

**Dean Rusk Oral History Interview – JFK #8, 7/21/1970**  
**Administrative Information**

**Creator:** Dean Rusk

**Interviewer:** Dennis J. O'Brien

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**Biographical Note**

Dean Rusk (1909-1994) was the Secretary of State from 1961 to 1969. This interview focuses on the United States' relations with the Middle East, the unrest between Israel and other Middle Eastern countries, and Rusk's impressions of John F. Kennedy, among other topics.

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Eighth Oral History Interview

with

DEAN RUSK

August 21, 1970  
Washington, D.C.

By Dennis J. O'Brien

For the John F. Kennedy Library

O'BRIEN: Since this interview is the last of the series we've been doing, at least for the moment, I think the logical place to begin is with--and since it does focus in on the Middle East--is basically with the appointment of Phillips Talbot. Where does Talbot come from, and why is Talbot selected as Assistant Secretary of State?

RUSK: I think Talbot was a nomination of Chester Bowles. I had known Phillips Talbot in earlier years when I was at the Rockefeller Foundation. I had a high regard for him. But I think it was Chester Bowles who put his finger on him and urged that he be brought into the government to work on the Middle Eastern and the South Asian problems. Phillips Talbot is an authentic expert on India and South Asia. He's worked on it for many years, he's lived out there; and so he had a running start on one of the major areas for which he would become responsible. He was a man who was well-known for his judgment and integrity, intelligence, and appeared to be the kind of man we wanted in the Kennedy Administration. So I forwarded Chester Bowles' nomination of Phillips Talbot with considerable enthusiasm.

[Sanitized under the RAC Project, 4/3/01  
No additional material released as a result of  
this review.]

O'BRIEN: Were there any other people that were being suggested at this time or pushed from out of the White House or other quarters?

RUSK: No, we had no specific pressures from the White House, the Democratic National Committee, or sources of that sort for this particular post. Now, we did have a considerable number of younger people, quite young, who wanted to enlist in President Kennedy's Administration, but one of the troubles was that these young people, many of them, wanted to start at the top. And so I had a good many interviews with young people who wanted to serve President Kennedy but who wanted to start as an assistant secretary, young people who'd never made a decision, who had never negotiated anything, who'd never drafted a note, who had never talked with foreigners about any matters of real importance. And so we had to point out to them that foreign policy requires a good deal of professional competence; that doesn't just come from a liberal arts course in a college; that there is such a business as an apprenticeship in foreign policy matters. But we were not under specific pressure from any quarter to name a particular individual for this Middle East-South Asian post.

O'BRIEN: Well, is Talbot a neutral in an area in which there is a great deal of interest domestically as to how a person stacks up in his views towards Israel and also the Arabs?

RUSK: Well, I think it should be noted that under a Democratic administration, whether it's Truman or Franklin Roosevelt or John F. Kennedy or Lyndon Johnson, there's always a body of opinion outside the Department of State which thinks that the Department of State is pro-Arab and anti-Israeli simply because the Department of State is not always willing to recommend that we put all of our chips in the Middle East on Israel. I say this is the case in a Democratic administration because, by and large, the Jewish vote in this country, the Jewish interest, the Zionist and Israeli interest, has been strongly in support of the Democratic Party. I don't know what the polls would show and the analysis of the election returns would show, but as a rough guess I would think that Democrats usually get about 75 percent of the Jewish vote.

So this tends to cause the Jewish community--or at least the pro-Israeli part of the Jewish community--to expect big things from a Democratic President. And it has indeed, caused Democratic Presidents to pursue a policy of strong friendship for Israel. After all, the United States played the key role in bringing the state of Israel into existence back in 1948. Now, anything less than an all-out pro-Israeli view in the Department of State is looked upon with considerable suspicion by the Jewish community in this country. This began back in the old days, when Ambassador Loy Henderson was in charge of Middle Eastern affairs in the Department of State.

As a matter of fact, American policy toward the Middle East has been based upon the rather simple and general proposition that the United States supports the political independence and territorial integrity of all the states in the Middle East. We have pursued that policy in this postwar period on a rather extraordinarily evenhanded basis--despite our close friendship for Israel and despite the difficulties we've had in the Arab world because of our strong friendship with Israel. If you look back over this postwar period, you will find that the United States has assumed this general policy in behalf of Lebanon, Jordan, Juwait, Saudi Arabia, Egypt at the time of the Suez crisis in the Eisenhower Administration, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco; and indeed, President Kennedy was known for his pre-election support of the independence of Algeria, in our relations with France. So we have tried to maintain the integrity of all the the states in the Middle East without taking part in specific commitments to any of them by way of a security treaty. We've acted through diplomacy; we've acted sometimes with the use of our own forces. President Kennedy put a squadron of fighter planes into Saudi Arabia at a time when Saudi Arabia was threatened by Egypt. So the commitment to Israel is a part of a general commitment to the political independence and territorial integrity of all the states in the area. We have felt that that would best serve American interests and that would best conform to the United Nations Charter and that a stable Middle East, based upon the stability of the component parts, would be most agreeable from the point of view of United States interests and policy.

Now, we were very much in the Kennedy Administration involved in a triangular relationship in the Middle East. There was first the contest between the Arabs--particularly the more extreme Arabs--

and Israel. Then there was a bitter contest between the so-called progressive Arabs--Egypt, Syria, Iraq--and the so-called moderate and conservative Arabs, such as Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, then Libya before its recent coup d'etat, Tunisia, Morocco. That caused a good many complications because we had to act at times in support of one Arab state against another Arab state, and we acted in support of Israel against several of the Arab states. But that triangular competition was a very complicating issue for us during the Kennedy period.

We tried to support Jordan, despite the fact that sometimes the Israelis became rather nervous about our support for Jordan. Although, on the whole, the Israeli authorities realized that they had a stake in the moderate or even conservative nature of the Jordanian regime, as compared with the situation they would face if Jordan became captured by the more extreme Arab point of view. So Israel generally understood the things that we were doing to support King Hussein in Jordan.

Now, we tried during the Kennedy Administration to work out a better relationship with some of the extreme Arabs. We tried very hard with President Nasser. President Kennedy approved a very large three-year food program for Egypt at a time when American food was feeding a substantial fraction of the Egyptian population. And that was several hundred million dollars over a period of three years. This was a massive contribution toward Nasser's own political system. But we were always in difficulty because Nasser found it apparently impossible to treat us with a calm and a dignity that made it possible for us to continue such aid to Egypt. He would make, from time to time, fiery speeches in which he would condemn the United States, even during the Kennedy period, rather severely. And those speeches made it politically difficult for us to maintain the support of the Congress for aid programs to Egypt. When Nasser would say that we should take our aid and dump it into the Red Sea, naturally the response from the Congress would be, "Well then, let's stop the aid program." So Nasser showed very little sensitivity to the point that if he was receiving substantial American aid, he had a political constituency in the United States which he had to nourish; that he had to help maintain the political atmosphere and the political environment in which such aid programs could go forward. President Kennedy became increasingly disillusioned about President Nasser toward the end of Kennedy's Administration.



O'BRIEN: American Presidents--as well as Secretaries of State--since particularly the Truman years, have felt the domestic pressures on the part of pro-Israeli groups within the United States. How about yourself? Did you feel pressures while you were in the position of Secretary of State during the Kennedy years? Were there people that came to you on various problems who were Democratic?

RUSK: I was genuinely surprised by the relative absence of direct pressure on Middle Eastern questions, either from the point of view of the organized Jewish community in the United States or on the part of the oil companies. I think I met once during the Kennedy Administration with a group of presidents of Jewish organizations in the United States. I met with the same group once or twice during the Johnson period, but I was not harrassed and heckled and pressured and threatened by the Jewish community in this country while I was Secretary of State--except for maybe that one meeting. I don't recall that anybody ever came into see me to pressure me on a particular point of policy affecting Israel. Now, the circumstances at that time were such that there was no particular occasion for severe pressures, because the area was generally quiet. Some of our most severe problems during the Kennedy period were not between Israel and the Arabs, but between Arabs: the threat of Egypt against Saudi Arabia, the very difficult problem of the Yemen. So that there was no particular occasion for the Jewish community to unload on me, as Secretary of State, on major problems of policy. Similarly, I don't think that I was ever visited during the Johnson years--with representatives of the oil companies pressuring me to take a more favorable attitude toward one or another Arab state. Now, I know the impression outside of government probably is that a secretary of state is constantly subject to competing pressures from the Jewish community in this country and the oil interests in the Middle East, but it just didn't happen that way while I was Secretary of State.

O'BRIEN: In your conversations with the President over matters pertaining to Israel and the Middle East did you ever get the feeling that the President was pressured or at least was made aware by various groups in the United States--either oil companies or groups which were pro-Israel?

RUSK: President Kennedy never passed on to me any direct pressures which he might have received on these matters, either from the Jewish community or from oil companies. One would have to look at his own records and his own diaries and appointments to see whether or not he was under substantial pressure. I doubt very much that he was. Now, again, I think that President Kennedy was somewhat more friendly to Israel than General Eisenhower had been. This was understood, and I think the Jewish community in this country knew that, and I think Israeli leaders reflected that in their discussions with members of the American Jewish community. But I never had the impression that President Kennedy was under severe and direct pressure over these questions from the special interests in this country one way or the other.

O'BRIEN: Were you aware at that time of the meetings that took place prior to the election of 1960--as I understand, basically the same group of people that met with, apparently, Nixon in 1968 before the election, groups of Jewish leaders who were rather strong and heavy contributors to Democratic politics, to national politics--and the content or at least the lines of questioning which President Kennedy was.....

RUSK: No, I'm not familiar with what happened during the period between the election and inauguration in that regard. I'm not aware of any meetings that he had. He might well have had some, but I was just not familiar with those. Now, I think--again, I would point out that the Democratic Party in general is more friendly toward Israel than is the Republican Party. In terms of evenhandedness, I suppose the Republican Party is somewhat more evenhanded than the Democratic Party on these Middle Eastern issues.

O'BRIEN: There's a number of appointments that come in that... . Well, let's take one appointment that is a Department appointment that's rather important, and that's the appointment of Mr. [Philip M] Klutznick to the U.N. post under Stevenson. In your associations with Klutznick, does Klutznick have any special role or representation above and beyond his U.N. duties, in problems pertaining to Israel?

RUSK: I don't recall that Ambassador Klutznick ever talked to me about Israel during the entire period that he was in office. He was basically an Adlai Stevenson appointee. Nor do I recall that Adlai Stevenson ever talked to me specifically about Israel as a policy problem because, again, during the Kennedy period, things were reasonably in good order as between ourselves and Israel, and the problems in the Middle East during the Kennedy period were basically between Arabs rather than between Israel and Arabs.

Nasser had told us during the Kennedy period that he was prepared to put the problem of Israel in the refrigerator and put it off to one side and then work on the problem of improving relations between Egypt and the United States. So the issues did not come to a sharp focus during the Kennedy period that would test President Kennedy's choices as between Israel and Arab interests.

O'BRIEN: What kind of a role does a person like [Myer] Feldman in the White House play? Does he ever complicate things for the people in the Department involved in Near East and Middle East affairs?

RUSK: He followed our relations with Israel in considerable detail, and he would take an active interest in such things as applications by Israel for aid and for military equipment and things of that sort. But I don't recall that we had tensions and strains between the Department and Mr. Feldman, as we had at the time of the Truman Administration between the department and the man who was occupying relatively the same position on the White House staff.

O'BRIEN: Well, there are some issues that do come up or some general problems that involve Israel and also the Arab world as well. I'm thinking of the decision to sell the Hawk missiles to Israel. Is this basically a Department decision, or is it a decision which--or how does the Department stand on this issue?

RUSK: Well, the Department was concerned about the reactions in the Arab world if we sold Hawk missiles to Israel. But since the Hawk missiles are basically defensive weapons, the Department did not take

a strong view opposing such sales, but simply pointed out that there would be some sharp reactions from the Arab world--as indeed there was--if we went ahead with it. We did not, during the Kennedy period, get into such sensitive and potentially provocative matters as the furnishing of Phantom jets by President Johnson to Israel. That was far more stimulating, as far as Arab reaction was concerned, than the sale of Hawk missiles. And then, too, we were supplying arms to some of the Arab states at the same time, during the Kennedy period. We were supplying arms to Jordan and Saudi Arabia, I think Tunisia, Libya, and so there was a balance in this that caused some of the Arabs to take the Hawk missile sale in stride. So that was not a major disruption of our relations with Arab countries.

O'BRIEN: Were there any compensatory sales of arms, that you recall, after the Hawks?

RUSK: Well, they were not directly related, they were not tied to each other, but we did furnish considerable military equipment to Jordan and to Saudi Arabia.

O'BRIEN: Well, the Johnson plan was basically a Department effort. Is there any resistance in either the Department or outside the Department to it, before the Arabs and the Israelis encounter it?

RUSK: You're referring now to the work of Joseph Johnson.

O'BRIEN: Yes, Joe Johnson.

RUSK: We called upon Joe Johnson to try to get a solution to the problem of the Arab refugees. We had the impression that if the refugees could be given a personal and secret choice as to where they wanted to live five, ten, fifteen years from now, that not very many of them would choose to go back to Israel. As a political matter, most of the refugees talked about going back to Palestine. But there was no Palestine; there was Israel; there was Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and so forth. So a refugee who wanted to go back to his home in territory that had become Israel had the choice of going back to Israel, not of going back to Palestine. Now, when the

question came up, it usually came up in public form, and the leaders of the Palestine refugees, in effect, would pass the word around among the refugees that you must say that you want to go back to Palestine. Whereas, we felt that if these individual refugees could make a choice and decide whether they wanted to live in Israel or Jordan or Syria or, indeed, Brazil or the United States, or wherever, that perhaps not more than 10 percent of them would choose to go back to Israel, and that on that basis Israel might be able and willing to take, say, 10 percent of them. But Israel could never take the entire two million refugees without basically changing the very character of Israel and creating major security problems for them.

Joe Johnson tried to work out a scheme by which you would get that kind of individual choice on the part of the refugees so that you would have a limited number choosing to go back to Israel, which would be in an order of magnitude which Israel could accept. But the Arabs, on the one hand, wanted a commitment from Israel that they would take all who elected to go back to Israel without regard to number, and Israel was unwilling to give an open-ended commitment to take back just any numbers that turned up. So the Johnson move, in effect, failed over that particular difference between the two sides. As a matter of fact, I still think that the approach must be the eventual solution to the refugee problem; that is, the approach of giving the individual refugee a private and secret choice as to where he wanted to live.

O'BRIEN: Did you have the impression at that point that the Israelis were really seriously interested in working out the refugee problem--or the Arabs?

RUSK: I think Israel would have been willing to take numbers, perhaps up to a maximum of two hundred thousand, back into Israel. After all, there are today a substantial number of Arabs living in Israel as Israeli citizens. But I had the impression that the political aspects of the problem on the Arab side made it impossible for the Arabs to accept so limited a number of refugees going back to Israel, and on the whole, I would say that it was not Israel's attitude but the Arab attitude that basically frustrated the Johnson effort.

O'BRIEN: Well, how about the problem of the Jordan River waters? Did you feel that it was solvable in the Kennedy Administration?

RUSK: Again, the problem was not a practical one in terms of whether it was feasible to work out a fair and efficient distribution of waters, but was a political issue on the Arab side that made it very difficult to move toward a nonpolitical solution of the waters based upon the conservation and utilization of the waters concerned. There was, for example, an attitude on the part of the Arabs that it would be better for those waters that fed into the Jordan River to be diverted and be dumped into the sea rather than give Israel a chance to exploit them. There had been some years earlier an agreement at a technical level under another [Eric] Johnston that could have solved the water problem satisfactorily. But politics on the Arab side prevented that plan from being put into effect.

I think it also ought to be mentioned that, with the development of the Negev, Israel's appetite for water was almost unlimited. Israel was insatiable, and so Israel pressed pretty hard for a utilization of water that went far beyond the uses of the water in the immediate vicinity of the streams under consideration.

Now, one thing that we tried to do--without much success--was to develop a regional plan that would have in it a major element of desalinization. We were prepared to finance or help finance major desalinization plants that would relieve the water problem for the region as a whole. Had we been able to get general agreement on that approach, I think we might have made some forward steps. But that did not work out because we could not get real cooperation between the Arab states on the one side and Israel on the other in dealing with the water problem.

You can contrast that, for example, with some success which the United States has had in this postwar period in helping India and Pakistan resolve their common water problems, the Indus River and things of that sort. Despite rather bitter political relationships between India and Pakistan, it was possible to work out some agreements, some partial agreements, involving the use of waters between the two countries. But we were not able to do that between Israel and the Arab countries.

O'BRIEN: In the eight years that you dealt with the Arabs and Israelis on these issues, the refugee problem-- well, actually three: the refugee problem, certainly aid and armaments as another, and the Jordan River--have you seen any tightening or loosening in the way of attitudes on the part of either since the Kennedy Administration?

RUSK: I think the events which preceded the June 1967 war. . . . [Interruption] Let me start over again on that question. The events which immediately preceded and included the June '67 war caused a sharp deterioration between Israel and its Arab neighbors. I think a good deal of the responsibility for this can be attributed to the Soviet Union because the Soviet Union began to make its presence felt in certain of the Arab states, particularly Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Algeria, and as a part of a Soviet effort to improve their own relations with the Arabs, the Soviets stimulated anti-Israeli attitudes among the Arab countries. For example, the Soviets circulated false reports about Israeli mobilization just prior to the June '67 war and caused Nasser to get steamed up and caused Jordan to form a defense agreement with Egypt and brought about the creation of the united Arab command. And this was very much the result of Soviet intriguing in the area. So I would say that from January 1967 throughout the rest of the Johnson Administration the situation in the Middle East deteriorated rather rapidly.

When Nasser closed the Strait of Tiran, he committed an act which was reckless in the extreme because he not only produced a situation which was casus belli for Israel, he ran directly into a commitment which President Eisenhower had made to Israel with respect to the Strait of Tiran when President Eisenhower got Israel to withdraw its forces from the Sinai in 1956. Why Nasser did this is hard to explain. He himself told us at one point that he had not asked U Thant to withdraw the U.N. forces from Sharm el Sheikh at the tip of the Strait, but that when U Thant did withdraw U.N. forces from the entire area and Nasser found himself with Egyptian forces at the mouth of the strait, he had no alternative but to close it. He could not have Egyptian forces sitting there allowing Israeli ships to pass through. Well, that's a rather feeble excuse, I think. But in any event, that was the step which provoked the June '67 war.

O'BRIEN: How was [Walworth] Barbour as an ambassador?

RUSK: Wally Barbour, in my judgment, is a great professional. He had been offered posts which were much larger than the embassy in Israel, much more important countries. As a matter of fact, at one point he was offered the ambassadorship in Moscow. But he elected to stay in Israel. He enjoyed it there; he felt he was making a worthwhile contribution. I think he also had some personal health problems which made him a little fearful about taking on a so-called major post. But he proved to be, in my judgment, a very efficient and wise counselor in his role as Ambassador to Israel.

O'BRIEN: Well, in the late 1950's, in government and the Department particularly, there are a group of people who feel that Nasser--and I think the proper quote is--"Nasser is the wave of the future." And I was wondering whether you felt that you belonged to that particular school or not?

RUSK: No, I would say that I did not. Nasser had and perhaps still has an appetite to unite the Arab world under his own leadership. This was a point in the program he announced when he first became head of the Egyptian government. The difficulty of that was that the other Arabs were unwilling to buy it because, although they were strongly committed to the general feel of the Arab nation as a whole, they were unwilling to accept Nasser as the leader who would bring about the unification of the Arab world. The experience which Egypt had with Syria, for example, illustrates the point. After the unification between Syria and Egypt, the Syrians got to a point where they chafed under Egyptian leadership and eventually resumed their independence. And of course, regimes such as Jordan and Saudi Arabia and Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, were in no mood at all to accept Nasser's leadership of a unified Arab nation. So I was not myself a proponent of that kind of Arab unity because I was confident that the Arabs themselves did not want it, and that it should be brought about only with the genuine free will of the other Arab states who might participate in it. On the other hand, I did try very hard to help President Kennedy improve our relations with Egypt, and we spent a lot of time on it. I had many, many conversations with the Egyptian ambassador, for example, and he made several trips back to Cairo to try to



work on this matter. But Nasser had a very unpredictable and difficult personality, and it was very hard to get very far in a basic improvement of our relations with him, despite major efforts we made, including major aid programs for Egypt.

O'BRIEN: I couldn't find any indication that you had at any time met him. Did you?

RUSK: No, I never met President Nasser. And while I was Secretary I never visited Israel or the Arab states. Whether that was, in retrospect, a mistake, I don't know, but it just never seemed the thing to do. I did have regular talks with the foreign ministers of the Arab countries. Sometimes they would visit Washington. But at least once a year I would meet with the foreign ministers of each of the Arab countries at the United Nations General Assembly in New York. So we had a great deal of give-and-take with the Arab government.

I think there's one thing that may sound a little flippant that I might insert here, and that is that the Arab psychology--and the sense of outrage at the very establishment of the state of Israel--made it very difficult to talk publicly with Arab countries about improving relations. My experience has been that if you talk to one Arab individually, you find yourself talking with a reasonable man; but if you give an Arab one other Arab as an audience, he tends to go a little crazy because there's so much pressure in the Arab world to take the categorical attitude of hostility toward Israel. Arab leaders are unwilling to step out and say publicly, "Come now, let's accept Israel, and let's make peace with Israel, and let's try to bring about a settlement of the Middle Eastern question," because--well, for one reason--there is in the Arab world the phenomenon of assassination. Now, we can't be too indignant about this because we've had our own experience with assassination, but many an Arab leader had told me that he can not possibly accept what I was suggesting because if he were to do so, he would be assassinated. And, in fact, chances are very high that he would in fact be assassinated if he were to accept some of the moderate proposals that we put forward from time to time.

O'BRIEN: Well, President Kennedy carried on a series of correspondences with Nasser, as I understand. How

did these come about? Are they much like the [Achmed] Sukarno letters and the Khrushchev letters?

RUSK: Yes, President Kennedy tried to improve our relations with several of the so-called progressive leaders in various countries--Ben Bella of Algeria, Nkrumah of Ghana, Sukarno of Indonesia, Nasser of Egypt--and spent a lot of time and thought on how we might do this. We had Nkrumah and we had Sukarno on visits to Washington where President Kennedy had some direct talks with them, and he sent special emissaries to seek various ones out. But there was a certain fanaticism about these people that was very hard to overcome. And President Kennedy's correspondence with President Nasser was conducted in an attempt to get a reasonable and normal basis of relationships between the United States and Egypt. But it was very difficult to make any serious headway on it because President Nasser would be carried away by his own Arabism and would speak out from time to time to appeal to an Arab audience in such terms that it made it very difficult for the United States to maintain good relations with him.

O'BRIEN: In the Administration, do you attempt to make any representation to the Egyptians to open up the Canal to the Israelis, to . . . Isn't there a freedom of seas amendment which was attached to the foreign aid bill in 1961 that brought a certain amount of domestic pressure in regard to some of the aid that was going to the UAR [United Arab Republic]?

RUSK: We took up the question of the Suez Canal with President Nasser once or twice, but the reaction was definitely so adamant that I can't say that we really wrestled on the rug over that particular issue. We also had the problem of the Arab boycott of American firms who were doing business with Israel. On that, from time to time, Egypt was helpful, and I think for a period of time there, we found that the Egyptians moderated the Arab attitude toward the boycott in a number of instances and eased it somewhat. But I think the tendency of President Nasser to appeal to the Arab masses and try to base a program of Arab unity on hostility to Israel cut across many of the things we were trying to do.

You see, one of the difficulties was that Israel is about

the only subject on which Arabs can agree among themselves. They had many, many differences among themselves, divisive and sharp and deadly, but Israel was the one subject on which they could all agree. So anti-Israeli attitudes were an important part of any attempt to build any cohesion among the Arab states, and this was one of Nasser's primary objectives.

O'BRIEN: Do you have any contacts with Fulbright in those years over this question of aid to the UAR?

RUSK: This matter would come up from time to time when I would appear before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in the executive session, but I don't recall that there was any particular complication with the Foreign Relations Committee on these matters. In general, Senator Fulbright wanted to take a balanced point of view as between Israel and the Arab countries. This was also true of Senator [Bourke B.] Hickenlooper, who was the senior Republican on that committee. But there was never, so far as I can recall, any tension between the executive and the legislative branch, on these issues during the Kennedy period.

I might add, however, that we got a full flavor of congressional opinion toward the Middle East when Nasser closed the Strait of Tiran. We were considering how to make good on President Eisenhower's commitment to keep the Strait of Tiran open, and we were thinking about the possibility of combined action by the maritime powers to press Egypt to open the Strait of Tiran, even to the point of sailing some ships through there by force if necessary. Secretary of Defense McNamara and I went down to Capitol Hill to talk to a great many senators and congressmen about this matter, and we ran into a passionate and almost unanimous view in the Congress that the United States should not undertake action by force, either unilaterally or with only two or three others taking part, and that we should leave this question to the United Nations. We were rather surprised by the strength of the feeling that the United States should stay out of the Middle East as far as any use of American armed forces was concerned. And I think that that attitude probably would have been the attitude during the Kennedy period, had the issue been raised in those terms.

O'BRIEN: Well, during 1961. . . . You mentioned that Nasser had agreed to put the question of Israel on the shelf, and as I recall, in those years Nasser and the UAR take a very soft line in the--what is it, the pan--the Arab conferences that take place every year.

RUSK: Right.

O'BRIEN: Was this directly related to it? In what form did that agreement come, of Nasser's, first of all? In what form did it come? Was it just an understanding? Could it be termed an exact agreement?

RUSK: Well, I can't recall at the moment the particular instances in terms of dates and places, but during the Kennedy period there were moments when we had the impression that Nasser was counseling moderation to the other Arab governments as far as Israel was concerned, even though he would make violent anti-Israeli speeches from time to time--and anti-American speeches. So I think that during the Kennedy period, as distinct from the latter part of the Johnson period, Nasser was not itching for a clash with Israel. He was trying to keep that issue moderated and on a nonviolent basis. So on the whole, I think that he, during the Kennedy period, did make some effort to keep the Israeli issue somewhat on the back burner.

O'BRIEN: Do you personally feel that the degree of aid he was receiving in Algiers entered into his decision?

RUSK: It might have helped some, but unhappily it didn't help enough.

O'BRIEN: You also have a problem with Iraq and Kuwait during those years. Was there anything that could have been done in regard to keeping relations with Iraq?

RUSK: When Iraq seemed to be threatening Kuwait directly with military forces, we tried to make it clear to Iraq that we thought that an aggression against Kuwait would be a very bad idea. As a matter of fact, I don't know whether the records will show this, but when the Iraqi

threat became severe, I got a message from Admiral [Robert L.] Dennison, who was then commander at Norfolk and who was in charge of American naval vessels in the Indian Ocean, saying that in light of the news from Kuwait, he had ordered I think it was two American destroyers that were on the east coast of Africa to head north toward Kuwait, and he asked for further instructions. We let those destroyers proceed north for two or three days (just to have them in the general vicinity) before it became apparent that the British resistance to the Iraqi threat had more or less cooled off the problem. So we never actually got to the point of deciding whether these two American destroyers would actually proceed to Kuwait. They were turned around long before they got there. But we were diplomatically very busy trying to make it clear to Iraq that we thought this was a very bad idea and that they should behave themselves.

O'BRIEN: There was also an attempted coup on Hussein in 1963, in which, as I understand it, the Mediterranean Fleet becomes involved. Did you apply any pressures to Nasser to discourage the pro-Nasser people within Jordan on that coup?

RUSK: Quite frankly, I don't remember very much about that. While I was Secretary of State, there were sixty-two coups d'etat somewhere in the world, and I just don't remember the details of that particular episode.

O'BRIEN: There's a number of AID problems that come up in regard to the UAR in those years. As I understand it, there's some debate between the time period that-- particularly on the PL-480 things. Do you recall any of these coming up to you from, perhaps, [William S.] Gaud on one side and the Department on the other?

RUSK: Well, during the Kennedy period I spent a good deal of time on aid to Egypt and the complications that stemmed from it. I spent a lot of time with the Egyptian ambassador, trying to work things out with him. The matter became crucial at the expiration of our three-year food program for Egypt. And by that time, Nasser's own conduct had made it extremely doubtful that we would be able to get congressional support for an extension of that aid program. So we went

on a hand-to-mouth basis for a while, and then eventually terminated it because we simply did not have the political basis for continuing it. We spent a lot of time on aid to Egypt during the Kennedy years.

O'BRIEN: I'd like to pass over to Turkey for a moment if we could. As I understand it, you were out there very early, in April of 1961.

RUSK: I think that's right.

O'BRIEN: And this question of the Jupiters comes up, as I understand. How did you find the Turkish government at that point in their attitude toward the Jupiters?

RUSK: When I became Secretary of State, I was made very much aware of the fact that the Joint Atomic Energy Committee of the Congress had filed a report--I think in 1960--in which it was extremely critical of the deployment of Jupiters in Turkey. As I recall it, this was on the grounds that they were inefficient, that they were vulnerable, that they were not even properly protected from a local point of view against even casual rifle fire and things of that sort, and that we ought to get them out of there as soon as we could. President Kennedy took this view.

So in my first visits to Turkey I raised with the Turkish foreign minister, very privately indeed, the possibility of withdrawing the Jupiters and substituting for them Polaris submarines in the Mediterranean. The foreign minister pled with me at that time not to raise the issue in any public way because they had just gotten from their own legislature the appropriations to pay for the Turkish part of the costs of emplacing the Jupiters in Turkey. And he felt it would be disastrous if we came along just after they had succeeded in putting that through their legislature and required the Jupiters to be moved. The second point he made was that we ought not to remove the Jupiters until in fact we were in position to deploy Polaris submarines in the Mediterranean. So that resulted in a delay in the substitution of Polaris for the Jupiter missiles.

Indeed, this was not a matter that was related solely to Turkey. We had some Jupiters in Italy we wanted to get rid of, and the British had some Thors that they wanted to get rid of. These were early-generation missiles with doubtful reliability.

They had been deployed partly because the Eisenhower Administration had produced these weapons and didn't know what to do with them. They were medium-range missiles, they were not intercontinental, and unless they could be displaced in some of the other countries, particularly NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] countries, they would have no use at all. So largely on account of that, the Eisenhower Administration did try to deploy the Jupiters in NATO countries. It was not a very popular idea in NATO because not very many countries wanted them. But Turkey and Italy finally consented to take some. It was, I think, a mistake in retrospect. But the Turks wanted some delay in removal of the missiles from Turkey for the reasons that I indicated.

BEGIN SIDE II TAPE I

O'BRIEN: The problem, or at least the question of high-altitude reconnaissance flights comes up at that point, I understand, as well. How do the Turks feel about it?

RUSK: I don't recall that we had discussed, at least at my level, this problem with the Turks. Of course, the U-2 business was washed out as far as flying U-2's over the Soviet Union was concerned. That was done at the time of the Eisenhower Administration when we promised that we would not do it again. I recall that there was some discussion of peripheral flying in the Black Sea, where we might get oblique photography and other kinds of intelligence by American aircraft flying in international waters. But I think that was pretty well stopped because it was too provocative.

O'BRIEN: Is there some problem with recognition on the part of Turkey and the UAR at that time? Does it come up at all in your discussions?

RUSK: Quite frankly, I just forget.

O'BRIEN: I have something written down here, and I can't quite remember why I wrote it down: the Kroner question. Does that ring any bells?

RUSK: No.

O'BRIEN: It may be a typographical error. During those years, you have Turkey as well as Greece, and they're both a part of the NATO complex. Are there any major questions, as early as 1961 and '62, between the Greeks and the Turks that cause you any real problems in particularly, their role of NATO?

RUSK: Our principal problem with Greece and Turkey during the Kennedy years was the level of aid that we were extending to those two countries. The United States had been putting in substantial quantities of both military and economic aid to both of those countries during the Eisenhower period, and their appetites kept growing, and our appropriations kept dropping. So we spent a lot of time, both with Turkey and with Greece, in explaining to them why we were not able to meet all of their requirements for military and economic assistance. This was difficult because both in Turkey and in Greece the armed forces were putting almost incredible pressures on their governments to insist upon higher levels of American support. But we were just not in a position to meet their expectations.

We were also disappointed that other NATO countries, such as Germany particularly, and France and Britain, were not pulling their real weight in providing aid to Greece and Turkey. At each NATO ministers' meeting we would make a speech about it, and we'd all pass a resolution calling for members to extend aid to Greece and Turkey, but it achieved only modest success in increasing contributions from the other NATO members to Greece and Turkey. And we felt that we should not be called upon to bear this burden disproportionately, as far as the United States was concerned. This was one of the disappointments we had in terms of general NATO reaction because they too had their budgetary problems and political problems, about increasing foreign aid.

O'BRIEN: The Jupiters come up in a very real way again during the Cuban missiles crisis. Were there any complications then with the Turks, that you recall? And then after, of course, they were removed later.

RUSK: No, I think that the Jupiter missiles issue during the Cuban missile crisis was a false issue because for our own and NATO purposes, we were in the process of withdrawing those missiles anyhow and substituting Polaris submarines for them. So this was a sort of red herring that was dragged across the track during the Cuban missile crisis.



I think the Russians understood that, as a NATO question, these Jupiters would be leaving in due course anyhow. What the Russians would never in the world have agreed to would have been to replace the Jupiters with Polaris submarines in the Mediterranean. So in a sense it was not really a negotiable point.

O'BRIEN: During those years and on into the Johnson years the Russians softened considerably towards Turkey, don't they, and make Turkey a special place of emphasis? Do you get any insights into Russian strategy and Russian moves in regard to Turkey and the Middle East? Do you see any subtleties or any changes from '61 to '69?

RUSK: I think that one should say that the Turks have been remarkably calm in their relations with the Soviet Union. They have lived next to Russia for a long time; they have a pretty good understanding of Russian policy. And I think that with some encouragement from us--certainly without any objection from us--the Turks were able to develop a somewhat more normal relationship between themselves and the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union on its side became less menacing and threatening, as far as Turkey was concerned. For example, they did not raise again the demand for the two eastern provinces of Turkey that they had raised in 1947, and the Russians seemed leave the problem of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles alone and let it lie quietly, although they, at the end of the war, had tried to achieve a joint administration of the Straits with the Turks, which the Turks turned down. No, I think the Russians came to accept the fact that Turkey would not itself originate any conflict with the Soviet Union; and they gradually put their relations on a somewhat more normal basis, just as the Shah of Iran succeeded in doing over a period of years.

O'BRIEN: How do the Turks react, unofficially, to something like the test ban? Do they have any great fears or qualifications?

RUSK: No, we had no problems with them on that. We kept them advised, as we did all the NATO countries, as the partial test ban treaty developed.

O'BRIEN: I think the next major diplomatic problem you had during those years must have been the Yemen crisis. One of the points about the Yemen crisis that's often made by people who have written is that it was a relatively quick recognition on the part of the Yemen . . .

RUSK: On the part of the United States?

O'BRIEN: On the part of the United States of Yemen. What were your own feelings about that? Do you feel it was too quick?

RUSK: The recognition of Yemen came about more quickly than some of our friends wanted it to. For example, the Saudi Arabians deplored our recognition of Yemen. The Saudi Arabians felt that the group that came to power in the Yemen was pro-Nasser and that the Yemen would become a point of penetration of Saudi Arabia by Nasser. So the difficulty we had with the Yemen question was derived from the rivalry between Nasser and Saudi Arabia. We felt, on the otherhand, that an American presence in the Yemen would be useful and could become something of a stabilizing factor and that we ought not to just walk away from it and let the Yemen become a battleground between the Egyptians and the Saudi Arabians. We had considerable difficulties with this because Nasser, as you will recall, put very substantial Egyptian forces into the Yemen, and Saudi Arabia covertly supported the Royalists and supplied them with the means by which the Royalists could continue their opposition to the Yemen regime from the hills and from the back country. We ourselves hoped that the Yemen could become a kind of buffer between Egypt and Saudi Arabia. This would require the withdrawal of Egyptian forces from the Yemen. That eventually came about. But the Saudi Arabians were fearful that--at least the government was fearful--that the Yemen would be a subversive base for operations against Saudi Arabia, and indeed it might well become so. I don't think the Saudi Arabian fears were wholly unjustified.

O'BRIEN: In that crisis, how do you find your contacts with the British? Are the British fairly nervous about what is going on in the Yemen for fear that it's going to endanger some of their interests within the area?

RUSK: I had the feeling that we were not on an entirely frank basis with the British about that situation. I had the impression that the British were doing covert things in that area on which they were not entirely frank with us and that we were sometimes working at cross-purposes.

O'BRIEN: In what way were they working? You were talking about covert ways.

RUSK: Well, like they were supplying some arms, for example, into the area and that they were pretty sympathetic to the royalist side in the Yemen situation. Whereas we were trying to be more or less even-handed as between the Republicans and the Royalists. So I don't think that we and the British were working hand in glove in that situation, as we tried to do in many situations in other parts of the world.

O'BRIEN: The question of working out an agreement here, the Bunker mission comes up. What is the genesis of the Bunker mission? How is Bunker selected?

RUSK: Well, he was one of our most distinguished diplomats, and we thought that it was worth a try to get a stabilization of the situation, as regards the Yemen. We also had a problem that Egypt was demanding aid from us at a time when they were expending substantial resources of their own to maintain forces in the Yemen. And we felt that it was not for us to pay for the Egyptian expeditionary force in the Yemen. So one of the issues we took up with the Egyptians was that American aid would be affected by the withdrawal of Egyptian forces from Yemen. But Bunker was not able to accomplish a great deal on that mission. He tried very hard, but I think the forces involved in the area, the political forces, made it impossible for him to come away with a definitive solution.

O'BRIEN: There are those within the Administration who argue successfully that the United States should put a token military force in there--and of course this was the squadron of the airplanes that went in . . .

RUSK: You mean in Saudi Arabia.

O'BRIEN: In Saudi Arabia. What was your own feeling, toward this and, thus, that general feeling on the part of others in other situations--perhaps even reflecting back to Laos--that token military forces could be dropped in to accomplish a diplomatic objective in terms of a show of force?

RUSK: I was in favor of the movement of the squadron of planes into Saudi Arabia, but it was more of a political move than it was a military move. It was designed to encourage the Saudi Arabians to think that they had American support and to warn Nasser that we were not disinterested in the pressures he was then putting on Saudi Arabia. This was one of the other issues that we took up with Egypt in relation to the possibilities of American aid, and we made it clear that his pressures on Saudi Arabia were unacceptable from the point of view of the United States.

I think it's unlikely that that squadron could ever have engaged in any systematic military action because of the lack of logistic backup and the fact that it was a very small presence. But there are many times in diplomacy where a token force performs a very important political role that goes far beyond its actual military capability. For example, the token force that we had in Trieste was enough to keep the Yugoslavs from over-running Trieste. And we have only token forces in Berlin, but they're symbolic of determination and very important from a political point of view.

O'BRIEN: Did you have any difficulty in the government with the Defense Department or the Air Force?

RUSK: I don't think so. I don't recall any controversy in the government on that matter. In general, the military are not very enthusiastic about token forces and feel--and one can understand this--feel that you should not send a boy to do a man's job, and that token forces that are not capable of performing a military mission are somewhat dangerous.

O'BRIEN: This incident has been cited by a number of people who have written as a particular problem or crisis.

as I think [Edward] Weintal and [Charles L.] Bartlett call it, and sometimes it's called "Komer's War", after Robert Komer. What is Robert Komer's role in this, and in general, in Middle Eastern affairs?

RUSK: He was on the White House staff at that time, as I recall, but quite frankly I don't recall any special role that he played. He was part of McGeorge Bundy's staff, I believe, and was in on the discussions. But I don't recall any decisive role that he played in determining policy.

O'BRIEN: Komer has a reputation, too, on the White House side and at least in some parts of the Department, as being a guy who short-circuits, who goes down in the bureaucracy and does not go by the formal channels of operation. Did you ever find this the case in your dealings with Middle Eastern problems?

RUSK: I don't recall that I ever had any particular pain about Komer's activities because the real decisions were made by the President, the Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense. Komer was very energetic and sometimes was a bit abrasive in his personal relationships, but I don't, quite frankly, recall any particular difficulties that came to my attention during this period.

O'BRIEN: We have a number of rather interesting ambassadors in the Middle East. I wonder if we could go over them for a moment. We talked about . . . [Interruption] We were talking a moment ago about some of the ambassadors. Let's take the Ambassador to the UAR in those years, Badeau. He's an outsider, isn't he?

RUSK: Yes, he had been an educator in Egypt for many years at the American University at Cairo. He knew Egypt very well. I think his appointment, again, was largely due to Chester Bowles, who, I think, discovered him and brought him forward. Badeau was not able to make a deep impression on American-Egyptian relations because those relations went far beyond the influence that a single ambassador might have on them. The same thing was true of the Egyptian ambassador in Washington, who I think wanted a good relationship between his government and

ours, but he was not able to swing the weight in Cairo that was needed to achieve that. So I don't have the impression that Badeau made a major contribution, although he caused no problems and, there was nothing negative about it. He was useful; he was frustrated because of the problems. But I don't have strong recollections of major contributions that he was able to make.

O'BRIEN: How about Parker Hart?

RUSK: Parker Hart was one of the best of our professionals. He has long experience in the Middle East. We eventually sent him to Turkey, and then brought him back to become Assistant Secretary for Middle East and South Asian Affairs. He's rather quiet, very efficient, balanced, a man of good judgment, detached, and, I think, was one of the more competent of the ambassadors we had in the area. We would give him, I think, very high marks.

O'BRIEN: At this time I know you had the opportunity to meet both Faisal [Ibn Abdul-Aziz Al Saud] and Saud [Ibn Absul-Aziz Al Saud]. What were your impressions of these?

RUSK: I have never met Saud. Well, perhaps I did, on a visit to Washington perhaps. I had known King Faisal for many years because he was the Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia at the time that the Palestine affair was before the United Nations in 1947-8. And I had a very considerable admiration for him. He was proud, intelligent, a man, I think, with a considerable sense of honor. He was deeply outraged by the role of the United States in the creation of Israel. I shall never forget the speech he made in the General Assembly of the United Nations just after the vote on the Israeli resolution. He was bitter, harsh, outraged. It was clear that he thought that the United States had been guilty of imposing upon the Arabs a foreign group, that we were, in effect, making the Arabs pay for the sins of [Adolf] Hitler; and he's never wavered in that point of view. He was able, however, to go beyond that bitterness and maintain good relations between Saudi Arabia and the United States. But the one subject that sets him off is the subject of Israel.

On the other hand, despite his bitterness towards Israel, he was shrewd enough and practical enough to refrain from doing anything about it. In other words, he would not use his armed forces and he would not endanger Saudi Arabia itself by any overt acts directed against Israel or directed against the United States. For a long time his bitterness toward Nasser was a dominant feature of his thinking. And on that he found that the United States was prepared to give him steady and quiet support over against the intrigues of Nasser in Saudi Arabia.

There was a time when Prince Faisal--King Faisal--appeared to be on very thin edges, as far as maintaining his own control of Saudi Arabia was concerned. But over the last few years I think he has steadily strengthened his own position in Saudi Arabia, and Saudi Arabia today is much less exposed to subversion and penetration from the outside than it had been for a while. Among other things, for example, King Faisal has put into effect rather far-reaching programs of reform in Saudi Arabia. He has tended to bring Saudi Arabia into the modern world much more effectively than his predecessors have done. And that has, I think, strengthened his regime inside the country.

O'BRIEN: How about Ambassador [Raymond A.] Hare in Turkey?

RUSK: Raymond Hare, eventually became a career ambassador. He went right to the top of the Foreign Service.

He takes his place along side of Livingston Merchant, and Alexis Johnson and Charles Bohlen and Llewellyn Thompson and Robert Murphy as one of the really distinguished and capable men in the professional Foreign Service. My own criterion for making nominations to become career ambassador was that a career ambassador ought to be a man who is capable of undertaking any job whatever in the diplomatic service of the United States. And Ray Hare was one of those men. We only have, at any one time, four or five career ambassadors, and his elevation to that rank was a demonstration of the confidence that everybody had in him.

O'BRIEN: How about [John D.] Jernegan, Ambassador Jernegan? He has his difficulties, doesn't he?

RUSK: Well, Jernegan--I liked Jernegan very much as an individual, and he was a dedicated, hard-working and knowledgeable man, working on the Middle-Eastern

problems. I would think that he was a man who did not reach the highest level of the Foreign Service in terms of sheer personal ability. But he was an extraordinarily useful and helpful, steady man. I enjoyed working with him when he was in the Department, and, in general, I would say he did a good job when he was overseas. I don't think that he particularly appealed to the Kennedy crowd. They tended to look upon him somewhat as a man of another generation and something of a fuddy-duddy and that sort of thing, but didn't really get in his way as far as his service was concerned.

O'BRIEN: When I mentioned difficulties, I didn't mean personally, I meant in regard to the friction that comes up with Iraq over Kuwait.

RUSK: Yes, I don't think that Jernegan could have done any more than he did to prevent that. I think that was not Jernegan's fault; that was Iraqi ambition.

O'BRIEN: How about Ambassador [Julius C.] Holmes and Iran?

RUSK: I was responsible for bringing him back into active diplomacy, despite some of the difficulties he had previously had about getting confirmation in the Senate. He had been out of the Service for a time and had been involved in certain business activities that would not apparently appeal to some of the senators. And I was responsible for pressing to have him rehabilitated, as far as Senate confirmation was concerned. He was an able man and did a good job in Iran. He had the confidence of the Shah and was able to restrain some of the Shah's more ambitious proclivities. He, I think, was a very useful advisor for the Shah, not only on those matters that directly involved Iran, such as oil problems and relations with the Soviet Union and relations with Iraq, but on general world problems. The Shah of Iran is one of the hardest working and most knowledgeable of the chiefs of state that you'd find anywhere in the world. He reads prodigiously. He was extraordinarily well-informed. And I must say I always enjoyed my talks with the Shah because he really knew what was going on in the world, and it was, a pleasure for a man of that stature and that breadth. In any event, I think Holmes did us a good job in Iran.



O'BRIEN: There are a number of aid programs that are kicked up to you in the years that he is in Iran. What do you recall from those?

RUSK: Well, the principal problem we had with the Shah, as far as aid was concerned, was that he had very large ambitions about developing the armed forces of Iran. We felt that he was going far beyond his own capacity to maintain and pay for the armed forces that he was trying to build, that he should not divert such massive resources away from the economic and social development of his own country, his own people; and that basically the principal defense of Iran would lie in the loyalty of the people of Iran to him and to his government. Now, that could best be achieved through economic and social and educational and scientific development, rather than through a massive buildup of his armed forces. Now, we had regular differences of view with the Shah on just this point, so that the annual exercise in restraining the Shah's appetite for military forces was a regular feature of our dealings with Iran during that period.

O'BRIEN: Passing on to the area of South Asia for a moment, I imagine the first major problem you really deal with here is Goa, the seizure of Goa. Is there any real friction or any differences that are created by this, since the United States has a commitment to the United Nations, certain special relationships with Portugal, and basic interests in India? In other words, in the parts of the Department that deal with all three of these, is there any conflict, friction, that you recall as to what we should do?

RUSK: Well, we had some rather ambiguous feelings about Goa. In the first place, we thought that Goa should probably become a part of India, that, that this little colonial enclave there on the coast of India was an anachronism. But on the other hand, we were very much concerned about India's seizing it by force before it had fully exploited all the possibilities of peaceful methods. I think there was no question about the legal status of Goa as a possession of Portugal, and the use of force to seize it seemed to us to be a bad precedent, in contravention of the Charter of the United Nations and in general a bad idea. But I think in this postwar period the

attitude of the Indian government has been that what India wants, India gets. So they put forces in the Kashmir and refused to accept the United Nations recommendations on the settlement of Kashmir; they threw an armored division into Hyderabad at a time when the government of Hyderabad was still refusing to commit itself to joining the Union of India; they seized Goa. The contrast between India's actions and India's pretensions as the great peace-loving arbiter of world affairs was, at times, very sharp.

But in retrospect, I would think that Goa is one of those problems that gets resolved by force and disappears as an issue over time. We did our best to restrain [Shri Jawaharlal] Nehru from committing his forces, but he was under great pressures at home, particularly from people like [Vengalil Krishnan] Krishna Menon, to go ahead and solve the problem. We suffered some battering from the Portuguese because we did not do more about Goa at the time that India seized it, but I don't know what the Portuguese wanted us to do. Among other things, they wanted us to break off all aid relationships with India over Goa, but our stake in the Indian subcontinent was so great that we felt that we could not surrender our interests in the subcontinent was so great that we felt that we could not surrender our interests in the subcontinent just because of Goa.

O'BRIEN: Did you have any conversations in regard to Nehru about this, or later of course, the intervention or at least the involvement of the Chinese in the border areas, and your impressions of them?

RUSK: I had several talks with Mr. Nehru; some of them interesting, some of them not. Those who were experienced in dealing with him referred to "mood A" and "mood B" when you talk to Mr. Nehru. When he is in mood A, he can be lively, alert, interested, forthcoming, and responsive. But when he is in mood B, you might as well be talking to a post. He will stare out the window; he will appear not to hear what you're saying; his replies will be uncommunicative, more or less in the nature of a brush off; he'll be withdrawn, uncommunicative. I would think that if I talked with him, it was about half and half. About half the time I'd find him in mood A and the other half in mood B.

My principal talks with him had to do with Kashmir, trying to find some handle to take hold of to help bring that problem to an end so that India and Pakistan could live peacefully side by side. Our concern during the Kennedy period was that the

rivalry between India and Pakistan proved to be a great burden to the United States. They were committing substantial resources on both sides, aimed at each other, at a time when we were being called upon to provide massive resources to both countries for their economic development. And we felt that the diversion of resources, both in India and Pakistan, to this rivalry between the two put an additional burden upon the United States to keep their economies afloat. So we felt that in talking to both sides about Kashmir that we were pursuing an interest of the United States, not just meddling in somebody else's quarrel. But it was not until the last three or four months of his life that Nehru seemed to show some broader view with respect to the possibilities of a Kashmir settlement. Whether it would have been possible to work this problem out had Nehru lived is hard to know, but there did seem to be some movement in his attitude in his later life--in his later period.

O'BRIEN: Is Ayub [Mohammad Ayub Khan] a reasonable man to deal with in those years?

RUSK: Ayub was a very attractive and very distinguished man, a very good conversationalist. On the whole, I think he did a pretty good job for his country. But he was consumed with hatred of the Indians. He felt that they had been outrageous in their attitude on Kashmir. He felt that the Indians really wanted to re-absorb Pakistan and make it a part of a greater India, that India never really accepted the partition. He also felt that India itself would at some point disintegrate because of the differences within India among the many cultural, language, political groups there and that India itself could not survive. But in general, we had reasonable working relationships with Ayub.

O'BRIEN: You also have a great deal of difficulties, as I understand, with the Pakistanis, and Afghanistan as well, in terms of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Was Talbot especially valuable in dealing with these problems in South Asia?

RUSK: I think so, but there were limits on what anybody could do in some of these situations. The United States supported Pakistan in resisting the Afghan

demand for a Pushtunistan on the border. On the other hand, we supported Afghanistan in trying to maintain access to the sea through Pakistan at a time when Pakistan was blockading shipment of goods and people out of Afghanistan toward the ports. I think we helped in that situation to cool off the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan. We worked very hard in both capitals to do so, and we were glad that that problem gradually faded away.

O'BRIEN: In terms of Afghanistan and Iran particularly, as I understand there's some rather energetic aid programs designed to improve the communications networks. What kind of feeling do you get from the Soviet Union in this regard? In their response to this did, they show any great fears or dangers to this kind of involvement, and particularly these communications things?

RUSK: I don't know what went on behind the scenes between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan. We were concerned that the Soviet Union would be able to penetrate Afghanistan in a very farreaching and fundamental sense, since Afghanistan was cut off by the mountains and was more or less inaccessible from the rest of the world and was more or less exposed to Soviet presence and penetration. The astonishing thing is that the Afghans have been able to maintain their independence to the extent that they have. And they're done this, I think, by falling back upon safety in numbers, in terms of foreign involvement and foreign influence in that country. We were able throughout that period, throughout my period, to provide considerable assistance to the Afghans, for example, in their educational system. The afghans divided things up in such a way that no particular country was able to put itself in a dominant position.

Now, we also had in mind that if the countries of that part of the Middle East could draw more closely together among themselves, that this would be an element of safety over against the Soviet Union. We encouraged, for example, the Turks, the Iranians, and the Pakistanis to develop their own relationships within the CENTO, the Central Treaty Organization framework, without the participation of the United Kingdom and the United States as the external members associated with CENTO. We also felt that if the relations between Afghanistan and Iran on the one side and

Pakistan on the other were good, that this would help Afghanistan maintain its independence over against possible Soviet pressures and penetrations. So one of the things we tried to do was to encourage that cohesion among all the countries in the region. And in general, I think some progress was made in that direction.

O'BRIEN: You have two career ambassadors, two career people there in Afghanistan and Pakistan, McConaughy and Steeves. How do they work out?

RUSK: John Steeves did a very good job in Afghanistan. He, I think, understood the Afghans very well. He was both energetic and discreet, which takes some doing. He understood that it was not wise for the United States to try to be Mr. Big in Afghanistan; that that would stimulate counteraction on the part of the Russians. But he developed good relationships with the government in Afghanistan and got to know the country very well and, I think, did a good job.

I think McCounaughy did not have equal success in Pakistan. In the first place, he was a career officer accredited to Ayub at a time when Ayub could look across in India and see intimates of President Kennedy or major political figures as our ambassadors to India. And he felt, therefore, that it was rather downgrading to Ayub to have a career man in Pakistan at a time when you had a man like Ken Galbraith, with the ear of President Kennedy, in India. So he hinted at times that we ought to send an intimate of the President to Pakistan as ambassador. And so there was, in general, a rather arm's length relationship between McConaughy and Ayub.

O'BRIEN: Was Galbraith an intimate of the President on matters of foreign affairs?

RUSK: He was a personal friend of the President and advised with him frequently on all sorts of questions, both foreign and domestic. I told Ambassador Galbraith once that, as I watched his work in India, he went through four periods out there: In his first period, he seemed to go out for the idea that he would, by persuasion and charm, influence, convince the Indians to agree with the United States. And after a while he discovered that that was not going to happen; that great nations don't change their policies because of the efforts

of an ambassador. Then in his second period, he set about to persuade the United States to agree with India, and that didn't happen for the same reason. In his third period, he seemed to just get bored with the job. He traveled around the country a lot; he probably spent some time writing books and things like that. But then came the Chinese attack on India, and that was his fourth period, and he was in his glory during that period. He was pretty hawkish about American support in India. And we did give the Indians considerable support during that period, some of it tangible like military assistance. Galbraith became very popular in India because we were supporting India against China, and so he wound up his service out there with quite a flair. But throughout that period he was also talking to the President; he'd come back reasonably frequently, and he'd talk to the President about the American economy and Southeast Asia and other issues. So India was not big enough to absorb all of his interests.

O'BRIEN: Did you get much feedback from this personal line of communication at the time?

RUSK: I think one has to take Galbraith's personality into account and realize that he can't resist a bon mot. In terms of operations, my principal problem with him--it was a rather minor problem--was that he would not practice diplomacy on his own colleagues. He would send back an occasional biting and sarcastic, scathing kind of telegram that offended people in the Department, and on one or two occasions the White House told him to cool it and be a little more temperate in his communications with the Department. Some of this is reflected in his book on his experience as ambassador. But he was inclined to pursue his own policy, and if he got an instruction which was thoroughly backed by President Kennedy, say on the issue of the Chinese seat in the United Nations, he would, because of his own view of the matter, would make the most desultory and indifferent kind of effort to carry out his instruction.

O'BRIEN: Passing over to just one sort of general economic problem in regard to--and strategic, I should say--problem in the Middle East, the oil industry. Is there any linking at all between the decision on the part of the United States to discourage and, in some instances, prohibit

the importation or the export--I should say the export--of large pipe to the Soviet Union; in other words, pipeline materials? And does this have any relationship to, perhaps, what we perceive as Soviet intentions in the Middle East?

RUSK: I don't think--as I recall the conversations that we had on that subject--I don't think that it was specifically related to the Middle East so much as related generally to the question of strategic materials. The Pentagon took a very strong view that such pipe would be a major strategic enhancement of Soviet capabilities, and at that time we were still taking a rather limited view of what could be safely sold to the Soviet Union. During the sixties, beginning in the Kennedy Administration and following through in the Johnson Administration, we steadily relaxed our attitude toward such questions, partly because we were in a minority of one in NATO. The change in policy culminated in President Johnson's proposal to the Congress that they enact East-West trade legislation to put us in a position to negotiate bilateral trade agreements with the countries of Eastern Europe, including the Soviet Union, in which we could extend most favored nation treatment to those countries. So I would say that the period of the sixties reflected a steady movement toward a more liberal view of permissible trade with the Soviet Union. But the pipe issue came up fairly early, and there was strong opposition from the Pentagon. And we, I think, even protested to the Germans about the Germans' selling of pipe, but I don't think that was related specifically to the Middle East.

O'BRIEN: Passing over this question of oil and its relationship to the strategic as well as the economic balance within the Middle East, how does the Department work in relationship to the companies in either supporting or at least watching over the strategic considerations of oil in the Middle East? And I'm talking not so much in the structured but in, perhaps, the unstructured and informal way.

RUSK: The principal contact that the Department has with the oil interests is through the Assistant Secretary for the Middle East and through the Assistant Secretary for Economic Matters. When there is an Under Secretary for economic matters, as was George Ball, then George Ball would have those contacts, too. Middle Eastern oil is of critical importance

to the United States, not so much because of our own need to import Middle Eastern oil, but because it is such a vital source of supply for Western Europe. So the stake that we have in Middle Eastern oil is primarily in relation to Europe and not to our own supply. And indeed, our stake in oil is not all that related to substantial American investments in Middle Eastern oil. It's true that we have substantial investments there and that this makes a considerable difference to our balance of payments problems, but a few billions of investment in relation to a gross national product of nine hundred billion dollars in the case of a country such as the United States that has more foreign investment when the rest of the world combined, the investment part of it was not all that decisive in terms of American attitudes and policy. No, it's really the European aspect of Middle Eastern oil that is our primary preoccupation.

O'BRIEN: Do the companies and representatives of the companies make pretty steady representations in the Department?

RUSK: Well, we were in very close touch with them when they themselves were in negotiation with their host countries out there about oil arrangements. This is true periodically with Saudi Arabia and with Iran and with others. We try, ourselves, not to inject ourselves, as a government, directly into those negotiations. We think that it is generally better to let the companies themselves do their own negotiating. But nevertheless we are very close to it because it could always be moved to a governmental level if agreement is not obtained.

O'BRIEN: Do you recall any time in the Kennedy years that significant questions regarding oil in, let's say, Iran or Saudi Arabia or Iraq particularly came up, which involved you at the Secretary level?

RUSK: I don't recall any particularly dramatic moments in that regard. I should say, however, that I delegated these matters very much to the Under Secretary for economic affairs so he carried the burden of negotiation on these matters, so that I was not personally very heavily involved.

BEGIN SIDE I; TAPE II



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O'BRIEN: How do you explain the relative calm and lack of major explosive problems and issues in the Kennedy years as contrasted with the Eisenhower years, as well as the later war in 1967?

RUSK: I suppose that during the Kennedy years we were still, to some extent, coasting along on the conclusions reached after the Suez affair in 1955 and 6 as far as the Middle East was concerned; that the rather fragile but nevertheless useful conclusions reached at the end of the Suez affair simply extended into the Kennedy years for a period. And then the basic hostilities in the area began to build up again and reached a new episode during the Johnson period. There was just a marking time, to a degree, during the Kennedy period as far as the Arab-Israeli issue was concerned.

O'BRIEN: During the years that you were Secretary of State, dealing with people who made the Middle East their business, do you find a growing disillusionment or an optimism or something in between on the part of the people that make it their business to deal with the Middle East?

RUSK: I think that one must start with the intractable nature of the issues that exist in the Middle East between Israel and the Arabs, on the one side, and between the extremist Arabs and the moderate Arabs on the other. These are issues that almost defy solution; they involve so deeply the passionate feelings of the peoples concerned. You get the holy war psychology among the Arabs and a sort of apocalyptic attitude on the part of Israelis so that the issues do not lend themselves to easy solution by compromise and adjustment and negotiation. The emotional aspects of the issues are such that governments are almost helpless to deal with them--the governments in the area are almost helpless to deal with them. Even among the rather dictatorial Arab regimes, there is still the mob; there is still public opinion. And Israel, with a constitutional democracy, has to take into account its own public opinion. So even the governments of the area may be somewhat limited in what they can do to solve these basic problems in a fundamental way. That means, therefore, that as a minimum you hope for a kind of a restless status quo, a kind of a seething situation that is neither peace nor war, hoping that major flare-ups will not occur. But in that situation, every now and again

you may very well have a major flare-up, as in fact we have had since 1948 in that area.

I don't think I ever knew anybody in our own government who felt that he had the answer to the Middle East and was confident that if people would just adopt his policy that the matter could be resolved. I think everybody approaches the Middle East more or less on their knees because of the inherent difficulty of the issues that are involved. Now it has reached a new level of complication and danger, particularly during the Nixon Administration, by the much more active intrusion of the Soviet Union into that area. And we don't know yet whether that will make things far more difficult, or whether it's possible for the United States and the Soviet Union to reach some kind of accommodation about the Middle East. But I don't think there's any part of the world where the issues are more difficult to deal with than they are in the Middle East.

O'BRIEN: Do you see any reasons to be optimistic at this point of time, as a result of the recent peace plan and cease-fire plan on the part of the Department?

RUSK: I hope that events will prove me wrong on this, but basically I'm quite pessimistic about the Middle East--or at least about the Israeli-Arab aspect of the Middle East--because I don't believe that either side is ready to make the concessions that will be required if there is to be peace in that area. I don't believe, for example, that the Arabs are willing, really, to accept Israel as a member of the Middle Eastern community of states and to give it the rights and privileges which belong to any member of the community of states in that area, such as passage through the Suez Canal and genuine acceptance of their right to be there and their permanence as a state. On the other hand, I don't think Israel is prepared to make the territorial concessions that will be necessary if there's to be peace. My own view is that there cannot be peace in the Middle East until Israel withdraws from all of the territory that was occupied by them in the June '67 War. I think it would be a miracle if negotiations were to succeed on the basis that Israel retains any significant part of that territory. So it looks to me like a deadlock and that the best that might be achieved for some time to come is simply an absence of war, even though there's no finally concluded peace. So I'm basically quite pessimistic.

O'BRIEN: Did you expect the Russian arms buildup as well as presence at an earlier stage while you were Secretary of State? In other words, did you have any sort of advanced warning of Soviet intentions, or at least, did you see any signs that they were going to do that?

RUSK: I think President Johnson's writings will have long since brought this point out, but at one stage during the June 1967 affair the Russians hinted that they might take some direct action in the Middle East if this or that did not occur. And President Johnson made it, very clear to them in very unambiguous terms that we felt this would be a very bad idea indeed, and this could lead to a major crisis. So throughout the Johnson Administration, the Soviets were rather careful about the way in which they intruded in the Middle East, and they stepped that up very considerably after Nixon came to power.

O'BRIEN: Well, I have just one question which is not related to the Middle East, and it's one that's really related to a recent article in Life magazine, and I thought I might ask you. That, of course, is the article by Kenny O'Donnell in which he states that President Kennedy was on his way to winding down the commitment of American forces in Vietnam. And he specifically cited the October second statement in regard to the withdrawal of troops. I wonder what your reflections are on this?

RUSK: I read that article. I suppose I talked to President Kennedy about Southeast Asia in one way or another at least two or three times a week throughout the period of President Kennedy's tenure of office. The first thing I would say is that at no time did President Kennedy ever say or hint or suggest to me that he was planning to withdraw from Vietnam in 1965. Now, that itself is not conclusive because it's possible that President Kennedy just did not want to take me into his confidence on what he had in mind for two years in the future. My second comment, however, is that if he had made a firm decision in 1963 to withdraw in 1965, that would have meant that he was committing men to combat for what would amount to domestic political purposes. I just don't myself believe that President Kennedy, or indeed any President, would be cynical enough to commit men to combat for electoral purposes.

The third comment is that no one could possibly know, not even President Kennedy in 1963, what his response would have been to a new situation with which President Johnson was faced at the end of 1964, namely, the movement of large units of the North Vietnamese regular army into South Vietnam. This was a major change in the situation, and it forced President Johnson to make some decisions with which President Kennedy was not confronted. I don't think anybody knows--Kenny O'Donnell or Senator [Michael J.] Mansfield or anybody else--what President Kennedy's decision would have been, faced with that situation.

O'BRIEN: Does the coup of the following month in November of 1963, first of all, deepen the United States commitment, and perhaps, secondly, lead to a deterioration of the situation in Vietnam? And in that way, is it your judgment that it binds the United States to a much larger effort?

RUSK: It's very hard to be categorical about that. On the one hand, it seemed that President Diem was steadily losing control of his own country, chiefly because of the activities of his brother Nhu. President Diem's government had alienated the Buddhists, the students, the universities, and eventually the military; and we were unable to get President Diem to get his brother Nhu out of the government, which could have opened the way to pacifying some of these major elements which were opposing President Diem. So had President Diem survived, I think the prospect was that there would have been increasing instability, in any event, and that his own effectiveness would have been seriously undermined by his loss of support around the country. However, when he was overthrown, that also led to a period of uncertainty and ineffectiveness on the part of the successor governments. So there's no question but that we went through a very troublesome period following the Diem overthrow, and it was not until [Nguyen Van] Thieu and [Nguyen Cao] Ky were able to organize a government on the basis of some national elections and on the basis of controlling the military that a significant degree of stability returned to the governmental structure in South Vietnam.

I think there's one other point that is worth noting, because I'm not sure that this point will be made in President Johnson's writing on the subject. I think it's possible that Hanoi misinterpreted the American election of 1964. President Johnson was running against Senator [Barry M.] Goldwater and, compared to

Senator Goldwater, President Johnson appeared to be something of a dove, although, in fact, President Johnson did say during the electoral campaign that we would have to do what was necessary to be done in Vietnam. But he took the view that he, President Johnson, did not want a larger war. Now, Hanoi might well have looked at the selection and said, "Aha, President Johnson has defeated Goldwater. Johnson says he does not want a larger war. That means that we, Hanoi, can have a larger war without an increase in risks," because it was after that election that Hanoi started moving divisions of its regular army into South Vietnam. President Johnson and I at times speculated about whether Hanoi had misread the American election of '64. But in any event, it was not until the end of '64 that he was presented with a new situation out there, based upon the action of Hanoi.

O'BRIEN: One point that I'd like to go into today, which I think will perhaps give some insight into the the President and the personality of the President. . . . Oftentimes a man who dealt with the President, like yourself, came away with varying impressions of his attitudes towards problems. And I think this case about Kenny O'Donnell and the withdrawal from Vietnam is one. In your dealings with the President did you. . . . First of all, were you able to get distinct feelings and reactions out of him on some of the problems that you talked to him and brought to him in regard to foreign relations? Or did you have the feeling that he sometimes was perhaps searching for ideas and perhaps debating himself through you?

RUSK: There was never any problem about getting a decision from President Kennedy when a decision was required. But before a decision was required, President Kennedy would speculate very widely about the alternatives that were open to him. He did not like to make premature decisions. He wanted to know what the circumstances were in which a decision was being made. He did not like to make abstract decisions. For example, during the Eisenhower period they produced a very large paper on national security policy which was supposed to be a general catalog of American policy throughout the world. During the early part of my administration, the Policy Planning Staff in the Department of State and others produced a revised national security policy paper. It was very thick, very long. President Kennedy

had no interest in approving such a paper because it was too abstract, it was too general. He didn't know what it meant; he didn't know what he was approving. And much to the disappointment of some of my colleagues like George McGhee and Walt Rostow, President Kennedy just made it clear to me that he just didn't want any such paper. And I think Presidents generally are wise in not dealing with things in the abstract when they don't really know what it is they're saying, as they could not know until the actual situation was in front of them.

Now, President Kennedy was a man with the highest intelligence, liveliest imagination; he was a voracious reader. He absorbed information from every possible source in a most extraordinary way. He would talk to outsiders; he would talk to members of the Congress; he would read everything that was published on matters of interest to him; he would talk to people in government, as a part of his own personal exploration of the issues. And I think it's entirely possible that in that process he would leave an impression with somebody like Senator Mansfield that he was looking forward to the possibility of getting out of Vietnam in 1965. But that did not mean that he had made a decision to get out in 1965. I just don't believe that he would have made a firm decision two years in advance of the time because that was not his method of operation, that was not his habit, that was not his method of making decisions.

O'BRIEN: You see him as a man of pragmatic judgments rather than of any deep philosophical, conservative or liberal persuasions in regard to his attitudes towards foreign affairs. Is that a correct assumption?

RUSK: I don't think that he was a man who had oversimplified, doctrinal commitments about foreign policy issues. He showed great flexibility of mind. It did not bother him, for example, that certain decisions might appear to be contradictory, and which called for different approaches. He was urbane, sophisticated, wary of dogma. He was skeptical of people who were always damned sure that they were right, because he understood the complexity and the complications of life.

But I think that underneath this was a commitment to an organized peace in the world, to a liberal approach to American domestic issues and concerns, a pragmatic approach to the politics of moving forward with his ideas. He came out of the 1960 election with a certain caution because of the narrowness of the victory.

He did not feel that he had a strong, overwhelming mandate from the American people, and so he would be rather careful about picking the issues on which he wanted to make a fight. And that meant that he would sometimes disappoint some of his colleagues by not fighting on every issue that came forward. I remember he once said that if you're going to have a fight, have a fight about something, don't have a fight about nothing. And so he would try to pick out the key issues on which he wanted to do battle and would refuse to do battle on secondary or tertiary issues. For example, in the foreign policy field he made a major effort on the Trade Expansion Act that led to the Kennedy Round of trade negotiations. He had to make some very far-reaching and dangerous decisions in regard to the Berlin crisis in '61-'62, the Cuban missile crisis. But he did not press for a program that swept across the board in the way that President Johnson did following the election of 1964. The Johnson legislative program was a massive program compared to the legislative program that President Kennedy insisted upon. And this was partly because Kennedy did not feel that he had the political clout to succeed on every point across the board in dealing with a Congress or in dealing with the American people.

No, I think he had strong commitments, but he also had an element of skepticism in him which caused him to look at those commitments and weigh them and judge them from a pragmatic basis, as you put it, rather than on some basis of ideology or theoretical principle.

O'BRIEN: How about yourself, now, as a decision maker? Do you have a philosophy of making decisions, either as Secretary of State or otherwise, sort of guidelines which you follow?

RUSK: I'm not sure that I'm the best one to comment on that because I think that would require a careful study by somebody else. There were a few habits of mine that affected the decision-making process. I was very much aware of a remark once made by Dean Acheson, for example, that in the relations between a President and the Secretary of State, it is very important for both of them to understand at all times which one is President. I had a great respect--as did General Marshall, for example--for the office of the Presidency. And I recall that during the Eisenhower period there were times when people would say that it was John Foster Dulles rather than



Eisenhower who was making foreign policy. And I was determined not to let that kind of speculation develop during my period as Secretary of State. The Secretary of State is under our Constitution a creature of the President, and it is the President who has the responsibility for making the basic decisions. For that reason I think you'll find that there was almost never any speculation in the press during my eight years in office about differences between me and the President, neither President Kennedy nor President Johnson. This is not because there were not differences, because there were, but I tried to talk out those differences with the President in private so that no one, particularly the press and members of my own Department, would ever see any gap between me and the President because I felt that a President had a right to have a Secretary of State who supported the President's policy.

Then I felt that big things are made up out of a lot of little things and that if you take care of the countless of foreign policy adequately, many of the larger questions would shape themselves up and would be eased. So I was very much aware of the fact that the conduct of foreign policy requires a thousand telegrams a day from the Department of State and that little things are just as important as big things and can affect the big things.

I must say that I also felt a strong commitment to the principle of collective security. I grew up in a generation which went into World War II because the Governments of that day were unwilling to take the steps necessary to prevent World War II, and I know that there was a great deal of bitterness among those of my age who were fighting World War II that the war had not been prevented by a timely action during the thirties to prevent the development of the momentum of aggression. And I was a part of the process by which collective security was written into the United Nations Charter and which was reinforced by some of our major security treaties in the postwar period.

Now, I've been concerned that--beginning about 1967--the idea of collective security has been eroding in this country, without anything being substituted in its place. And therefore, I have been concerned that the prevention of major war is going to become increasingly difficult--if the phenomenon of aggression develops momentum. Now, we may be in a period of transition, when my generation has become somewhat old and tired, weary of the enormous effort we've been called upon to make in this post-World War II period, and when half of our people the young people, have not had a chance to live through that experience and remember

the great issues that were involved in organizing a durable peace in the world.

For example, the present so-called peace movement is not talking about peace. They don't call upon Hanoi to get out of South Vietnam or Laos or Cambodia, or to quit sending guerrillas into Thailand; they don't call upon Peking to stop sending guerrillas into Burma or to quit interfering with the tribal areas of eastern India; they don't call on North Korea to stop sending guerrillas into South Korea. What they're doing is simply demanding that the United States get out of it, whether there's peace or not. So I think they're improperly called a peace movement because they're not demanding peace; they're not asking for the steps which are required to establish a peace.

I think, beginning in about 1967, there started in this country a very rapid movement toward isolationism. Now, if that is one of the costs we pay for our effort in Vietnam, that is a frightful cost to pay because the later worldwide consequences of American isolationism could be catastrophic, not only for the rest of the world but for the United States itself. So the new generation is going to have to make its own decision on that issue. At the present time it's taking the form of "abandon Southeast Asia; withdraw from NATO; cut down on foreign aid; put on import quotas; and forget the rest of the world and take care of our domestic needs here at home," the same kind of general atmosphere that we had during the thirties when we marched over the cliff into World War II. So what we need is a great debate on this subject.

We didn't--since we're talking now about the Kennedy period--we didn't really have, during the Kennedy Presidency, that phenomenon of isolationism to contend with. In general, the liberals of the country supported President Kennedy and his international efforts. I sometimes speculated on what the liberals would have done had President Kennedy lived and made the same decisions that President Johnson made about such a region as Southeast Asia, and what the liberals would have done then, because at the present time this isolationism is being led by a good many liberals around the country.

O'BRIEN: Well, during the time that you were Secretary of State, during the Kennedy years, at any time did differences over policy or personalities ever make you consider resigning?

RUSK: I didn't consider resigning on points on which the President took a different view than I did on a matter of policy. My attitude on that was pretty much the view of Secretary Marshall. President Truman pulled the rug out from Under Secretary Marshall once on the Palestine issue, and some of Marshall's friends suggested that he resign. He said to them, "No, gentlemen. You don't take an appointment of this sort from the President and resign because the man who has the Constitutional responsibility for making a decision makes one. You can resign on any other basis."

There were one or two occasions when I discussed with President Kennedy whether it would not be wise for me to step down and let him, President Kennedy, get a fresh start in foreign policy questions. For example, whether it would not be well for him to get ready for the 1964 election by having a fresh face as Secretary of State before the election came along. But he would not hear of it and turned it down. But I was not inclined to pull the old New Deal gag of going in periodically to resign in order to get a fresh vote of confidence from the President. That's just not in my temperament, and I thought that was a sort of phony process during the FDR period.

My own understanding with President Kennedy, before he announced my appointment in 1960, was that I could not possibly serve more than one term. In the first place, there was a major financial problem. I did not see how I could possibly manage it financially for more than that period of time. When President Kennedy died, I pressed my resignation on President Johnson, but he insisted that I stay on as a part of the transition from one administration to the other. He wanted to keep the Kennedy team more or less intact, and I felt an obligation to do so. And then, later, he would not, again, would not hear of my resignation when I raised the matter a time or two with him. Excuse me. [Interruption]

There's one point that might be worth mentioning. There are occasions when someone in the executive branch of the government will go to a President and say, "Now, Mr. President, unless you feel that you can decide to do this this particular way, I don't see how I can continue to carry on my responsibilities;" in other words, to use the threat of resignation as pressure on the President to make a decision one way or the other. Now, that is a matter which no President can accept. Both President Kennedy and President Johnson were very harsh

when anyone came to them with that attitude. No President can be blackmailed into making a decision one way or the other because of the possibility of a resignation.

This was illustrated in a lesser degree by Secretary Marshall, who was approached by a senior officer of the Department of State who said to him, "Mr. Secretary, unless you decide thus-and-so, I think I would have to resign." Secretary Marshall said to him, "Well, Mr. So-and-so, whether you or I serve the government of the United States has nothing to do with the merits of this question. So let's remove this irrelevancy by accepting your resignation right now. Now, having done that, if you're willing to, let's sit down and talk about the merits of the question." Well, this is, in general, the attitude that any President must take in order to preserve the prerogatives of the President in making decisions.

O'BRIEN: Is there any instance of that concerning problems in foreign affairs during the Kennedy Administration, in which other Cabinet members, or less than Cabinet members, that you recall. . . .

RUSK: I don't have precise instances in mind during the Kennedy period. I think the closest thing that we had during that period was the tendency of a few people to let it be known to the press, by leaks and so forth, that they did not agree with the decision of the President. This was almost epidemic at the time of the Bay of Pigs. It led President Kennedy to make that remark that success has many fathers but failure is an orphan. So there were times when President Kennedy's people did not rally around him and give him solid support when things got tough. And I think he himself was aware of this, and I think he didn't like it very much.

O'BRIEN: What's your favorite remembrance of the Kennedy Administration, or do you have one that stands above the rest?

RUSK: Well, I think in terms of policy I had great respect for the courage which President Kennedy showed at times of great crisis and danger, and the coolness with which he confronted those dangers. Not since World War II have we had a crisis anywhere in the world that compares with

the Cuban missile crisis, and yet the cool and calm way in which President Kennedy handled that question struck all of us with great admiration. The book of Robert Kennedy, Thirteen Days, on the Cuban missile crisis, contains a considerable emotional content. But I think that was Robert Kennedy's own personal emotional reaction rather than the emotional involvements of President Kennedy himself, because the President was as cool as a block of ice in looking at the alternatives, looking at the dangers and making the decisions in that particular crisis. So I think that that attribute of President Kennedy showed qualities of genuine greatness.

Now, in terms of personality, I must add that President Kennedy was a delightful personality. It was fun to work with him; he was a delightful man to talk things over with. He had a sense of humor that very often was directed against himself. He punctured stuffed shirts; he ridiculed pomposity; he was serious when he had to be; but he was capable of a gaiety which was infectious. It was a stimulating period to be around.

O'BRIEN: Rostow, in a couple of his writings, looks at the Cuban missile crisis as a great turning point in East-West relations. And I wonder how you see it, in the perspective of your term as Secretary of State, in dealing with the Russians and with the world?

RUSK: I'm not sure yet what the answer to that question is. I think there's no question that for a period of time it was a turning point in the sense that both we and the Russians acted with considerable prudence following the Cuban missile crisis. We both had looked down the barrel of the gun and had not liked what we saw. But I think there's no doubt now that the Cuban missile crisis caused the Russians to embark upon a major program of rearmament, particularly in the missile field. One senior Russian said to Jack McCloy right after the Cuban missile crisis that "this matter has been settled, but I want you to know, Mr. McCloy, that this situation will never happen again." And I think the Russians may have misunderstood the basis of our decision. They may have thought that we knew we could get away with what we did because of a very substantial nuclear superiority. And the Russians may have judged that if they were to build up their missile forces to parity or beyond that we would not make such a decision in similar circumstances

again. I don't think we know yet what Russian policy will be in the period of nuclear parity which we have now entered. But I think it's reasonably accurate to say that both we and the Russians came out of the Cuban missile crisis more cautious and more prudent than we were when we went into it, and that that may, indeed, be a permanent element of the situation. I certainly hope so.

Now, one of the great issues still unresolved is what the Chinese attitude will be as they develop their nuclear forces: whether nuclear weapons will cause them to be more cautious now that they know what they can do, or whether they will use those nuclear weapons as an active instrument of an aggressive and dynamic foreign policy in support of the world revolution. I just don't think we have any answer to that one yet.

O'BRIEN: Well, one final question: In the three years of the Kennedy Administration (and the five years of the Johnson Administration if you care to include that), what changes take place in you? What does the office of Secretary of State, in a sense, give you, and what does it take away from you in the eight years that you occupied it? Or is it too soon for you to make that kind of judgment?

RUSK: In personal terms, I'm inclined to think that eight years were too long. In the first place, that service exhausted my slender financial resources. Secondly, it added more than eight years to my age. One year of service in that office today, in the modern period, is the equivalent of several years of such service before World War II. [Interruption] At the turn of the century, Secretary Elihu Root could go off to the country for three months and not even answer letters from the President. The pace has increased enormously and the pressures. Appearing before congressional committees and subcommittees hundreds of times during the eight years was a very costly part of the job in terms of nervous exhaustion. I'm inclined to think that four years are about enough on that job for anybody, and that a regular turnover in the job is wise.

Now, in terms of policy questions, I think that I became increasingly convinced that persistence and patience are primary requirements for a Secretary of State. Many problems don't yield themselves to quick solutions, but that doesn't

that you have to throw up your hands and decide that all is lost. Sheer doggedness has a lot to do with the possibility of eventually building a stable world order.

Another point that impressed me deeply was the fact that so much of the world's business does get done despite the crises that make the headlines. There's been an explosive development of international law in this postwar period. My legal advisor told me that the United States alone has forty-five hundred treaties and agreements with other governments, ranging all the way from the control of nuclear weapons to the control of hog cholera. Most international boundaries are peaceful; most treaties are observed; most disputes are settled by peaceful means. The processes by which international law is expanded are really quite effective. It is sometimes said that international law is deficient because there is no international legislature. In fact, the further development of international law is not held back by the inadequacy of machinery; it is held back when there is no general agreement to bring new international law into operation. There are many ways in which new principles of international law can be established quickly when there's a general will, as was the case in the space treaty, for example.

And then a final observation I might make is that American foreign policy is really geared to the simple and decent purposes of the American people. One of the most important historical facts in this period in which we live is that the fantastic power of the United States has been harnessed to those purposes, and has not been exploited for imperial expansion and world domination, as has been so often the case in the past when particular nations accumulate great power. I think this postwar period has shown a moving expression of the generosity and responsibility and concern of the American people to establish a workable peace in the world and to take our share of responsibility for making it a better place in which to live, despite the failures and the frustrations and the disappointments and the mistakes.

'It's a very impressive story. -I just hope that our young people who face very large items of unfinished business do not discount the foundations which have been laid by the efforts of the American people in this postwar period. For example, we've been able to establish a period of twenty-five years since a nuclear weapon was used in anger. Now, that's a good deal for the younger generation to build on. If they can do as well and add another twenty-five years to that period, we will have

I took a draft cable in to Secretary Marshall addressed to Mr. [Ernest] Bevin, who was then Foreign Minister of Britain, and this cable really put Mr. Bevin in his place. It was a reply to some proposal that Mr. Bevin had made, and this draft would have knocked it down in no uncertain terms. And Secretary Marshall read it over, looked at me and said, "Rusk, I may or may not agree with you, but there's one thing that is certain: I will not send that kind of telegram to my friend Mr. Bevin." Now, you do develop relationships of that sort. [Interruption]

BEGIN SIDE II TAPE II

RUSK: There were some foreign ministers for whom I had a special esteem. For example, I greatly enjoyed working with Sir Alec Douglas-Home when he was Foreign Minister of Britain. He was a man that you could rely upon; you knew where you stood with him, whether you agreed with him or not. He was a man of great integrity. Mr. [Gerhard] Schröder of Germany was another one that I much enjoyed. There were a number, and I wouldn't want to offend others by leaving their names out, but I wouldn't be able to list them all.

But there were others who were just the opposite. Mr. [Zulfikar Ali] Bhutto of Pakistan was a very disagreeable colleague. Even though he had been American educated and was a very smooth customer, I found that I couldn't trust him. So that complicated things at a time when we were trying to get along well with his own president, President Ayub. Krishna Menon was impossible. I had great regard for Paul Hasluck of Australia, now the Governor-General out there; great regard for Antonio Carrillo Flores, the Foreign Minister of Mexico. He's one of the great figures in present-day diplomacy. And there were many others. I think the circumstances of modern diplomacy are such that personal relationships do play more of a role than classical diplomacy thought they should. This is because of the ease of communications and the growing practice of visits by heads of government and foreign ministers, and things of that sort. The human family is becoming more and more of a family, in one sort or another.

I might just say here--and I hope this doesn't get him in trouble--that in my last meeting with Mr. Gromyko, after our election in '68 when it was known to him that I would be leaving office, he drew me aside and spoke very warmly of our personal



relationship over the last eight years. Now, we've lived through some very difficult times together. There were times when we were figuratively at each other's throat, but we always dealt with each other with impeccable courtesy and, I think, on the basis of a straightforward presentation of each other's points of view, even though they didn't always agree with each other. I have a considerable regard for Mr. Gromyko, as a matter of fact.

O'BRIEN: Does the office of Secretary of State have to be as consuming as it is? Are there ways in which pressures could be taken off the Secretary of State, or is there some way that decision making could be less centralized?

RUSK: Well, in fact there is necessarily a very considerable delegation in any event. I mentioned a thousand cables going out of the Department of State on every working day. Now, the Secretary will see maybe six or eight or those cables before they go out. The President may see one or two of them. The rest of them are sent out on the basis of delegated authority. If the President decides in the conduct of his own office to delegate substantially to the Secretary of State, then the Secretary of State in turn can delegate substantially to his own colleagues in the Department. But if the President himself does not delegate to the Secretary of State, then it's difficult for the Secretary to delegate to others in his own Department. In that respect, President Johnson was more willing to delegate to his own Cabinet officers than President Kennedy was. And, of course, President Truman delegated an enormous amount of responsibility to Secretary Marshall because of his high esteem for him and his regard for his judgment.

O'BRIEN: I was going to say, we've covered a number of points today, and I really have no more questions. Is there something that--or anything that you feel that you'd like to add at this point?

RUSK: Well, there's one other point that I've mentioned before, but I want to return to because I consider it of such importance, and that is that the future historian should be rather careful about using contemporary materials as a source without checking them against the basic record which will be available in the presidential libraries.

I'm thinking of the spate of Kennedy books and Johnson books that are flooding the market. Many of these books are written by people who have their own fish to fry, who have only a partial or distorted picture of what actually happened. There's been too much of an effort on the part of some people to capture President Kennedy, and drag him along in their own train, in support of points of view which may or may not have been President Kennedy's. Now, the important thing for the historian, in trying to get at the real situation, the real facts, is to examine what President Kennedy and President Johnson said and did as President, not at tea table conversations or in walks around the Rose Garden, but at moments of decision, when they had to be President, and when they had to make judgments in light of the full responsibilities of the office of the President of the United States.

I mention this once again because there's the possibility of a distortion of the real story by the quick writers who blossom just after a Kennedy or a Johnson Administration. For example, there's been a good deal of skepticism expressed about President Johnson's interviews on CBS [Columbia Broadcasting System] with Walter Cronkite. In fact, President Johnson's interviews were based upon the written record of his Administration, and my guess is that when the historian looks into the documentary record, that those interviews will stand up very well indeed in terms of what actually happened at the time that President Johnson described them. So the historian has a job of cutting through a lot of flimflam and getting to the meat of the matter by looking at the full documentation.

O'BRIEN: Yes. Well, thank you, Secretary Rusk, for another fine interview.