

Dean Rusk Oral History Collection

Rusk YY

Harlan Cleveland and Lois Cleveland interviewed over the telephone by Richard Rusk
circa 1985

[Interview was recorded over the telephone, poor audio quality]

RICHARD RUSK: [audio for this initial introduction was recorded at a very low volume] This interview is with Mr. Harlan Cleveland, assistant secretary of international affairs, 1961-65. And 1965-69 he was U.S. Ambassador and representative to NATO. This interview also contains remarks from Mrs. Cleveland at the beginning of the tape.

[break in recording]

LOIS CLEVELAND: --for some time. That was when he was quite a bit younger and your father was trying to get him to come up to the Foundation, and he could not cut loose then. So, when he had the chance to go to the State Department and work with your father, he did not even think twice. I remember one time your mother had to make a little speech to a group of ladies and she and I walked in together, and she took hold of my arm and her hand was just shaking, and I thought this woman does this six, eight, ten, twelve times a week and it is hard for her every time. And she does it so that her husband will not be tagged with all these things. She went to all those embassy parties by herself.

RICHARD RUSK: That's right.

LOIS CLEVELAND: Took all the embassy wives out to the house one on one. She knew all of them. At the final banquet, I remember, the whole white-tie group stood up as a man and applauded like mad when her name was offered.

RICHARD RUSK: Is that right? The final dinner for my father and mother? When was this that you noticed my mom's hand shaking before her speech? I am not surprised to hear it. I know she was real uncomfortable about that kind of thing.

LOIS CLEVELAND: I know because I would be, too. This was something at the Cosmos Club, but it was a women's group of some sort.

RICHARD RUSK: What year would that have been roughly do you think?

LOIS CLEVELAND: It never occurred to me that she was nervous. Here she was the wife of the Secretary: my goodness, top dog! I was nervous, but I did not think she ever was. It was kind of a revelation that she was conquering that and just going ahead and doing what needed to be done. The embassy wives loved her dearly. They thought she was wonderful.

RICHARD RUSK: Would that have been during the Kennedy years or the Johnson years?

LOIS CLEVELAND: The Kennedy years. During the Johnson years we were in NATO. No, this was about '62 I would say.

RICHARD RUSK: Well, that is interesting. Do you have any more stories on my mom or my dad?

LOIS CLEVELAND: Yeah, I remember one night we had an embassy dinner up there on the seventh floor, and it was going on and on. It was very, very late. And Harlan saw your father, and he told Harlan at a quarter of twelve, "Well, you can go home early. I don't think we need any more tonight." He said that one of the things that impressed him was that he had known your father before he went there, and by the time he left he didn't know him very much better, and that he never played favorites. There was no scratching for position with your father because he never worked that way. It really cut the dissension and rivalry down to practically nothing.

RICHARD RUSK: Was he a hard man to get to know? Did you and your husband feel that you knew him?

LOIS CLEVELAND: Not closely and personally, because he discouraged that because it could lead to this kind of thing. He didn't start it. But they never doubted for one minute his support and his friendship. I don't mean that. He just wasn't allowing any competition to be the inside man.

[break in recording]

CLEVELAND: He made reticence a policy.

RICHARD RUSK: You're right about that.

CLEVELAND: That affected everything he did. It affected all of us who worked for him. He is never going to write this story. He said that even when he was in office. Give me just a second. Ma Bell is interrupting it seems. When he was president of the Rockefeller Foundation he offered me a job which I was very disappointed to turn down because I already had a job that I hadn't finished by a long shot. I was spending a lot of Foundation money and I couldn't quite imagine that it would be as much fun to give it away. The man who was in charge of the social science part of the Rockefeller Foundation died rather suddenly and that was the job that he was talking to me about. I said at the time to my wife and others that I really turned it down with much reluctance, because if there was anybody that I wanted to work for in the United States it would be Dean Rusk. So I was really delighted when he called up one day during the interregnum after the election, before Kennedy took office, and said, "There seem to be two ideas about what you should do in the new administration." I had been sitting there wondering whether anybody was going to call up about anything.

RICHARD RUSK: Waiting for the phone to ring, huh?

CLEVELAND: All kinds of friends of mine were being appointed for things. And I had been

chairman of Citizens for Kennedy for our part of upstate New York around Syracuse. He said, "Well there are two jobs; there are two people: [Henry R.] Harry Labouisse and you. And there's the AID [Agency for International Development] program, the foreign aid program, and there's the job in the State Department as Assistant Secretary for International Organization Affairs." The deal is that Adlai [Ewing] Stevenson [III], of course, had wanted to be president, and then had wanted to be Secretary of State, and had settled for being Ambassador to the U.N. Part of his deal with the President was that he would get to nominate the person for the Assistant Secretary job, would be his backstop. I told your father, "Well if I were the new administration I would put me in the AID program," because earlier during the last of the war and the Marshall Plan and so forth I had spent quite a number of years in the very early stages of the AID business. I said, "Precisely for that reason I would rather do something that I haven't done before on the political side of diplomacy." I had always been on the economic side. I would really rather work in this job which I realize was being the man on the flying trapeze between Adlai Stevenson and Dean Rusk. So he said, "Well I will try to make it come out that way." And evidently he did, although he had a lot of trouble with Bobby Kennedy, who had taken a dislike to me during the campaign.

RICHARD RUSK: Is that right?

CLEVELAND: And I had taken an enormous dislike to him, which I carry to this day.

RICHARD RUSK: Is there anything in that that I would be interested in, or not really?

CLEVELAND: Well, I don't know. It would take up too much of your time.

RICHARD RUSK: That's funny! Bobby Kennedy was a man who attracted some strong supporters and yet some people really couldn't stand him.

CLEVELAND: It is said by people who knew him well in his last two, three, four years that he became the great liberal and so forth. But my contacts with him made it seem more credible that he was the person who had worked for [Joseph Raymond] Joe McCarthy earlier in his life. He was the rudest man I've ever met: unnecessarily so. I'll give you just one example. I was in Syracuse and I was chairman of Citizens for Kennedy. And I went over to Auburn, a town near Syracuse, to pick him up and bring him back from a baked-bean dinner, I think they were having to symbolize New England, for him as part of the campaign. So on the way over--I had written a long memorandum for the Kennedy campaign about how they ought to handle the foreign policy issue in the campaign. Then I had listened to most of his speech in Auburn. And Robert Kennedy had not been taking the line that I had suggested in my memo, so I called this to his attention and sort of argued the case for how I thought it ought to be handled. In the middle of a sentence he leans over and turns on the transistor radio in the car full blast so that it was impossible to hear anything. Now, you know, I was trying to get his brother elected President and I considered that that was an unnecessarily rude act, but that was quite typical.

RICHARD RUSK: The only man in government who really gave my dad a hard time in that sense was Bobby Kennedy, on things like ambassadorial appointments in trying to resurrect his old China hands, and things like that. So, I guess it rings true.

CLEVELAND: My appointment was held up for several weeks: my formal appointment. I came down as a consultant the third day of the administration. And I was sitting in what was going to be my office, waiting for the formal papers to come through and wondering why it was taking so long. And your father finally told me that the reason it took so long was that Bobby Kennedy had objected and had been overruled by his brother.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you know if my dad fought on your behalf? Did you ever find out anything about that story?

CLEVELAND: Well, of course, as in everything else--and maybe we can get into this a little--you never learned what he and the President said to each other. You never learned that from him. He obviously fought for it and won that round. I think that I was one of relatively few people in those first rounds of appointments that he really regarded as his nomination. I think [Phillips] Phil Talbot would be another. But, for example, [G. Mennen] Soapy Williams, the former governor of Michigan, had been publicly appointed as Assistant Secretary for Africa even before your father's appointment was announced. That was settled. So it was kind of a mixed bag of appointments. But I always had the feeling at least, that I was one of those that he really thought was a good idea.

RICHARD RUSK: I talked to your wife briefly before you came home. She told me that my dad is one of three people you really looked forward to working for one day. Why was it you thought that highly of my dad? Perhaps it's worth going back into the story and trace out your earlier involvement with him. Do you care to do that for me?

CLEVELAND: I first got to know him somewhat when I was working for Paul [Gray] Hoffman, who was one of the other people I really wanted to work for and did, in the [George Catlett] Marshall Plan. But I wasn't in the Marshall Plan as most of these people think of it: that is, as a European recovery program. I was responsible for all of the developing countries. I was a sort of underdeveloped areas guy in the Marshall Plan agency. I had started in charge of the China Aid Program and then I was given the responsibility for the whole of all of the Far Eastern programs.

RICHARD RUSK: You worked on the China desk in '48 and '49 I guess, huh?

CLEVELAND: Yeah. It was the China Aid Program, as it was called from '48 and '49. And then in '49--Most programs like that run out of money. But we didn't run out of money, we ran out of country. The communists took over the mainland and we were left with Taiwan and a surplus of about \$100 million, which was quite a lot more money than it is now. [Dean Gooderham] Acheson and Hoffman went up to Capitol Hill with that effort that I participated in and argued that what the appropriations meant when they appropriated the money for China was really the general area of China. And they nodded their heads and said yes indeed, that's what they had had in mind. And we then spread that \$100 million through the area. We started programs in the so-called Associated States of Indochina, as they were then called: Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos; developed a much expanded program in the Philippines; continued a program in Taiwan; and started programs in Indonesia and Burma. For a time I was director of the Far Eastern Program, which included sort of starting all those new programs and continuing the programs in Korea, China, and Taiwan, and beefing up the ones in the Philippines. At that time your father was the

Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs. So, although I considered him as considerably outranking me, he was my opposite number in a way in the State Department. So we had some contact in that connection. My feeling in every one of those contacts was that this was the most lucid mind I had ever encountered. He had a clarity of thought and of expression that just seemed to me extraordinary. He also had a kind of judicial temperament, a sense of kind of looking at one side and the other of issues and then coming up with what was almost the kind of judgment that a judge might make, based on the rationality of it. So I carried away that sense of--There were one or two cases where--I remember one issue where there was a big issue between the people who were interested in our relations with France and the people who were interested in our relations with the Indochina states.

RICHARD RUSK: If I can recall my history, wasn't that China money, that surplus money, pumped into the effort with the French and Vietnam Indochina?

CLEVELAND: Yeah. It wasn't military aid, though, it was economic aid. The French had left in the sense of leaving their sovereignty. So our arrangements were with Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. But we were still--You know, they were virtually French satellites still. So it was helpful. But there was a big issue about whether we would put the money in through France or whether we would open up our own aid missions and operate them directly.

RICHARD RUSK: That would have been 1950? Or rather 1949-1950?

CLEVELAND: Forty-nine, maybe early '50, but probably more likely late '49. So there was quite a bureaucratic row in Washington about it, including the row within the State Department between people interested in the Far East and people interested in getting along with France. The way it came down, the person who really had to make the decision about it was your father. He was very judicial and rational about it, but he decided, from my point of view, the right way: that is, not doing it through France, but doing it directly.

RICHARD RUSK: He made that decision as Assistant Secretary?

CLEVELAND: That was how it came through to me. He presided at the crucial meeting on the subject and rendered the decision. Now how much he had to clear his skirts with people above him at that time, I don't know. But my guess is that the people above him had enough confidence that they figured that whatever he did would be all right.

RICHARD RUSK: That would have been a rather important decision for that time.

CLEVELAND: It was an important decision. It came back in my mind much later when, in the State Department in the sixties I was involved in several issues between sort of European constituents and African constituents on issues about the Congo and otherwise, where your father would say to me, "Now for purposes of this particular issue, if you're on U.N. desk and the problem is between the European Bureau and the African Bureau, your job is to coordinate the two of them. Bang their heads together and come out with a reasonable answer. You're a Deputy Under Secretary," he would say, "for purposes of this particular issue. But if you say that is what you are, and that is what you have been assigned to do, I will deny it." He says that "Your job is

to reconcile these things, but I am not going to give you the formal mandate to be the coordinator of it." That was rather a typical way in which he would operate. But I felt that he had enough confidence in me so that I would sail into the coordination function with enough confidence so that that would abash the other participants. It worked pretty well, but it could never be traced back to him. Not an untypical way of administration for him.

RICHARD RUSK: Two questions come to mind. One is relating to my dad's impression on you in the early fifties when you knew him early. That is, did he have that degree of reticence about him then that he later had as Secretary?

CLEVELAND: Well, I guess I did not really know him well enough in those days to know what he was keeping back. My main impression from those days was his capacity to not only analyze foreign policy issues but to explicate them. He is one of the few people I have known who really speaks in full sentences.

RICHARD RUSK: Oh boy, we find that out with these transcripts and oral histories. They are grammatically correct. His conversational English is grammatically proper written English.

CLEVELAND: Yes, well that struck me even in the fifties or late forties. So I was not at all-- Well, I was just impressed with him at the time. And so, as I saw him occasionally in the period when he was with the Rockefeller Foundation, I had that same sense of lucidity. And I always had a very warm feeling about him even though he was not a person, and particularly later in the sixties, with whom you felt you could have a sort of close personal friendship. Although I had been calling him by his first name for some years in the interim, when I came to Washington I quickly realized that somehow it would be more appropriate to call him Mr. Secretary. And for the eight years that I worked for him in the State Department and then as Ambassador to NATO, I called him Mr. Secretary.

RICHARD RUSK: What did he call you?

CLEVELAND: He called me Harlan. And when he was out of office I started calling him Dean again and that seemed to be all right.

RICHARD RUSK: I don't think it would have mattered either way.

CLEVELAND: Well, I don't know. The other people who had known him that were there, some of them had known him even better than I had, they had the same feeling that we were addressing an office, which is very much what you do with the President. Even his closest friends would kind of freeze up and call him Mr. President after he got elected.

RICHARD RUSK: Well, my dad was greatly influenced by George Marshall, and I could explain some of the reasons for his more formal relationships with people as a--

CLEVELAND: I think that you ought to make a major theme of the influence on him of George Marshall.

RICHARD RUSK: Yeah. He talked a great deal about George Marshall did he?

CLEVELAND: He was full of stories about George Marshall.

RICHARD RUSK: Okay. Well I think we have them all. I think we do.

CLEVELAND: I'm sure you have them all? My favorite was the story about George Marshall when he was called up about when V-E [Victory in Europe] Day was going to be exactly.

RICHARD RUSK: We have it.

CLEVELAND: He regarded that as a very good thing for Marshall to have done.

RICHARD RUSK: And I suppose that when he was giving some directives or directions to his staff, that is the form in which he would give them. He would tell these stories and these anecdotes rather than say explicitly what he wanted done and in what way things should be done, huh?

CLEVELAND: Well, it was interesting. He was not really very much like George Marshall whatever his self image, because he was not a person to give orders. The old theory of administration was recommendations up, orders down. I guess for him you would have to say it was recommendations up and indications down. The typical situation would be this: We would gather in his office to discuss some issue that would have to be decided ultimately by the President. We would debate the issue. He would participate, but mostly by asking questions. Then the meeting was over. He did not ask for a consensus, he knew what we thought. He would then go over to the White House and sort the question out with the President, through both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations.

END OF SIDE 1

BEGINNING OF SIDE 2

RICHARD RUSK: Incidentally, while we have this interruption--and again as soon as dinner is ready I'll hang up and we will reschedule at your convenience. I think you are the type of fellow who definitely has some things to say about my dad and I would like to get back with you. But let's not push it, and keep our priorities straight as far as dinner is concerned and things like that.

CLEVELAND: We could reconvene more easily over a weekend.

RICHARD RUSK: Okay, that would be fine.

CLEVELAND: About another twenty minutes. Let's see, where were we--

RICHARD RUSK: You were speaking of my dad's manner of operation with groups. I presume you were talking about the assistant secretaries and how he would participate but not really give directions. Go ahead.

CLEVELAND: Then he would go to the White House and there would be a conversation between him and the President, perhaps some staff, but often I think just with the President. Then he would come back and he would tell us what the policy was. Typically, we would never know whether this was a policy that he had strongly argued for and had been accepted, or a policy he had strongly argued against and had been overruled. But when he came back it was the President's policy. He very much felt like the President's deputy for foreign policy, which is exactly how a Secretary of State ought to feel, I think. And it was not his job to be second guessing it after the President had spoken. But it was his job to mobilize all the best possible advice he could get, including his own opinion. But it certainly was not his job to tell us, "Well, the President has decided this but I sure don't agree with it, but we have to do it anyway." He has never said anything like that. He had a very kind of constitutional sense of the office he held. That was admirable but also somewhat frustrating, obviously, for his subordinates who wanted to know where all the bodies were buried and what all the gossip was. We never got any gossip.

RICHARD RUSK: I see that as being very damaging to this idea of trying to develop departmental positions on things.

CLEVELAND: I'm not sure that it was really, because I think that essentially what it did was it reserved to him the departmental position, and it did not permit a situation in which the departmental positions were being developed by all sorts of people. So I think that, in a way, it didn't derogate from his power. It probably increased it internally. He always stayed away from any real revelation of what went on between him and the President, and he certainly stayed away from any sense that he disagreed with the President on a matter after the President had made a decision. I would say it's sort of a constitutional view of the office.

RICHARD RUSK: Did that impair your ability to function as Assistant Secretary for International Organizations? How did it work with you?

CLEVELAND: Well, no.

RICHARD RUSK: Did you know what was in his mind on the things that you needed to know?

CLEVELAND: On the things that I really needed to know, I felt very comfortable. One of the reasons for that was a kind of a special reason. He had been in my job, you see. In fact, he was the first person to be in the job that I held when it became an assistant secretaryship: in fact much earlier, when it was still called the U.N. Affairs Bureau. So he was very much interested in what I was doing. I had very good, often just instant, access to him when we had a problem. He was fascinated with the tactical issues in the U.N.

RICHARD RUSK: With the tactical issues?

CLEVELAND: With the tactical issues. In other words, if I would go up and say, "Well now,

we've got this problem in the Security Council about the Angola Resolution. And we've got the so-and-sos on this side and we've got the other people on the other side, and our dilemma is this, and our sense of strategy is that we should instruct Adlai Stevenson to do so and so and to say so and so." On those subjects, instead of a kind of an Olympian posture he would get right down in the staff work. He would say, "Well, I wonder if we couldn't," and he'd kind of crinkle his smile. He'd say, "I wonder if we couldn't try this way of doing this": some wonderfully creative procedural gimmick that he could have thought up only if he had had previous experience in this particular kind of--He had gotten very much interested in what he called "parliamentary diplomacy." He wrote a very good article in Foreign Affairs once on that, which if you haven't seen, you should.

RICHARD RUSK: I've seen it, yeah.

CLEVELAND: He was very much interested in multilateral diplomacy as it was practiced in the U.N. And, of course, back when he was doing it and when he--he probably ought to be credited with the politics that created the U.N. force in Korea, for example, over a weekend. He was very good at that sort of thing. He still had this sort of almost technician's feel for what I was doing. And for me that was not an obstacle at all. It was not a feeling that, "Oh my God, the boss is going to second guess me." It was a feeling that I could, first of all, get to him almost immediately because he knew that the decisions we needed were matters of hours, not days; and secondly, that when we got the problem to him and explained it he would be a creative participant in the staff work. And it was, therefore, a lot of fun to work with him that way. He was also very sensitive, wonderfully sensitive, about the psychological problem of dealing with Adlai Stevenson.

RICHARD RUSK: Let me stop you there for a minute and back up. Let me ask you this question: Overall was he a good boss for you? You had said that you had wanted to work for him at one time. Obviously you anticipated that he would be would be a certain type of fellow to work for. Did that pan out? Was he a good man for you to work for?

CLEVELAND: Very much so, yes. Very much so. It was different from what I thought because I had not really anticipated the reticence and the sort of constitutional view of the office.

RICHARD RUSK: But you're saying--

CLEVELAND: In that job he was not a pal. I don't know of anybody that felt that he was a pal. But substantively, and I was very much interested in the job substantively, and in terms of political judgment and so forth, I always felt that he and I were very much on the same wave length. He gave me a great deal of rope. I had a feeling, although this may not be justified and he might not agree with it, but he gave me more rope than any other Assistant Secretary. The fact that I felt that way is perhaps an answer to your question.

RICHARD RUSK: And all of the negative aspects of his performance as a boss, in your experience, was this reticence. Is there anything else that you could think of for the record?

CLEVELAND: There may be a first cousin to the reticence, which is a compartmentalization:

That is, as the Vietnam war wore on--And during most of that period of course, which was quite long, I was over in Europe as Ambassador to NATO. But I got back, I figured, at the end of my forty-four months in that job, I had come back to Washington twenty-two times. So I was back quite often. And, of course, my European colleagues were leaning on me very hard about the war in Vietnam. So whenever I saw him there was a kind of incentive to tell him what the Europeans and I, myself, were increasingly feeling about the war, which, as my European friends kept saying, "Whatever obligation you think you're fulfilling out there, you've already over-fulfilled it." Well I tried a few times, and I tried quite hard in a series of cables after I got authority from Washington to probe deeply into the views on Vietnam of each of the countries in NATO. That was to get different angles from what they might be getting from the bilateral end of it in the capitol. And I got very negative feedback about the war in Vietnam. I sent a series of, I thought, very well-formulated and eloquent cables back and got zero response to it.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you think he read the cables?

CLEVELAND: Well, I raised this question with him much later, just a few years ago, and he said he didn't remember why he hadn't ever responded to that.

RICHARD RUSK: What year would that have been?

CLEVELAND: Probably late '67, during '67 anyway. But the point is that when you would approach a subject like that, that was not part of your responsibility, you got no encouragement at all to pursue the conversation. Vietnam was for discussion with the people who were managing the war in Vietnam.

RICHARD RUSK: I wonder if he was that way on all issues or strictly that one, as touchy as that was.

CLEVELAND: I don't think so. Well, I think even when I was in Washington he was very open to discuss the issues that were in my jurisdiction or which affected NATO even if they were arguments between the Belgians and the Africans. But I never felt any encouragement to tell him what he ought to be doing in some other part of his responsibility. And my feeling is that he, in a sense, never had a kitchen cabinet. He never had a bunch of cronies that sat around discussing the situation as a whole. Personally, I think that was too bad because I think he might have gotten insight. Much later he asked me how come so many people now say that "they thought I was going down the wrong track but they did not tell me at the time." I told him essentially what I am telling you.

RICHARD RUSK: Good point.

CLEVELAND: That was not something that he encouraged. You know, it's kind of a hierarchical society, and when the king indicates that he does not want to discuss that subject, you don't discuss that subject.

RICHARD RUSK: That's interesting. That is an important point. One of the reasons that I am doing this book is because I am trying to piece that story together. If you look at my dad's career

over seventy-five years, it's one hell of a story, and yet he got involved in one of the worst things this country has ever done. And as his son, I want to try to figure this thing out. And whatever insight you can give me along those lines is very helpful and I encourage you to do it.

CLEVELAND: My diagnosis would be, a very important part of that was this constitutional view, particularly during the LBJ administration.

RICHARD RUSK: Let me back you up just a minute. When you discussed your views, the NATO countries' reactions to Vietnam, and you brought these up with him, did you ever try to break through that reticence, press those views on him in any way?

CLEVELAND: No, and I wondered later whether I should have jumped up and down or anything, but somehow it did not seem appropriate in his presence.

RICHARD RUSK: Do you recall anyone in the Department so-called going to the mat with him on that war? I know George [Wildman] Ball did in numerous ways.

CLEVELAND: George Ball was against the war for the wrong reasons. I helped George Ball write two or three of the crucial memos that he put into the hopper. But his basic view was that that we should not be pushing it so far because the Chinese will come in and clobber us as they had in Korea. I didn't really think then and I don't really think now that that was the main problem. But that was the main thing that George was pushing. Maybe he felt that that was the main thing that would be effective.

RICHARD RUSK: You don't recall an instance where he was severely challenged on his views on Vietnam within the Department with which you may have been familiar?

CLEVELAND: I never witnessed it, no. And it was sort of a Vietnam coterie of people, Bill [William Putnam] Bundy and others, who were managing the war. And they were the people who were in the act. One of the hardest liners, of course, was--Oh, what is his name? He was head of the Research and Intelligence and later wrote a book saying, "It sure should not have been done this way."

RICHARD RUSK: Head of Intelligence at the Department of State?

CLEVELAND: Yes. But he wrote a really ridiculous history shortly after he got out of the government: Roger Hilsman. I guess the most emotion I ever saw your father exhibit was in talking about Roger Hilsman and his book. Because here was this guy claiming to be a Vietnam dove and getting onto the best-seller list and so forth, when inside the Department he was one of the hardest liners, one of the set of tough guys who really wanted to clobber them and so forth. I felt equally strongly about it, but of course he wasn't my subordinate.

RICHARD RUSK: Hilsman claimed in his book that he resigned, but my dad says that he fired him. Do you have any insights on that one?

CLEVELAND: Well, I would go with your dad. They may have allowed him to resign. But he

had become insufferable and his whole story that he tells in his book is so egocentric and self-centered. I mean, on the Congo issue for example, which I was very much involved with, he tells the story as if Soapy Williams and I were sort of on the African side against the European bureau. In fact, that was one of the issues which I'd been assigned to try to sort out. And we did sort it out. And we developed a policy and told the policy to the President about three or four times at different crucial moments. And very late in the story, George Ball asked Roger Hilsman to sort of review the whole thing and give him his personal advice.

RICHARD RUSK: Yeah.

CLEVELAND: Roger builds up to that as the great climax of the story where he takes all the papers home over the weekend (probably illegal, they were mostly classified) and reviews the matter and comes in with his opinion that the line on which we were was exactly right. Somehow that's the climax of the story.

RICHARD RUSK: I see.

CLEVELAND: The rest of us never even knew that that was even part of it.

RICHARD RUSK: Can you tell me what my dad's reaction to Hilsman's leaving in his book might have been: you know, the little anecdotal types of things that I might be able to key in on?

CLEVELAND: Just that he was terribly impressed with the fact that Hilsman had been on one side when he was in the Department and on the other side when he was trying to collect readers for his book.

[break in recording]

CLEVELAND: --Of your father's reaction to people that did instant histories, and then let's make a date to resume this.

RICHARD RUSK: Okay.

CLEVELAND: This story is one that I've been tempted to write down but I haven't yet, but one of these days I may do so. It was while I was at NATO. And I came back on one of my many trips and we had a lunch date with your father: [John J.] Jack McCloy and I.

RICHARD RUSK: Jack McClay?

CLEVELAND: McCloy. He was not in the government, but was sort of a consultant to the President on derailing the so-called Mansfield resolution, which was the resolution that Mike Mansfield kept putting up about taking our troops out of Europe. So we had a date to discuss all of this with Dean Rusk in the eighth floor special little sanctum that he had lunch in. And that morning the *Washington Post* had all over its front page a new book by Arthur [Meier] Schlesinger [Jr.]: not his big book about the Kennedy administration, but a small book that he published later. I can't remember its title, but it had to do with his perception that if Kennedy had

been alive he wouldn't have done the Vietnam thing the way--

RICHARD RUSK: Okay, that was maybe a hundred-page book on the war in Vietnam. I recall it.

CLEVELAND: Well, the most natural thing in the world as we sat down to lunch was for Jack McCloy to ask Dean Rusk "Well, what do you think of Arthur Schlesinger's new book?" And your father made an absolutely classic "Ruskian" statement. He said, "Well, I suppose that I met with President Kennedy maybe a hundred times on Vietnam and Southeast Asian policy, and I don't remember a single time when he held up his hand and said, 'Stop. We can't discuss this subject, Arthur Schlesinger's not here.'" That's all he would say. But I think that's vintage Rusk.

RICHARD RUSK: Yeah. I'm glad you told me that one. We've got a few stories about Schlesinger. Of all the critical things said about my dad in all that time, the only one that really affected me was Arthur Schlesinger's *Thousand Days* and the *Look* magazine installments of it. I felt like I'd been kicked by a mule after that one. The rest of them never got to me, but that one hurt. Yeah, that one did. When do you want to talk again?

CLEVELAND: The best time would be--

END OF SIDE 2

