INTERVIEW IV

INTERVIEWEE: DEAN RUSK

INTERVIEWER: PAIGE E. MULHOLLAN

DATE: March 8, 1970

Tape 1 of 1

M: This is March 8, 1970--a continuation with Secretary of State Dean Rusk.

The subjects, as I said, sir, are the Middle East, Europe, and Africa; and then perhaps some generalizations on such things as foreign aid, and so on. Taking the Middle East first, that's a crisis that arises in a very short time frame. I've heard people say that the government, under any Administration perhaps, can't really deal effectively with two crises at the same time like the Middle East and Viet Nam. Was that a distinct distraction from government action?

R: That's just not true. Viet Nam was never such a problem as to cause us to neglect other areas. There were times when for weeks on end President Johnson would give more time to Europe or to the Middle East or to Latin America than he did to Viet Nam. I once met with a group of European correspondents who complained that Viet Nam was diverting us from interest in Europe; and I asked them to name one subject of interest to the Europeans in which we were not taking a full part. And they looked at each other and couldn't find a single subject. So it was just not true that Viet Nam was such a total preoccupation that we neglected other areas.

M: Is that also true of the President? Was he able to master the details of a problem like the Middle East?

R: Oh, yes. He worked intensely on the Middle East. The general background of Middle Eastern policy is a declaration made by several Presidents that the United States supports the territorial integrity and political independence of all the states of the Middle East. Now at one time or another the United States has acted in support of that policy, in support of Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, as well as Israel. The general attitude of the United States is that the Middle East ought to be stabilized on the basis of the existing states in the

area, and that the United States ought to try to make friends with all of those states.

You had a three-cornered rivalry in the Middle East. You had on the one hand a contest between the so-called progressive Arab States--the extreme Arab States--and the moderate and conservative Arab states such as Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia; the more progressive or more extreme Arab states being primarily Egypt, Syria, and Algeria.

So we were interested in peace in the Middle East. In 1967 we became disturbed because we found that the Soviets were circulating rumors of Israeli mobilization against Syria, which did not check out as being factually true when we looked at the situation on the ground. But those rumors excited the Arabs and probably had something to do with the formation of the alliance between Syria and Egypt, and later Jordan and Egypt. The Soviets played a considerable role in stirring up the sense of hostility and crisis in the Middle East just prior to the June war.

Then when President Nasser closed the Strait of Tiran and insisted on the departure of the U.N. forces, I think the Soviets became concerned that the situation was moving too far and too fast. So they then tried to work with the United States to cool off the situation. We and they were in touch with each other, and we tried to get commitments from both sides that hostilities would not begin. They got such commitments from the Egyptians, for example; we got such a commitment from the Israelis. And when the Israelis then launched their attack in June 1967, it was in the face of a commitment to us that they would not do so, so we were very disappointed. The views in the Israeli Cabinet were closely divided--there was almost a tie-vote on most of these issues. But the so-called hawks in the Israeli Cabinet carried the day and precipitated the hostilities there, which caused the crisis of '67.

M: When something like that breaks out suddenly, does it immediately get kicked over to the White House and become Presidential as opposed to the Department's handling it?

R: Well, on a continuous basis we had furnished information to the President on the development of the crisis in the Middle East, so that he was in no sense caught by surprise. And then he was involved in some of the negotiations prior to the outbreak of hostilities. For example, he had a long talk with Aba Eban, the Foreign Minister of Israel. And it

had been arranged that the Vice President of Egypt was coming to Washington on the Wednesday after the war actually broke out for the purpose of talking over the Strait of Tiran situation, and the President was going to take part in those conversations himself. So the President took a very active part in the consideration of the Middle Eastern crisis, both before it broke out and of course when the fighting actually started.

M: How far did the plans actually get for some kind of joint action to open up the Straits of Tiran, either by American action or by joint international action?

R: We looked upon it as involving two stages: one, a declaration by the Maritime powers--by a considerable number of Maritime powers, maybe a dozen--that the Strait of Tiran was an international waterway, and that innocent passage through the Strait of Tiran was available for all nations, and for ships carrying all flags. The second stage was the possibility of forcing ships through the Strait of Tiran even against Egyptian opposition. Now there, there were very few volunteers. Our own Senate and members of Congress were very anxious that we not do anything unilaterally in that situation; that whatever we did would be done as a group, preferably through the United Nations; to make it clear that we were not just pursuing a unilateral policy out there. When you looked around to find out who else would be with you in forcing the Strait of Tiran, volunteers were very few--possibly Britain, possibly the Netherlands, but beyond that there were very few good prospects. It would have been a difficult military operation anyhow, because it was in a relatively remote part of the world; it would mean that the vessels that would be engaged would have to be supported around the Cape because the Suez Canal of course was not available; it would mean that the vessels that were going through there would be subject to Egyptian air power, and that was a very tricky situation. The Israelis are good diplomats, and they knew as well as we did that the number of volunteers to send ships through the Strait of Tiran would be very few; and this undoubtedly had some influence on their decision to start hostilities.

M: Is that actually what happened? We didn't ever have to decide either to do so or not to do so because hostilities came along?

R: That's right. The plan was overtaken by events. When the Israelis made their decision to launch hostilities, then everything started over again.

M: But we had gone so far as to seek some international volunteers? You mentioned England and the Netherlands had agreed?

R: That's right. We were talking about that with other governments.

M: When hostilities did break out, the earliest press sensation was the Departmental spokesman's, "neutral in thought, word, and deed" statement that Mr. Johnson apparently reacted strongly against. Was that accurate--he did react strongly against that slip?

R: Yes, he did. That was an inadvertence on the part of the press spokesman who simply picked up a phrase that had been used in a staff conversation--the phrase came from Woodrow Wilson. And he used it publicly without really giving it enough thought. I tried myself to correct that phrase during the course of the day by a rephrasing of our attitude. But actually it was not as bad a statement as that--it just excited some of the Jews in our own country.

M: How much of a problem is that?Domestic politics apparently are a greater importance in diplomacy in that area than almost anywhere in the world.Do you really have to keep a large eye on the domestic Jewish community, particularly since they're Democrats, when the Middle East is involved?

R: I think that tends to be true of the Democratic Party than the Republican Party. The Democratic Party has strong ties with the Jewish community in this country, and traditionally the Democratic Party has been a lot more vigorous in support of Israel than the Republican Party.Anyhow, that was an increment in foreign policy which had to be taken into account.

M: And you had some high ranking officials dealing with the problem who were Jewish themselves.Was that any problem?

R: Yes, but they weren't so biased that they weren't able to pursue the President's policy with integrity.

M: Had a decision been made upon a contingency plan if the Israelis had lost?

R: No. We did not anticipate that the Israelis would lose such a battle. Our own military estimate was that the Israelis would succeed in defeating their immediate Arab neighbors in the course of about ten days.Well, we were just two or

three days off.

M: We were pessimistic; we thought it would take four more days than it did.

R: That's right.

M: What about the Russians after the hostilities started? You said they had decided that maybe they'd gone too far. Is that the circumstance that led to the Glassboro meeting, was that primarily a Middle Eastern summit affair?

R: Well, the Middle East was the occasion for Mr. Kosygin's coming to the United States for a special meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations, so that the answer is yes in the sense that the Middle East was the reason for his being here. And of course if Mr. Kosygin and President Johnson got together while he was here, it was inevitable that the Middle East would play a large part in the talks.

M: Were the Russians helpful then at that stage, or were they still meddlesome in the sense of stirring things up?

R: Mr. Kosygin came to the general assembly of the United Nations dedicated to the point that Israel would first have to withdraw from all Arab territories, and then other elements in the peace conference would have to be discussed. We felt that it was impossible to get Israel to withdraw before the shape of a peace element was apparent, and it was necessary to talk about such things as passage through the Strait of Tiran and passage through the Suez Canal and guaranteed borders and the settlement of the refugees and things of that sort so that you'd have a complete package within which the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Arab territories would be one of the items. Mr. Kosygin stuck with his attitude in his talks with President Johnson, and it was not until some time later that they began to talk about the various elements in the peace package.

M: After Glassboro?

R: After Glassboro.

M: Actually we never have talked about Glassboro. If the Middle East was inevitable, I suppose Viet Nam was too. Did the Russians come forward with a Viet Nam proposal at Glassboro as well as on the Middle East?

R: President Johnson and Mr. Kosygin talked about Viet Nam at

some length at Glassboro; and President Johnson gave Chairman Kosygin a formulation of bombing policy and talks which he thought Mr. Kosygin might transmit to Hanoi to see if Hanoi would find it acceptable. Mr. Kosygin accepted this formulation from President Johnson, and presumably transmitted it to Hanoi, but we never heard anything from it. So presumably Hanoi turned it down.

M: Did he indicate that he could deal for the North Vietnamese at that point?

R: He more or less indicated that he would transmit it to Hanoi to see what they thought about it.

M: But that was the end of it as far as any developments were concerned.

R: That's right. I think some more detail on this can be found in President Johnson's book.

M: On this particular subject--Viet Nam at Glassboro?

R: Right.

M: What about the "hot line" communiques? There is apparently disagreement as to how threatening the Russians were in their hot line messages. Did you think that they were particularly threatening during the course of the hostilities, or not so threatening?

R: They were not particularly threatening as far as themselves taking action is concerned. They were very outraged and very sober about the fact that hostilities had broken out because we had told the Russians that we had assurances from the Israelis that they would not initiate hostilities, and so one of our problems was to assure the Russians that the Israeli attack surprised us as much as it did the Russians. And I think the Russians came to believe us on that point. But the Soviets must have known that in the event of fighting that the Arab side would suffer a stinging defeat. They have good professional military men who must have made some estimates themselves, and I'd be surprised if the Russian professional military estimate was much different than our own.

We tried to arrange a ceasefire on the first day. Had we been able to do so, there would not have been any fighting between Israel and Jordan and Israel and Syria. And Israeli forces would only have been maybe thirty miles

or so into the Sinai Desert as far as Egypt was concerned. Had we been able to get a ceasefire on that first day, the situation would have been much more easy to solve than it is today. But the Russians and the Arabs delayed in the Security Council in moves toward a ceasefire; they tried to link it with withdrawal of forces, and they tried to inject other elements into the situation.

M: We were trying this at the United Nations?

R: That's right. It was not until about a week had passed that an actual ceasefire resolution succeeded in passing the Security Council. By that time the Israelis were already well established in Jordan-Syria, as well as Egypt.

M: Had the United Nations consulted the United States, or had the Secretary General consulted the United States before he withdrew the U.N. forces in the area--?

R: No, there was no consultation. We were very upset by the action taken by the Secretary General to withdraw U.N. forces from that part of the world on Nasser's request. In a purely technical sense of international law, it is perhaps true that U.N. forces cannot stay anywhere where the government itself does not wish them to stay. But on the other hand those forces were put there by the action of the General Assembly and of the Security Council. We felt that the Secretary General ought not to have made that judgment himself, but ought to have referred the matter to the Security Council or the General Assembly for instructions, during which referral there would have been some time given to negotiate out a different solution than the one that was finally reached.

M: And had the forces stayed, we think that perhaps the hostilities could have been avoided?

R: For example, President Nasser did not ask for the forces to be removed from Sharmal-Shaykh at the mouth of the Gulf of Tiran. It was U Thant who took the attitude that removal of some of the forces meant removal of all the forces. And so when the U.N. forces pulled away from the Sharmal-Shaykh and Egyptian forces went there, Nasser felt it was impossible for him to allow Israeli shipping to go through the Gulf; and that precipitated the casus belli for Israel, namely the closing of the Gulf of Tiran.

M: Once the situation had stabilized after the armistice, our Administration presumably did not look with too much favor

on four-power talks regarding a settlement--is that accurate?

R: We were for a long time reluctant to take this up as a four-power matter, because we felt that it would be an uneven discussion; that the United States would be cast in the role of the lawyer for Israel--

M: In the four-power--

R: In the four-power talks. And the Soviet Union might well be cast in the role of the lawyer for Cairo; and that this was not the best way to get a solution. We much preferred the use of Ambassador [Gunnar] Jarring from Sweden to try to make contact with the two sides and try to find out on the basis of private exploration what basis for peace might exist. Now later four-power talks did develop.

M: Later in the Johnson Administration?

R: No, just in--

M: Just after the other one began.

R: But had the Johnson Administration have continued, we would have gone into four-power talks. Because we drew a distinction between four-power talks inside the frame work of the Security Council and four-power talks outside the Security Council. We took the view that it would be all right for the four permanent members of the United Nations to talk about these matters looking toward Security Council action, but not to convene a big conference outside the framework of the U.N. for the purpose of dealing with the Middle East.

M: Some of the statements by the current Administration seem to me at least to give the implication that the Johnson Administration's policy was dangerously pro-Israeli in the sense that it perhaps drove the Arab States more closely to Russia or some non-Western alliance. Do you think that's an unfair charge against the Johnson Administration?

R: Well, the Johnson Administration was friendly to Israel, and President Johnson had made a decision to supply some additional planes to Israel, for example, when the French decided not to supply their Mirages. And of course the extreme Arab groups--Egypt, Syria, Algeria--did their best to link the United States directly with Israel when Israel launched its attack. And they tried to hold us responsible

for Israel's action. You see, some of these capitals credit us with unlimited influences in Israel.

M: And everywhere else.

R: We don't have it. We just don't have it. And we're not the supervisors--the tutors--of Israel.They're a very independent little nation. But some of the Arabs tried to hold us directly responsible for whatever it was that Israel did.

M: Were there any other elements of the Middle Eastern problem there in the summer of '67 that are important to go into or are there any vignettes of the President during that time that occur to you?

R: Well, I think the historian will want to look at the five points which President Johnson announced as a basis for our policy toward the Middle East.Those five points were pretty well inscribed in the Security Council Resolution of November 1967. And we looked upon that November resolution as providing the basis for peace in the Middle East by giving each side assurances on those things which are most important to it. It basically meant that the Arabs would have to acknowledge that Israel was there to stay; that Israel was not to be driven into the sea; that it was a member of the international community of nations, and had a right to all the privileges and rights and obligations of any member of the international community; that it was not to be discriminated against in the Middle East as it had been up to that point; and that Israel would basically have to withdraw from most of the territories that it had occupied in the June fighting.

M: What was the reaction of the Israelis, or the Israeli supporters in the United States, to that statement of policy? Did they think that was going too far to be even-handed?

R: No, I think not. There were some groups here who thought that we were being too even-handed, but in general it was acceptable as a basis. Israel has never been enthusiastic about that November 1967 resolution.But we did not run into undue trouble in our own Jewish community here on the subject.

M: And we didn't consult Israel about it--it was our own unilateral--is that right--unilateral statement of American policy?

R: That's right.

M: If nothing else occurs to you on the Middle East, let's shift north, I suppose, to the European sphere; and there one of the problems is that there are so many topics that we can't go into any of them perhaps with the depth that some of them might deserve.

The first one that got a lot of public comment after Mr. Johnson assumed the President was the multilateral force notion. Did Mr. Johnson ever have, to your knowledge, a strong view regarding the utility of that idea or that concept?

R: I don't think that as Vice President he took much part in the discussions of the multilateral force. The multilateral force idea developed out of a request by the Europeans themselves to play a greater part in nuclear strategy and nuclear affairs. In the summer of 1960 Mr. [Paul-Henri] Spaak, who was then Secretary General of NATO, and General [Lauris] Norstad, who was then the NATO commander, came to our representatives at the NATO Council and told them that the Europeans wanted more of a role to play.

M: Was that primarily the West Germans now, or--?

R: Well, it was not just the West Germans; it was a group of them. And that something would have to be done to cut our allies in more effectively on nuclear matters; that they did not want any longer to leave it just as an American monopoly within NATO. Well, that caused Secretary [Christian] Herter in the December 1960 meeting of the NATO foreign ministers to propose an international force. At that time I think he had in mind some polaris submarines as a part of that international force.

Well, when President Kennedy came to power, he took a look at this situation. And we decided then that it would be up to the Europeans to tell us what from the European point of view would meet their needs. And so we tried to pass the word to the Europeans that they should come up with some proposals. We waited for at least a year, maybe more than a year, to hear from our Europeans as to what would meet their needs since they were the askers, they were the petitioners. But nothing came out of it. Finally the Europeans in effect said to us that they did not know enough about nuclear matters to be able to make proposals, and since we did that we should make some proposals of our own to try to meet their needs. So we got down to the

drawingboard and came up with the multi-lateral force idea. It was originally intended to be a submarine force, but through the opposition of Admiral [Hyman G.] Rickover and some members of the Congress and some members of the military, it was shifted from a submarine force to a surface vessel force because it was felt that on security grounds it would be unwise to cut all of our allies into the submarine technology that was involved.

So we proposed the multilateral force as a "for instance"--as one example of what might be done to create a NATO nuclear force. We were not putting it forward as a solution made in Washington which had to be accepted come what may; it was a tentative proposal. Well, the truth of the matter is that the Europeans were unable to agree among themselves as to what ought to be done with a NATO nuclear force; the British took one view, the Germans another, the French another, the Italians still another. The Germans and the British were never able to get together on their reaction to the multilateral force idea. And so since it was obvious that the multilateral force idea would not be unanimously accepted by the alliance, then we just let it die on the vine. Because the purpose of the multilateral force was to achieve an allied objective. As if this did not meet the allied point of view, then there was no point in going ahead with it. So by the time that President Johnson became President, it was clear that there was resistance to the multilateral force idea, both in the alliance and on Capitol Hill--Senators and Congressmen were opposed to it. And so it died a natural death from lack of sustenance.

M: It didn't require any direct Presidential decision killing it at any point?

R: No, it just required an understanding that we would not press the matter. We'd simply leave it on the table and let it die there.

M: This is one of the issues that has been suggested where there was a clear division between at least some in the Department of State and the National Security operation in the White House. Was that accurate--the Department favoring it and the people in the White House opposing it clearly?

R: I think there might have been some shadings of difference there among different individuals; there were some who felt themselves strongly committed to the multilateral force, who wanted to go ahead with it on the grounds that it would be

good for the alliance. There were others who felt that if our allies do not want the multilateral force, it was not for the United States to press it. And so there were some differences of view within the Administration on the multilateral force idea.

M: Those were the ones that the analysts called the "cabal" or "Theologians" or something?

R: That's right. The MLF developed a theology of its own.

M: What happens to the people like that when they lose? Do they get farmed out then into--?

R: No, they don't change their jobs. They just go ahead and take on the next problem that comes along and go working along. There are some of those who are still disappointed that the multilateral force idea never took hold.

M: As you describe it then, the suggestion that I also have seen that the multilateral force was given up more or less as a kind of a quid pro quo for the Nonproliferation Treaty would not be an accurate analysis.

R: The multilateral force had died before it got to the point of serious discussion in the Nonproliferation Treaty; but in fact the Nonproliferation Treaty would rule out the multilateral force by its terms.

M: The way we interpret its terms it would have denied us the opportunity to create that kind of force?

R: Yes. We had long discussions with the Soviets on the key articles of the Nonproliferation Treaty. The chief objective of the Soviet Union was to be sure that the Germans never got their finger on any trigger under any circumstances, or by any combination of voting, or anything of that sort.

Now the way the Nonproliferation Treaty eventually wound up was on the basis of the idea that there would be no new entity that had control of nuclear weapons. If the countries of Western Europe were to merge, if they were to create a unified Europe which had control of foreign and military policy, then that Europe would be nuclear by direct succession--by inheritance from Britain and France. Now the Soviets had some objections even to that interpretation of the treaty, and we made it clear to them that we were going to announce that that was our interpretation of the treaty,

and if they publicly objected to it then we'd have to go back to the drawingboard and negotiate the treaty again; because there would be no treaty if that interpretation were counterbalanced. In fact they did not object to that interpretation; I suppose that the Soviets predict that it's going to be a long, long time before Europe ever gets to that degree of unity.

M: Did those negotiations for that treaty require the President's direct participation at any point.

R: Oh, yes. He followed the negotiations on the Nonproliferation Treaty very closely and had to make some of the key decisions about how far we would go, particularly on the point of negotiating a treaty which would rule out the MLF because he had to decide that we would ignore those allies who still wanted the MLF in negotiating the NonProliferation Treaty.

M: And the reaction from those allies was adverse to this decision so that he had to put up with their complaints pretty strongly?

R: Well, they didn't complain very hard because they knew the MLF was dead; they had already learned that there was not going to be an agreement among the Europeans on the subject, therefore that we would not be able to go forward with it.

M: The most sensational event I suppose in NATO affairs during the Johnson presidency was General de Gaulle's demand that the headquarters be moved out of France. What was Mr. Johnson's reaction to that?

R: Well, we were disappointed of course that France withdrew from the military arrangements of NATO; it made a big difference in matters of convenience, matters of logistic support, matters of headquarters locations, and things of that sort. It affected the depth of the central front in Central Europe. But when President de Gaulle made that decision, President Johnson was determined that we meet it--that we do everything that President de Gaulle asked us to do by the time that he asked us to do it. And so President Johnson was determined that we as a matter of dignity get all of our forces out of France by the deadline set by President de Gaulle, and not be in the position of quarreling with him about that decision. President Johnson was determined not to be in the position of having a personal vendetta with President de Gaulle. He never let us criticize President de Gaulle personally, and his whole

attitude was one more of regret than of anger that President de Gaulle had made that decision.

M: Your implication there, stop me if I'm incorrect, is that there may have been some in the government who would have liked to pursue a stronger reaction policy toward de Gaulle, but--?

R: Yes, there were some who wanted to attack President de Gaulle personally, and try to undermine him personally in France as well as in Europe. But President Johnson wouldn't let us do that because he did not believe in personal vendettas among people who are carrying top political responsibility.

M: After the move was accomplished then, NATO went through a number of exercises. One of the most important I suppose was the Harmel Exercise toward the end of the Administration. Did Mr. Johnson take any great interest in this or consider the NATO activity in that regard very important?

R: He didn't take much interest in the Harmel exercise because it was not that sufficiently important. When we went to a NATO Foreign Ministers, meeting, we would always have a talk with President Johnson on the issues that were likely to come up and what lines of approach the President wanted us to take toward the issues that were coming up at the Foreign Ministers' meeting. But the Harmel Exercise was a very useful exercise, but it went on at a level less than Chiefs of State.

M: Was it one of our specific goals to try to enlarge NATO's responsibility to a world role, as one of the suggestions in that exercise ultimately came out?

R: We were very anxious that Europe recover from its tendency to withdraw into itself and assume the role that was waiting for Europe in world affairs. You see, decolonization had been quite a shock to both France and Great Britain, and the tendency to become a little France or a little England was very pronounced. And there grew up in Europe a strong feeling of isolationism in the sense that Europe would look after its own affairs and not pay too much attention to what's going on in other parts of the world. We were concerned about this because that would leave the United States more or less alone as great power in the free world able to act in any part of the world where an action was required. We wanted some help in this role. And we thought

particularly that Europe ought to take a very active part on the continent of Africa. Here was this vast continent within twenty minutes flying time of NATO Europe. And on geopolitical grounds we thought that Europe ought to be deeply concerned about anything that was going on on the continent of Africa. But through my administration we were not able to get very much excitement on the part of Europe in what was going on in other parts of the world. And the same thing has been true under the Nixon Administration. Europe eventually will recover from its isolationism, but it will take some time and will probably take some further moves toward unification in Europe itself, so that a unified Europe can play the role of a great power in the world rather than being dependent upon the actions of individual national states.

M: Is this the same issue that's involved in our continuing large troop commitment? I know some of Mr. Johnson's close friends in the Senate have been outspokenly in favor of reducing that commitment, and we did reduce it I guess once during your administration. Did Mr. Johnson have strong views on that subject?

R: Well, President Johnson basically felt that we should not unravel NATO defenses by unilateral withdrawal of U.S. forces. But he was faced with some political facts of life in the United States, particularly in the Senate where a resolution to reduce forces would probably have passed. Such a resolution would probably not have passed the House of Representatives, but it would have created a very messy situation had the Senate passed a resolution to withdraw substantial forces from Western Europe. Our attitude on this was not made any easier by the attitude of the Europeans themselves, because the Europeans were not willing to do what was required in the defense side to defend themselves. The proportion of their gross national product that went into defense budget was substantially lower than ours; they were not manning the ramparts of Central Europe with their own forces to the extent that we thought they should; so that we were in the position of being the only member of NATO who seemed to be meeting its NATO commitments. And that made it very difficult to carry the argument here in the United States against those who were trying to get some reductions, because they would argue that we ought to not be required to do more than the Europeans were prepared to do for themselves.

M: Is that what made it necessary for us to put I suppose considerable pressure on the Federal Republic of Germany on

their offset purchase program, for example?

R: We have a substantial balance of payments problem arising from the presence of American forces in Europe. This is not a budgetary problem in the sense that it would cost us at least as much to maintain those same troops in the United States as it costs us to maintain them in Europe. So that as far as the budget is concerned there's not much in it one way or the other. But from the balance of payments point of view, this involved something like a billion-and-a-half dollars--

M: Which is substantial.

R: Yes. Which is substantial from a balance of payments point of view. And so we were anxious that the Germans particularly offset this balance of payments problem, in the first place by buying military equipment from the United States for their own armed forces; and then secondly by arrangements in the monetary and fiscal field to neutralize the balance of payments offset that the presence of our troops brought about. So we've always had difficulty negotiating with the Germans trying to get them fully to offset the balance of payments increment of our troops in Europe.

M: Some of the European political analysts have always suggested that we pushed the [Ludwig] Erhard government so hard that we actually caused its political fall. Do you think that's an exaggeration, or is that accurate?

R: Well, the Erhard government wanted to be relieved of any serious obligation on the balance of payments problem, and we just couldn't accept that. I think there's a little something in the fact that the failure of ourselves and Erhard to come together on the offset agreement has something to do with the fall of the Erhard government.

M: And we undertook that pressure in the knowledge that that might be the result?

R: Well, it was not a purpose of our position; we were simply in a situation where we had no alternative. We had to press for offsets, because we had problems of our own. We made a mistake back in the early 1950's when we first put our additional troops in Europe in not making arrangements at that time to neutralize the balance of payments cost of such a move. But at that time we were trying to send dollars abroad--we were trying to close the dollar gap. We were

going to all sorts of extremes such as the Marshall Plan, trying to put dollars in the hands of Europeans. So that at that time we did not look ahead to the time when we ourselves would have a shortage of dollars and would have to take care of the balance of payments situation. Had we put our troops into Europe initially on the basis of an arrangement which would neutralize foreign exchange costs, it would have been much better for us in the long run.

M: Were Mr. Johnson's personal relations with Mr. [Kurt Georg] Kiesinger after he came to power there as close as they'd been with some of the previous German Chancellors?

R: I had the impression that Mr. Johnson never got as close to Chancellor Kiesinger as he had been with Chancellor Erhard.

M: Erhard had visited here a number of times.

R: Erhard had visited here, and they were close partners, and they were good friends; and although the relations between Johnson and Kiesinger were correct and cordial and friendly, I have the impression they were not as intimate as the relations with Erhard had been.

M: All the experts say that the big problem in Europe of course is to settle the German problem. Did we push the Federal Republic to undertake measures of its own aimed toward settling the so-called German problem as it has apparently done in the past year?

R: The settlement of the German problem is basically a problem with the Soviet Union. There isn't going to be any settlement of the German problem to which the Soviets don't agree. I talked with [Andrei A.] Gromyko many times about the German problem, and tried to show him what vast changes in the situation could take place if we got the German problem behind us. And the only thing that the Soviets had to do was to allow the East Germans a chance to choose for themselves whether they wanted to be independent as a separate East German state, or become a part of the united Germany; and that if that question was settled by plebiscite, that then there would be far-reaching opportunities for a disarmament as between the two sides, and for intimate trade relations between the two sides, and a new era of peace in Central Europe.

You see, the German question is probably the only question on which the Soviet Union and the United States might be drawn into a nuclear war. We're not going to have

a nuclear war with the Soviet Union about polar bears in the Arctic. The unsettled German question is the question on which there could be a major confrontation between our two sides. I would doubt, for example, there would be any nuclear confrontation over the Middle East. So that the German question is a question of the greatest importance.

We were in favor of what Willy Brandt called Ostpolitik; that is, a policy on the part of the Federal Republic to approve its own relations with the individual countries of Eastern Europe, including the Soviet Union. And we gave Chancellor Kiessinger and Willy Brandt more or less a free hand to explore the possibilities there. If the Federal Republic can work out its own relations with Eastern Europe on a more favorable basis, then that reduces the impact of the German question on U.S.-USSR relationships and it makes it much less of a dangerous problem.

M: In your talks with Mr. Gromyko, did he ever indicate that the Russians were interested in moving in this direction seriously as well?

R: No, I think that there was never an indication that the Russians were willing to contemplate a reunification of Germany on the terms that the West would accept.

M: What about our policy under your and Mr. Johnson's Administration in the rest of Eastern Europe--the so-called building bridges policy? Was this a serious initiative on our part to try to really change the nature of things in that area of Europe?

R: President Johnson took the view that it's too late in history to pursue an attitude of total hostility across the board toward anybody. He set about building bridges with Eastern Europe, not on the basis of trying to improve relations with all of them including the Soviet Union. You see, President Johnson did such things as bring the Consular Treaty negotiations to a conclusion, the Civil Air Agreement to a conclusion, the Nonproliferation Treaty, the space treaties; he did his best to get the SALT talks started before he left office. So that he was concentrating pretty hard on individual steps to improve relations with the countries of Eastern Europe, primarily with the Soviet Union. The Soviets were suspicious that the bridge building policy was an attempt to drive wedges between the smaller countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Well, that was not the purpose at all as far as President Johnson was concerned. It was to reduce tensions by trying to find

points on which agreement could be reached, whether they were small points or large points, simply because President Johnson wanted to reduce the dangers in the world.

M: Is this something that he himself was particularly interested in, or was he getting advice from the Department that convinced him that we should go in this direction?

R: Both. But he personally felt very strongly about the need for finding points of agreement with the Soviet Union. Among other things for example, he proposed to the Congress an East-West trade bill which would have authorized the Executive to negotiate trade agreements with the countries of Eastern Europe on a most-favored-nation basis. But the politics of the situation in the Congress never let that bill come up for a vote.

M: Was that just a casualty of Viet Nam and the dissension growing out of that?

R: Probably a casualty of Viet Nam.

M: That was one of his most famous speeches, I guess, that October 1966 speech that introduced that concept. Was that a program that the State Department developed for the purpose of building bridges?

R: Yes, the State Department was very much in favor of the bridge building attitude. President Kennedy had also taken some of the same point of view despite the Berlin crisis of '61 and '62; despite the Cuban missile crisis. You'll remember President Kennedy did go ahead and complete the partial Test Ban Treaty.

M: You mentioned awhile ago the SALT talks--that got interrupted by Czechoslovakia. How far had the agreement for a summit for example gone prior to the August invasion of Czechoslovakia?

R: The Soviets moved into Czechoslovakia on a Tuesday night. It had been agreed between us and the Soviet Union that on the Wednesday morning--the next day--we were both going to announce in our respective capitals a summit meeting to launch the SALT talks. And one of the first things that we had to do when they moved into Czechoslovakia was to cancel that announcement. So we were just on the point of announcing a summit meeting to start the talks on offensive and defensive missiles. So we had gone a long way down that trail. Now one wonders why the Soviets felt that they could

go ahead with the SALT talks and at the same time move into Czechoslovakia.

M: They did think that, you--?

R: Now from their point of view, of course it would have been fine--if we had been willing to go ahead. Because that would have put our blessing on what they were doing in Czechoslovakia and would mean that we would not take too much offense over it. But it was perfectly clear that from the point of view of our own people and our allies and the general world situation that we could not announce a summit meeting with the Soviets the morning after they had moved into Czechoslovakia.

M: Did we ever get very close to reviving that idea then in the last months of the Administration?

R: We tried to as late as December 1968. I have the impression that the Russians came to the conclusion there was no point in opening up the SALT talks with an Administration that was just about to leave office; that they should wait and engage the new Administration in such talks, although we had cleared the possibility of such talks with Mr. Nixon and had his blessing had the Soviets been willing to meet in December to get the talks started.

M: At the time of the Czechoslovakian invasion, was there any lengthy debate as to what our reaction should be; did anybody want to do more than we were able to do?

R: No. We had no commitments to Czechoslovakia. Czechoslovakia was a Communist country that was very active in pursuing the world revolution in terms of interfering in the affairs of other countries and doing things to stimulate dissident groups here and there. Czechoslovakia had been almost as active as Red China and the Soviet Union itself.

M: They were the first ones to supply Egypt I suppose--

R: So we did not feel that we owed any obligation to Czechoslovakia. Anyhow it was covered by the Warsaw Pact, and any overt move by us to support Czechoslovakia would have meant war, and we were not prepared to go to war over the issue of the internal arrangements in Czechoslovakia.

M: Mr. Johnson made some statements that the press at least interpreted as being intended to protect perhaps other states in the area such as Romania and Yugoslavia; did we

have a clear plan in mind that was the basis of those statements he made immediately after the invasion?

R: We tried by warning the Soviet Union to inject some caution into their attitude toward the other countries. A move on the Soviet Union to Romania probably would not have brought forth any direct response from the United States given the location of Romania and the general situation. But a move by the Soviets into Yugoslavia would have created a crisis of first-class proportions because the threat of the movement of Soviet armies to the Adriatic would have been of great concern to all of NATO as well as to the United States. So President Johnson tried to warn the Soviet Union against any further Czechoslovakias.

We had not issued a public warning about Czechoslovakia to the Soviets before it happened; we were playing it calmly and quietly, more or less with the blessing of the Czechs themselves. We had talked privately with the Soviet Union about Czechoslovakia and objected strenuously to the efforts which they seemed to be making to charge western imperialists with stirring up problems in Czechoslovakia. And I told the Soviet Ambassador that that looked to me like an attempt to build up an excuse for moving armed forces into Czechoslovakia, and that we didn't like that at all. The Soviet Ambassador told me that no such thing was in progress.

M: Can you roughly date that--how far in advance of the actual troop movement did that happen?

R: That was about three weeks. I think the Soviets did not decide to go into Czechoslovakia until about three days before they actually went in; they got their troops ready; they got all their maneuvers accomplished; and they got their logistics laid on; and they got everything else ready. But our later information was that they made their decision to go in on the Saturday before the Tuesday on which they actually did go in. So that it surprised a good many Russians, I suspect, as well as a good many Americans.

M: You don't think there was any element in that decision of avoiding the SALT talks or avoiding the summit?

R: No. I think these were on two different tracks in the Soviet policy-making machinery, and that the two just happened to come out that way.

M: You mentioned earlier that the Viet Nam problem had never

caused us to not pay adequate attention to any European problems. A different part of that is the claim by the critics always that our policy and our relations in regard to Western Europe were greatly damaged by our activities in Viet Nam. Do you think there's anything to that in any of the countries involved?

R: Well, I think with the isolationist view in Western Europe that they just didn't want to see any problem like the Viet Nam problem on their plate; they'd be glad to see Viet Nam simply disappear from the agenda. Some of them did not understand that the integrity of the United States under a security treaty is of fundamental importance to Western Europe. Had we simply pulled out of Viet Nam, President de Gaulle would have been the first one in Europe to say, "Ah, you see, you cannot rely upon the Americans under a security treaty." Because he had tried to tell the Europeans that we could not be relied upon under NATO. But in general we didn't get much flak from the other members of NATO about Viet Nam. There was some problem in the left wing of the Labor Party in Great Britain, and there were a few demonstrations here and there, but in general our NATO allies seemed to understand what our problem was in Viet Nam.

M: What about states such as Sweden who encouraged apparently some of our deserters or protesters and so on?

R: Well, Sweden became very unneutral toward Viet Nam. They favored North Viet Nam; they did not act like a neutral at all in dealing with American deserters. For example if they gave political asylum to Americans, say American deserters, they were under an obligation to be sure that those Americans did not participate in political activities in Sweden under political asylum. So they created a new category for these Americans; they let them in on humanitarian grounds, which left them free to participate in political activities. And so we felt that that was, again, an unneutral act on the part of Sweden. So we had a rather bad time with Sweden there for a period of two or three years.

M: Were they alone in that exception pretty well in Europe?

R: In general, yes.

M: None of the NATO allies participated in that kind of unneutral acts?

R: No.

M: One of the things that came up about the time you left office and was a matter of some publicity for awhile was the negotiation for the renewal of the Spanish bases; the press kept charging it was being handled by the military rather than the State Department. Can you clear up what went on in that situation and the reason for it?

R: The Spanish base negotiation was a very difficult negotiation because Spain wanted to make the most of those bases. Spain for example either wanted to get into NATO, or to have a security treaty with the United States comparable to the NATO Treaty on the grounds that Spain was incurring risks by having American bases onboard, and that there ought to be some compensation for that. In addition to that, Spain wanted extraordinarily high levels of military support, in terms of equipment, in exchange for the bases. Well, when the time came for renewal, I had a discussion with the Spanish Foreign Minister, and we agreed that the discussions should take place in three stages. There should be a preliminary political stage between the Foreign Minister and myself in which both sides would decide whether or not they wanted the base agreements to continue. There would then be a second stage which would be military in character which would get into the question of hardware--what kind of equipment should in fact be furnished Spain for what purposes, and for what strategic objectives, in connection with the base agreement. And that there would then be a third stage which would be, again, political in character which would wrap up the whole works.

Well, we had the first stage and the Foreign Minister and I did agree that we wanted the bases agreement to continue. Then when we got to the military stage the American military negotiator let himself be drawn into very important political questions, such as security assurances to Spain, and went beyond his terms of reference. And that was what caused the problem. Because he got into questions which should have been reserved for the third political stage at the Foreign Minister level.

M: Which <u>was</u> already scheduled.

R: Which was already scheduled. So the flak resulted from the fact that in the military discussions they got into political questions which should have been reserved for the third stage.

M: Was it our policy unalterably to oppose Spanish admission to NATO, or was it our allies who--

R: No. We were in favor with Spanish admission to NATO and had been for some years. But countries like Britain with the Labor government, the Scandinavian countries, perhaps Belgium, just could not see admitting Franco to NATO. There was still too much memory there of the early relations with the Franco regime. And so since admission to NATO is on a basis of unanimity, the admission of Spain to NATO has never been a political possibility.

M: There are, as you're quite aware, all sorts of peripheral European issues. Are there any important ones where the President got particularly interested, or played a decisive part, that occur to you?

R: Well, the President made some very important decisions, which will be available in his book, on fiscal and monetary matters involved in Western Europe. The work of the Committee of Ten, and the work that [Sec. of Treas. Henry] Joe Fowler handled so successfully in working out the Special Drawing Rights in the International Monetary Fund. The President took an intimate part in the various discussions we had when there were monetary crises involved in the pound, or the dollar, or the franc, and handled himself with great astuteness. He seemed to grasp these questions fully and in great detail.

M: Which very many people can't say.

R: That's right. And I was very much impressed with his technical competence in dealing with fiscal problems involving the Western community. Then he also had to be personally involved in an intimate way in the conclusion of the Kennedy Round negotiations on trade. We had several long sessions with him in the closing stages of the Kennedy Round to see whether we would in fact accept the position that had been worked out by the negotiators in dealing with some sixty thousand or more separate items in those negotiations. And it was the President who made the decision to say yes, and to go ahead with the Kennedy Round negotiations even though he knew that there would be some disturbance here in this country on certain aspects of the Kennedy Round results.

M: We took a generally liberal trade position, toward free trade, toward lower controls and so on?

R: Yes. And he did not want us to be responsible for starting a new cycle of restrictive trade practices which would have led to worldwide depression. He wanted us to move forward on a more liberal open trading system on the grounds that that would be in the American interest as a great trading nation and would also be good for the western community as a whole.

M: On the monetary affairs, again it was a case of the French and the Americans being at odds, was it not? Did this arouse a new round of anti-French sentiment on our part?

R: It was President de Gaulle who seemed to put this in a bilateral France-U.S. context. As a matter of fact from the U.S. point of view, France was a minority of one in the Committee of Ten. France wasn't playing in the general community effort to find answers to these monetary problems. And so President Johnson tried to avoid having this appear as simply a U.S.-France problem, whereas President de Gaulle wanted to make it into a U.S.-French problem.

M: Anything else on Europe before we pass on? There are, I'm sure, endless little instances of activity--

R: I would like to emphasize again that there was nothing in the allegation that Viet Nam had caused us to divert our attention from Europe, and that we were neglecting Europe because of Viet Nam. This just wasn't so. We were taking a full part in all aspects of European affairs in which our presence was indicated. And we spent a great deal of time on European questions during the Johnson Administration.

M: Is the same thing true of the continent you mentioned awhile ago as being particularly to Europe's interest--that is, Africa? Is that the one continent you did not visit while you were Secretary?

R: I did not visit Africa while I was Secretary partly because I could not find a way to visit just a few countries without making a great many other countries mad. I tried to find an occasion where I could go to a group meeting of African countries, or something of that sort, but that never seemed to come up in just the right way. I regretted that because I would have enjoyed seeing some of Africa south of the Sahara.

M: Mr. [Nicholas] Katzenbach did finally go, I believe, didn't he?

R: Well, Mennen Williams spent a great deal of time in Africa, and Mr. Katzenbach did go, and other dignitaries went. The Vice President went on one or two occasions, I believe. But I never seemed to be able to get there myself.

We were a junior partner in Africa throughout the period of the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations. Our aid to Africa was only twenty-five percent of external aid to Africa; they were getting more from Western Europe than from us, for example. France played a very major role in aid to Africa, particularly to its former colonies. I felt myself that we ought to remain in the position of the junior partner; that we ought not to try to play Mr. Big in each one of the African countries; and that we should work out some sort of division of labor. After all, the Europeans do very little in aid to Latin America, and we are heavily involved with Latin America. The Europeans do very little in aid to the Asian countries, and we were heavily involved with the Asian countries. And so it seemed to me that we should expect and allow Europe to play the major role in Africa. That was not always agreeable to some of our African friends because they wanted more aid from us, and they wanted all sorts of other things from the United States. So there was some complaint during our period that we were not giving enough emphasis to Africa. Well, this was a deliberate matter of policy and not just a happenstance.

M: I suppose the only time we ever really got involved to the extent of using our forces was in air support in the Congo in 1967, at least during Mr. Johnson's time--is that right? Was this something that he had to decide to do, that particular instance?

R: We did drop Belgian paratroopers into Stanleyville in the Congo to rescue hostages who were being held there by the so-called Simbas. And then President Johnson put three C-130 transport aircraft into the Congo one weekend to attempt to avoid a European massacre in the Congo. We had been told along about the Thursday of that week that with the outbreak of the mercenaries in the Eastern Congo, that this was being charged as being a white plot against the Congo; and that all white people were in danger there. As a matter of fact, they had organized a mass meeting down in the Katanga and told people to bring their machetes with them because there would be things to do when the meeting was over. And we were desperately afraid of a massacre of the whites, including Americans. Our Ambassador thought that if we could find some way to demonstrate that we were

supporting the government over against these mercenaries, that that would give the government something to lean on and to go to its people and calm them, and get away from this possibility of a massacre. And the purpose of sending the C-130's there was to make it clear that the United States was supporting the Congo over against these mercenaries; that we were not a part of any general white plot in behind the mercenaries to overthrow the Congolese government. But we had quite a to-do with some members of the Senate over those planes; but had we not sent the three aircraft in and had there have been a white massacre, then we would have had more questions to answer. I was more prepared to answer the questions of why we did what we did than I would have been to why we did not do something.

M: This was Presidential, too? This had to go to Mr. Johnson?

R: Yes, this was the President's decision.

M: To go ahead and send them in?

R: Yes.

M: And there was no doubt in his mind that this was some proper use of our force?

R: No, no doubt at all.

M: What about a much more long-lasting and serious, in terms of human costs, problem, the Nigerian difficulties? Is this something where we just couldn't really bring any force to bear or any influence to beat to bring about a settlement?

R: We tried on occasions to get the two sides to talk with each other, but we were basically operating through the organization of African Unity. We thought this was an African problem that ought to be handled by the Africans in an African way. In general we felt that it would be a great misfortune if Nigeria were to split on tribal grounds. We felt that the repercussions of that throughout Africa would be very severe. If you reorganized Africa politically on the basis of tribes, you might have four or five hundred petty principalities that could not sustain themselves; and you'd have political confusion in Africa that would make it very difficult indeed to sort things out. And this was generally the view of the other African states. By and large American policy toward Nigeria was the policy of the overwhelming majority of the Organization of African Unity; only four of the more than thirty-five African states

recognized Biafra or showed sympathy toward Biafra. The rest of them were in favor of the unified Nigeria, partly because they all shuddered at the thought of breaking up over tribal grounds, you see. So we favored the Federal Republic; we favored the central government of Nigeria. But in the interest of trying to get the two sides to settle the matter through palaver--through talk--we decided not to send arms in there, and not to involve ourselves in the fighting in any way, but to remain at some distance. I think in retrospect that was the correct policy, although now the federal government of Nigeria looks upon us as somewhat at arms length because we did not give them the arms that the Russians did and that the British did while they were having their battle with Biafra.

M: Were we active in trying to keep powers like Russia and England uninvolved also?

R: No. We didn't try to interfere with their shipments of arms.

M: Even though they did provide a non-African type influence there?

R: Yes. We were concerned about food supplies for the Biafrans; we were ready to put in large amounts of food ourselves from our own stocks and were prepared to divert food ships going to other countries to Biafra. But the leaders of the two sides in Nigeria never could get together on the groundrules for furnishing food to the Biafrans, so the problem was not the availability of food but the ability to get it to those who were hungry. And Colonel [Chukwuemeka O.] Ojukwu, the leader of the Biafran forces, has to carry a heavy share of the responsibility for the deaths by starvation in Biafra because he too was very difficult about the groundrules for getting the food in.

M: I guess the issue in Africa then that has excited the longest political interest here was the whole complex of issues involving Rhodesia and the U.N. policy. Did these cause a great deal of trouble because of their domestic political importance?

R: We had some domestic reaction toward the Rhodesian situation. In general we felt this was a British problem--we tried to stay one or two steps behind Britain in it because we did not want to buy the Rhodesian problem as being one of our own. We have a commitment to human rights that generally makes us feel that the Rhodesians ought to

give some sort of political representation to the blacks in Rhodesia; we felt that it would have been desirable for the problem of the blacks to be settled between Britain and Rhodesia before Rhodesia became fully independent. But in general we acted in support of the general attitude in the U.N. on Rhodesia, and our sanctions on Rhodesia were part of U.N. sanctions. But we didn't crusade on the subject, and we didn't--what we were trying to do was to keep ourselves from getting very much involved in it.

M: Did our private sector cooperate reasonably well with those voluntary sanctions?

R: In general, they cooperated reasonably well.

M: Does that also apply to the voluntary sanctions against South Africa?

R: Well, the sanctions there are not economic in character. They basically have to do with shipping arms into South Africa, and we complied with the U.N. resolutions on arms to South Africa.

M: The NATO alliance--in which Portugal is involved--does that get us involved in Portuguese colonial problems in Africa on some occasions?

R: Again we were never a crusader on these issues. We didn't ask for these subjects to be brought before the United Nations, but when they came before the United Nations we had to state our attitude--our basic attitude toward the problem. And that of course led to difficulties with Portugal because we thought that they ought to do more toward independence or self-governance of their African territories. So there were some tense times with Portugal, both inside and outside NATO, over our attitude on the Portuguese colonies.

The historian will look back with some amazement at this post-war period to see the way in which the great colonial empires disintegrated and gave birth to more than sixty new nations, generally by peaceful means. And the United States influence has been behind that development. But it's to be expected that the most difficult problems remain for the end, and the most difficult problems are those that now exist in Southern Africa--the Republic of South Africa with its <u>apartheid</u> problem, the Portuguese territories, and Rhodesia.

M: One of those involves the United Nations World Court's decision in regard to what used to be Southwest Africa. Is that something we can support actively in such a way as to produce movement there?

R: It's very hard to know how to move to get the Republic of South Africa to acknowledge the international interest in Southwest Africa. After all, it was a mandate; it should have been a trusteeship territory. But South Africa is determined to treat it more or less as if it were a part of South Africa itself. We were responsible--one of the responsible associated powers--in turning Southwest Africa over to South Africa as a mandate after World War I. And so we have some 'responsibility for the result there. But we're not prepared to use armed forces; we're not prepared to use far-reaching economic sanctions. We are prepared to work at it through peaceful procedures to see if something can't be done by a peaceful means rather than by armed action. That means therefore that we're not able to go as far as some of our African friends would like to see us go in trying to resolve these problems in Southern Africa.

M: Again, as in the case of the other areas of the world, are there issues that occur to you that haven't occurred to me regarding Africa in which Mr. Johnson played an important role or a decisive role?

R: There's one point that was troublesome, and that is there developed in the Congress a resistance to the numbers of countries that were on your aid list; and they did impose arbitrary limits on the numbers of countries that can be receiving aid at any given time. Now, if you want to help five hundred million people in the subcontinent of Asia, you can do it by helping the government of India--one country. But if you want to help five hundred million people in all of Latin America and all of Africa, you've got to deal with about sixty countries. So if you think in terms of people, it doesn't make any sense to impose arbitrary restrictions on the numbers of countries with which you can be dealing in your foreign aid operations. So when the Congress imposed these arbitrary limits, that drove us away from bilateral aid relations with many African countries and forced us to adopt a regional approach to African needs. That caused some anxiety in Africa; caused some resentment in Africa, because we were not able to act on a bilateral basis. But this was a direct result of the action taken by Congress to impose arbitrary limitations on the numbers of countries.

M: And the Administration was unable to keep Congress from

taking that action?

R: Yes, we opposed it, but we were not successful in preventing it.

M: In line with that, we've mentioned foreign aid a number of times in regard to certain countries in some general ways. Is that type of restriction that Congress passed over your opposition, as well as the generally decreasing level of aid through the Johnson years, connected directly to the Viet Nam problem and the problems growing out of it?

R: I don't think that what happened to foreign aid--I don't think that the various restrictive amendments in the foreign aid bill were primarily the result of Viet Nam; there were one or two that were directly related to Viet Nam such as "No foreign aid to a country that's trading with North Viet Nam," and that sort of thing.But I think that before the end of the Johnson Administration we became aware of a general mood of withdrawal in the United States.It was not doctrinal isolationism as such.People didn't stand up and say, "I am an isolationist."But they would stand up and say, "I am not an isolationist, but: I want to withdraw from Southeast Asia regardless of the consequences," or, "I want to withdraw troops from NATO," or, "I want to make deep slashes in foreign aid, or, "I want to impose import quotas on imports," or, "I want to give overriding priority to the domestic needs at the expense of our foreign policy obligations." Now a great deal turns on whether this is a passing mood from which we will recover after Viet Nam, or whether we're moving into a cyclical trend toward isolationism, such as we were in during the 1930's--the '20's and '30's. The consequences of this are vast of course, and much turns on whether the United States is going to be willing to remain a part of world affairs and play its role to organize a peace in the world, or whether it's going to draw into its own internal affairs and pretend that the rest of the world is not there.We could undo a great deal that has been done in this post-war period if we should move to a period of isolationism.

M: A lot was made by the AID Agency and other people during President Johnson's Administration of the fact that our emphasis changed over the course of those years from industrial development emphasis to interest in agricultural development and health programs, population programs, and so on. Was this a direct result of Mr. Johnson's personal preference in the aid area, or was this the result of advice that the Department of State had formulated before his

decision?

R: This came about because we were trying to draw some lessons from the experience that we had had in foreign aid in the post-war period, particularly in the developing countries. And it seemed to us that emphasis on industrialization had gotten out of perspective, and that what was being neglected were these great fundamental sectors such as agriculture, education, public health; and we reflected upon the lessons that we learned from the development of the United States itself when we were just at the turn of the century and still a country with large undeveloped areas in our own country. And so we decided that foreign aid ought to shift its emphasis to education, to agricultural development, and to public health, in order to provide the base for an expanding market and to provide an opportunity for local industry to get started. We were also influenced by the food crisis. The developing countries have got to learn to grow more food because the industrialized countries are just not going to be able to make available enough food to meet their needs with expanding populations. And so a real green revolution in agriculture was of the utmost importance if these countries were going to begin to feed themselves in the way that was necessary if they were to have minimum standards of nutrition. President Johnson did a great deal in that direction. He was very much interested in the green revolution. And he and Secretary of Agriculture [Orville] Freeman worked very hard at it through the AID program and otherwise to get agriculture lifted in priority among the developing countries as a sphere of development.

M: Did it hamper the administration of those aid policies for Mr. Johnson to require the personal approval of projects of any size in the White House? What was it--ten million dollar projects or more that had to be approved over there?

R: From a purely bureaucratic point of view, this was at times inconvenient; but from the point of view of getting accomplished what the President himself wanted to accomplish, I think it was probably necessary. The President himself watched very closely the performance of the countries to whom aid was being given. Well, for example, in his book the historian will find an account of what we did to help India get its food situation turned around. It was necessary to cause India to make a complete change in its priorities in its development programs and to give greater emphasis to agriculture, and to open up the channels of trade between the provinces of India. So President Johnson gave a lot of personal attention to these

development problems and insured that he would have that personal effect by drawing into his own hands a final release of important aid grants.

M: But the quid pro quos he was seeking by drawing that into his hands were performance guarantees and not things connected with our shortrun goals?

R: That's right.

M: In Viet Nam or elsewhere.

R: That's right. He was interested in performance--performance by the aid recipient, as well as performance by our own aid operation. The dominant theme of President Johnson's Administration was, "It's not rhetoric that counts, it's performance," it's what you actually do. And he was very insistent upon performance as compared with words.

M: Mr. Rusk, you've been patient with me for a good long time; we've got some time left on this tape. I'd be happy for you to add anything that you think important about your relationship with Mr. Johnson, or your activities in the Department, or anything else for that matter. I certainly don't want to end seeming to cut you off. Is there anything that you think is important to put into this record?

R: Well, there are a good many things we could talk about. I don't want to prolong it unduly. Someone once asked me what I considered to be the most important achievement during my years as Secretary of State, and I answered that I helped to add eight years to the time since the nuclear weapon had been used in anger. Now I think that the historian will probably have other evidence at his disposal; but as it looked to us in the 1960's and still looks to me in March 1970, the overriding issue for the human race is how to avoid a nuclear war. We have thousands of megatons lying around in the hands of frail human beings, and if those megatons are fired--if they go off--then there's a real question as to how much of the human race can survive. Certainly there will be nothing but rubble in most of the northern hemisphere. Everything that you do in foreign policy has to be measured therefore by whether it contributes to or detracts from the possibility of maintaining peace in a nuclear world. Gradually we may be able to get these nuclear weapons under some control of law--the Partial Test Ban Treaty, the Nonproliferation Treaty are a good beginning. The SALT talks will be very important in this connection. And I hope we can get some

limitation on strategic weapons in the SALT talks. But avoiding nuclear war is the overriding problem.

Close behind it are other great problems like the population explosion. By the time this transcript is available to the reader, the impact of the population problem will be clear for everybody to see; but that is something that the human race has got to deal with, and it is not yet dealing with it in an effective way.

The relations between the races is another great problem--the white race is a minority race in the world, and it has got to come to terms with the colored races of the world. We are making some progress on that, but we still have not gone far enough. And if we have a division in the world between the colored and the white races, then we'll have the problems of an enormous impact upon our hands.

Then the gap between the developing countries and the developed countries is a matter of great concern. It has been estimated that the per capita gross national product favors the developed countries at a ratio of about twelve-to-one compared to the developing countries. That gap is widening instead of closing. By the end of the century it might be twenty-to-one, so you may have a great division in the world between the haves and the have-nots that will be a source of friction and maybe even violence before the end of the century.

So there are major problems still ahead of us. President Johnson tried to address himself to these problems; he brought us a long way for example in public policy on the population problem. And we said things and did things as a government during President Johnson's Administration which would have been almost unthinkable during earlier Administrations. The public policy of the United States now favors population control, and that was largely a result of the things that President Johnson did to call people's attention to the issues and to get our aid program in behind population planning programs in other countries.

M: Did you ever try to answer the question, what was your greatest failure in eight years?

R: I think the greatest mistake was the Bay of Pigs. I think the greatest failure we had was in failing to bring the Viet Nam war to a conclusion while we were still in office. The greatest crisis we had was the Cuban missile crisis. But I

think the greatest satisfaction comes out of the thousands of little things that were done every week that built toward peace in the world. And we are developing in the world situation what one man has called the common law of mankind. The institutions of law are taking on more and more responsibility for human affairs.And so the causes of war are being reduced somewhat in variety.We don't have dynastic wars any more. We have a very few wars involving frontiers. The chief causes of war still come out of the great confrontation between those who are committed to their world revolution and the free world who are trying to organize the world along the lines of the United Nations' Charter. I think that ideological confrontation will diminish as time passes on, because changes are occurring. In the West where we start from the principle of individualism, we're trying to find better answers in the direction of social responsibility.In Eastern Europe where they start with the idea of the collective, they're trying to find better answers in the direction of individual responsibility. And so I think changes on both sides will reduce the impact of the ideological gap between them; and that perhaps by the time this text is available ideological factors will not be playing the same role that they did during the '40's and '50's and '60's.

M: That's probably as good a peroration or summary as could be asked for. If I can just get my thanks here on this tape before it runs out, because we certainly do give them to you, sir.

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