And that leads me to the conclusion that the CIA ought to be very closely supervised, both in the executive branch through the statutory members of the National Security Council and by committee of the Congress.

RICHARD RUSK: Did it lead to the feeling that perhaps they were involved in a much wider range activity out there that was at least covert and perhaps illegitimate?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I don't think there was a great deal of that; these assassination plots are a prime example. I used to have frank and personal talks with the head of CIA pretty regularly, just as I did with McNamara, and I didn't have the impression that I was being deceived by those fellows.

RICHARD RUSK: A lot of these third world political types automatically assume that whatever happens in their country that is not in the best interest is automatically the work of the CIA. To some extent, this is sort of a "cop-out" on their part.

DEAN RUSK: Well, bear in mind that these countries are subject to disinformation activities, on part of the Soviet Union and others. There were a couple of cases where the most crude forgeries were planted on a couple of African leaders trying to convince them that CIA was out

to destroy them. And it was relatively easy to demonstrate that these were just crude forgeries. So, you know this is a very mixed up kind of a problem and you have to work your way through it. But in terms of action, I think anything the CIA does ought to be closely supervised, both in the executive branch and the Congress. RR--Which, in your experience, is the greater problem in government: high level misrepresentation of intelligence among policy makers or faulty intelligence at the lower levels of government? Faulty intelligence, you know, at the field level. In your experience, where does intelligence generally break down in situations where it does?

DEAN RUSK: Well, the principal breakdown in intelligence comes from the simple fact that Providence has not given us the capacity to pierce the fog of the future with accuracy.

RICHARD RUSK: Okay, forget it. All right. I've got your remarks earlier on that.

DEAN RUSK: And so you must always--a policy maker must always ask himself, can these people really know what they are telling us? And often I would ask for some of the raw data which was behind the reports of the intelligence committee so I could make my own check on that.

RICHARD RUSK: Pop, forgetting the future for the moment and just being concerned with the intelligence for the present and the past, how would you respond to that question?

DEAN RUSK: Well, by and large I think the work of our intelligence community is very good. When there is an occasional mishap or when things go wrong, that tends to be highlighted. But the great mass of the work day by day, week by week, I think is very good indeed. Both CIA and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research in the Department of State have some extraordinarily able analysts in the present. And they do a very good job. My guess is that the shortcomings of our intelligence community are basically inherent in the intelligence process, and not because of incapacity or deliberate misrepresentation on the part of those in the intelligence community.

RICHARD RUSK: Some things are just plain hard to figure out.

DEAN RUSK: Yeah.

RICHARD RUSK: Now, when they run into some confusion or uncertain sources like that, do they do a pretty good job of reflecting those elements of controversy within their own service?

DEAN RUSK: Well, I've sometime--

RICHARD RUSK: Are they certain of their own evidence?

DEAN RUSK: I've sometimes commented to our intelligence leaders on just that point. I've told more than one director of Central Intelligence that when they make their national security estimates, a good many of them ought to begin with the expression, "Damned if we know, but if you want our best guess, here it is," to alert the policy officer that there cannot be certainty in the matters being discussed. It was general practice when there were differences of view among CIA, State Department, defense intelligence that those differences would be noted in the reports

themselves. Dissenting opinions were really quite frequent. So the policy officer would be alerted to know that there was another point of view.

[transcript ends here but tape continues for approximately four more minutes]

END OF SIDE 2

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