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MEET THE PRESS

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MEET THE PRESS

America's Press Conference of the Day

Produced by LAWRENCE E. SPIVAK

Guest
THE HONORABLE DEAN RUSK
The Secretary of State

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MEET THE PRESS

MR. NEWMAN: This is Edwin Newman, NBC News, inviting you to MEET THE PRESS, coming to you by satellite from London, Paris, Bonn, Rome and Washington, D. C.

Our guest today on this intercontinental MEET THE PRESS is Secretary of State Dean Rusk, who is in our studio in Washington. Interviewing Secretary of State Rusk live by Early Bird satellite are four of Europe's leading reporters. In London: MR. WORSTHORNE: This is Peregrine Worsthorne of the Sunday Telegraph.

MR. NEWMAN: In Paris:

MR. GORDEY: This is Michel Gordey of France-Soir.

MR. NEWMAN: In Bonn:

MR. KEMPSKI: This is Hans Ulrich Kempfski of Sueddeutsche Zeitung.

MR. NEWMAN: In Rome:

MR. DELLA-GIOVANNNA: This Ettore Della-Giovanna of Il Tempo.

MR. NEWMAN: And in Washington, the permanent member of the MEET THE PRESS Panel:

MR. SPIVAK: This is Lawrence Spivak.

MR. NEWMAN: Now, for the first questions for Secretary of State Rusk we go to London and Peregrine Worsthorne.

MR. WORSTHORNE: Mr. Rusk, it seems to me that a great many of the troubles that America is having in Vietnam, or at any rate a great number of the criticisms that are being made on this side of the Atlantic about your policy, don't so

much arise from what you are actually doing there, but for the rather embarrassingly vulnerable reasons that you give for doing what you are actually doing there. You say, for example, that you are in the South to defend the South against Northern aggression, which I suppose is at best a half truth, that you are there to promote the cause of democracy, which is again something of a half truth.

Might I put it to you that it would be wiser if you took a leaf out of Britain's imperial past and admitted frankly and unashamedly that you are there to preserve or to maintain the pax Americana, not for any high moralistic reasons but because you believe—quite rightly in my view—that the American presence in Vietnam is essential to maintain a world order and that for this reason it is essential for you to stay there.

MR. NEWMAN: Excuse me, Mr. Worsthorne. What is the question, please?

MR. WORSTHORNE: My question really is, would such a frank statement of this kind not clear the air of a certain amount of cant and make it clear to the American people and to us on this side of the Atlantic that you are really embarking on an imperial mission of the kind that we had in the 19th Century. Then the whole situation, it seems to me, would become a good deal clearer.

SECRETARY RUSK: Mr. Worsthorne, first, let me say how glad I am to be with you and your other distinguished colleagues from Western Europe and with Mr. Spivak here in Washington for this hour.

I would not accept your references to half truths. First, on the matter of aggression from North Vietnam, there is no doubt whatever about that. Tens of thousands of men and large quantities of arms have been sent from North Vietnam to South Vietnam to impose a political solution on South Vietnam by force.

It is true that these divided countries may represent a certain special case, but surely we would understand that an attempt by North Korea to impose its will on South Korea would be an aggression that we would have to meet. I have no doubt at all that an attempt either by the Federal Republic of Germany or East Germany to do the same thing to each other as is now happening in South Vietnam would provoke a major crisis in the present world situation.

The United States is in South Vietnam very specifically because of the aggression from the North. If ~~the world~~ stop doing what it is doing in South Vietnam, the United States combat forces would not be required there.

And further, this matter of a democratic solution: No one

seriously pretends that North Vietnam is offering a democratic program to South Vietnam. We, and indeed, the people of South Vietnam, are prepared to accept free elections at the earliest possible moment, but the other side is not. Hanoi is not. The National Liberation Front is not. They say that they must be given a dominant role in South Vietnam without elections, and from their point of view they must surely take into account that no people—in this post-war period—has freely elected a Communist regime to power.

I don't believe they see their success in the direction of free elections, and I think that is one of the reasons why they have turned it down.

However, coming to your third point: It is not the purpose of the United States to impose a pax Americana right around the world. It is true that we have some 42 allies, and we are determined to make good on the commitments we have to our allies, but we do not consider ourselves the gendarmes of the universe. No one has asked us to, no one has elected us to that position. The American people would not be prepared to accept any such responsibility. It is true, however, that the success of aggression in South Vietnam engages a vital interest of the United States. This is because, among other things, we have alliances with Korea and with Japan and Formosa and the Philippines and Thailand, as well as our commitments to South Vietnam, and to Australia and New Zealand.

If the principal source of aggression in the Pacific Ocean—that is, Beiping—should discover that aggression pays off, that militancy is profitable, that the United States will not meet its commitments, then they will develop policies, ambitions and appetites which will have to be met and which will cause even greater problems in the future.

So we believe that this problem should be met in its simplest form at the very beginning, namely, at the point where North Vietnam, since 1960, has been trying to impose a solution on South Vietnam by force. That we reject. If they want to come to the conference table and argue about differences by peaceful means, then we will be there, but we cannot accept that Hanoi, or Hanoi and Beiping combined, or any combination will move out here and impose their will on their neighbors by force.

MR. WORSTHORNE: I am not questioning American policy in Asia, but it does seem to me, and I would be interested to know whether you agree with me, there is a distinction which should be made between the position of America in Europe in the containment of Russia and the position of America in Asia and the containment of China and that you are going to have to stay in Asia to contain China on a very different basis.

My question really is, isn't it about time the American people began to be prepared for this very changed basis because even if you win in Vietnam, you are going to have to stay there in force and really govern Vietnam much as Britain had to govern, for example, India. Is this how you would see the future?

SECRETARY RUSK: No, I don't see the prospect that if South Vietnam is left alone that they would have any difficulty in governing themselves. It is a country with a highly intelligent people, with substantial resources; it is potentially a very rich country. In fact, they have almost everything but peace at the present time. I would not see a permanent American position there.

We have indicated many times that we are not interested in bases in Southeast Asia. We are not interested in continued American military presence in Southeast Asia, but I'd be careful about drawing too much of a distinction between the situation in Europe and the situation in the Pacific.

The United States agreed with our friends in Europe during World War II that we would give the war against Hitler the first priority, but you will recall that the war against Japan was won without a major redeployment from the European theater. In other words, the second priority theater in the Pacific was a very large effort.

The United States necessarily, given our position, our commitments, must be as much interested in peace in the Pacific Ocean area as we are in the Atlantic area, and so, I would suppose that many of the underlying and fundamental issues are the same in both parts of the world.

MR. NEWMAN: Now a question from Michel Gordey in Paris.

MR. GORDEY: Mr. Secretary, in your last press conference you said that you were encouraged by the result of the Tashkent Conference and that the United States had congratulated all three parties, the Soviet Union, India and Pakistan, on what seems to have been a most constructive step there. I am quoting you.

In that spirit, do you think that you could work out some solution of the Vietnam War with the help of the Soviet Government?

SECRETARY RUSK: We have made every effort to do so, in fact, for the past five years. One of the first things that President Kennedy did when he became President was to look very hard at the Southeast Asia situation and to explore very diligently the possibilities of a peaceful settlement. You will recall that he had a substantial talk with Chairman Khrushchev in Vienna in June, 1961. At that time the two of them agreed

that the solution for Laos, for example, should be that everybody leave the Laotians alone. These two million people in a land-locked country should not be a bone of contention among the great powers. That led to the Geneva Conference and the Geneva Agreement of 1962, which put down in solemn agreement, signed by Hanoi and Peiping, the essential element that all nations should leave the Laotians alone and let them run their own affairs. Unhappily, the result of that agreement was that Hanoi never brought themselves into compliance with it for a single moment. But, nevertheless, since 1962, through diplomatic and other channels, we have explored every possibility with the Soviet Union and others to bring a peaceful settlement to Southeast Asia.

The Soviet Union is a co-chairman of the two Geneva Conferences. They have a special responsibility in that regard. Further than that, they are a very great power and cannot help but have some responsibility for the maintenance of world peace. But there are some complications on their side. They have a major division with Peiping on such matters. We are not entirely clear about the extent of their influence in Southeast Asia. Certainly we are prepared to be and in fact we are and have been in close touch with Moscow in order to find out whether there is anything that can usefully be done to bring these matters in Southeast Asia away from the battlefield to the conference table.

But, I am afraid that the specific answer to your question would have to come more from Moscow than from the United States. Certainly we would be prepared at any moment.

MR. GORDEY: Mr. Secretary, the main issue which seems impossible to settle for years now, is the representation of the Viet Cong at a future negotiation about Vietnam.

From our own French experience, both in Indo China and in Algeria, though our wars were different from yours, admittedly, from our experience we know that it is impossible to get a cease fire, a truce or a peace except by some kind of negotiation between those who are fighting it out on the battlefields.

To what extent are you ready to speak to the Viet Cong in the framework of the unconditional discussions mentioned several times by President Johnson in the last year?

SECRETARY RUSK: Last July President Johnson said that the Viet Cong would not have difficulty being represented and having their view represented. If for a moment Hanoi decided she wanted to cease aggression, "I don't think," he said, "that that would be an insurmountable problem." Let us remind ourselves that the Viet Cong are only one,

all in NLR

and a relatively small element, in a very large population in South Vietnam. There are 14 million people there, and the Buddhists and the Catholics and the Montagnards, the other sects, a million Cambodians who have long lived in South Vietnam, a million who fled from Hanoi in 1954 in order not to live in a Communist regime, all these are elements in the South Vietnamese situation.

We do not believe that these 200,000 or so Viet Cong have a right to be promoted into a very special position simply because they have rifles in their hands, because the others also have their share of the fighting, the Buddhists and the Catholics and the Montagnards and the others.

If they wish to be heard as a part of the population of South Vietnam, arrangements could be made to do that. But to accept them on the same basis as government would be a very difficult matter. But I emphasize once again, however, that this is not really the central problem. This is a peripheral problem. If Hanoi should decide that it does not wish to continue to attempt to impose its will on South Vietnam by force, then we could move toward peace very promptly. Until that time comes, I see, in fact, rather gloomy prospects for peace.

MR. NEWMAN: Questions now from Hans Ulrich Kempfski in Bonn.

MR. KEMPSKI: Mr. Secretary, responsible newspapers in the United States have reported that you regard Vietnam as a kind of Asian Munich and that you have been unenthusiastic about the bombing pause and the peace offensive. Could you comment, please?

SECRETARY RUSK: Let me say very quickly there is no truth whatever in any suggestion that I, myself, have had another view than that of the President on such matters as the bombing pause. The President and I have worked in the closest collaboration throughout this matter and have worked in the closest possible agreement at all stages.

I don't look upon Vietnam as an Asian Munich because, in fact, Vietnam has not been surrendered and is not going to be surrendered.

We have a very important commitment there. We are going to meet that commitment.

I do think if we should abandon South Vietnam and if Hanoi and Peiping and, indeed, even Moscow, should discover that pressure and force and threat will be successful, that then we shall reap some of the harvest which was reaped after Munich. That is one of the very elementary problems in this total situation, that is, the course of the aggressor, the appetite of the aggressor and what people do with it before it is too late.

MR. KEMPSKI: Mr. Secretary, I would like to ask you the same question which the German public and even responsible politicians in this country are discussing now, in these days. Would Washington welcome it if Bonn offered German soldiers to Vietnam, sir?

SECRETARY RUSK: The South Vietnamese Government has asked a very large number of countries for assistance in this situation, and there are almost 40 countries that are providing assistance in one form or another. Indeed, 12 of the NATO countries are providing assistance to South Vietnam.

We would welcome assistance in any form from any government for South Vietnam. We recognize that it is for each government, each nation, to decide in what form its assistance can best be rendered. I might say to you, Mr. Kempfski, that we very much appreciated the decision recently taken by the Federal Republic to send a hospital ship to South Vietnam. That will be very important and very helpful and is a very important indication of solidarity in this difficult situation, but I would not wish to pick out particular countries and say that in this case we want "x" and in the other case we want "y." We know that your Chancellor and your government are thinking very seriously about what kinds of assistance they might give to South Vietnam, and we would be prepared to leave that to them.

MR. NEWMAN: Questions now from Rome and Ettore Della-Giovanna.

MR. DELLA-GIOVANNA: Mr. Secretary, in Italy the peace offensive of the United States has been followed in the last month with anxiety and hope.

Would you be so kind as to make an appraisal of the result of such an aggressive action carried on practically all over the world?

SECRETARY RUSK: Mr. Della-Giovanna, we are now in the 31st day of the pause in the bombing of North Vietnam. During that period we have been in touch with more than 115 governments, and we have had special emissaries sent to 25 or 40 governments and other authorities all over the world. I want to emphasize that this effort to probe the possibilities of peace has been a most serious and a most sincere one. I reject completely those who would put tongue in cheek and think that this was some tactic or some sort of artificial demonstration, because it has been the policy of the United States for many years to support the peace and to try to find a way to bring these problems involving aggression to a peaceful conclusion as quickly as possible in a way which will not endanger the future of peace.

Unfortunately I would have to say that we have not heard

P.O. Mr. West he is saying is that they were not present in the room. He had, in fact, heard "from the wife" of a report from Spivak.

anything from the other side. We have not heard anything from those who can sit down at the table and make the peace indicating that they are interested in peace. I find it hard to understand why the other side seems to be so afraid of the conference table, why they seem to be so reticent about discussions, why they are so silent about talking specifically about how to make a peace in Southeast Asia. I can only conclude that it is because they have an appetite, and they think that they can succeed in that appetite. They see no prospect of getting South Vietnam at a conference table, and therefore they refuse to come to the conference table.

MR. NEWMAN: Another question from Rome—
MR. DELLA-GIOVANNA: May I ask you, Mr. Secretary, what will you do next, speaking always of the peace offensive?

SECRETARY RUSK: The President indicated just the other day that the door of peace must always be kept open for those who wish to avoid the scourge of war, but that the door of aggression must be closed and bolted if man himself is to survive.

Whatever the decisions which will have to be taken in the days ahead may be, you can depend upon two very simple, elementary things. The one is that the United States will continue in every possible way to explore the possibilities of a peaceful settlement in Southeast Asia, and secondly, that we shall meet our commitment to the people and the government of South Vietnam.

MR. NEWMAN: Questions now from Washington from Lawrence Spivak.

MR. SPIYAK: Mr. Secretary, there is mounting pressure in the United States for and against resumption of the bombing. Will you tell us where you now stand on that?

SECRETARY RUSK: Mr. Spivak, I don't believe that this is the time or the place for me to talk about decisions which are ahead of us which affect the military situation in South Vietnam. You are familiar with the considerations—I can be quite confident in saying to you that the President is taking all of these matters into the fullest account. We have a commitment in South Vietnam. We have substantial numbers of our own forces there. There are other allied forces present. We must do what is required to assure the safety of our own forces and allied forces to the extent that we can. At the same time we want to be sure that every possibility of peace is fully explored. I recognize that I am not answering your question directly, but I just can not at this time and at this place tell you what the decisions of the next immediate period will be.

MR. SPIYAK: Mr. Secretary, can you tell me this: You held

a press conference the other day, and some of the press interpreted you as saying that the bombing of North Vietnam will soon be resumed. Do you think that that is a fair interpretation? SECRETARY RUSK: I did not say that, and there was a considerable discussion in that press conference about tone. I simply brought them up to date on the present situation as we see it. That present situation is that although there have been now 31 days in which there has been no bombing of North Vietnam, we have not had any responsible or encouraging or constructive reply from the other side. Instead there has been the harshest public statements, particularly from Hanoi and Peiping. There has been a continuation of the infiltration from North Vietnam into South Vietnam. There have been repeated attacks in South Vietnam itself, no indication of any reduction in the effort of the Viet Cong in the South or the North Vietnamese forces that are in South Vietnam. And indeed during this Tet holiday there have been about 90 violations of the so-called Tet cease-fire by the Viet Cong forces.

MR. SPIYAK: Can you tell us whether the report that the Washington Post published on Saturday that there has been a response from North Vietnam but that we considered the response negative but ambiguous—

SECRETARY RUSK: No, no, I have not had—and I think I would know about it if there were such a response. I have not seen a response direct or indirect to the United States by Hanoi in this situation.

MR. SPIYAK: Mr. Secretary, I'd like to ask you one question about Europe. I know you visited Europe recently and talked to our NATO allies. As you know there have been reports that our NATO allies would like us to get out of Vietnam because they don't think their vital interests are involved. Is there any truth to that?

SECRETARY RUSK: We have not had that point of view put to us by NATO allies. Indeed, as I have pointed out earlier, some 12 NATO nations are in fact giving assistance to South Vietnam in one form or another, some of it smaller than we would like, but some of it quite substantial.

I think that we have a situation here where the formal obligations of NATO do not apply, although NATO has its western flank in the Bering Sea which separates the Soviet Union from the United States, and NATO extends considerably into the Pacific Ocean area and some day there could develop a threat from that direction which would engage the direct responsibilities of NATO. But I think that part of the problem here, Mr. Spivak, has been that there was equivocal action when North Vietnam first took on the problem of taking over South Viet-

Spivak was always there

nam. They didn't attack by mass divisions, as happened in Korea. They sent people in by infiltration and people who were removed from that situation by great distance rather tended to hope that somehow there wasn't a problem and that somehow the problem would go away.

We would hope that our friends in Europe would ask themselves, "What is our own national interest in the outcome in Southeast Asia? Is it in the interests of my country that a Communist country overrun Southeast Asia by force? And what is our own national interest in the integrity of the commitment of the United States in its various alliance arrangements?"

MR. SPIVAK: May I ask you what you think their national interest is?

SECRETARY RUSK: We would hope that our European friends would be concerned about the situation in Southeast Asia, that they would recognize that we all had an interest in the invasion of Manchuria in 1931, which we did not do enough about, that we all had an interest in the occupation of Ethiopia in the mid-1930's that we did not do enough about, and that all of us are caught up in the problem of what to do about an aggression. Do we let it grow and feed upon success and develop its appetites until it comes to a point where major conflagration is inevitable, or do we try to organize a peace in which nations do in fact leave each other alone and in which people recognize that armed action across frontiers and demarcation lines is just something that is out, that it is too late in history to play such dangerous games as attempting to take over people by force.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Secretary, do you expect to get any troops from Europe, realistically?

SECRETARY RUSK: We have had personnel of various types, most of them not organized troops. We would hope that our European friends would consider this question. I can't give you a direct answer on that today. I think this depends upon decisions made by individual governments.

*** MR. NEWMAN: We will continue now with Peregrine Worsthorne in London.

MR. WORSTHORNE: I should like to go back, sir, to what we were discussing before the break, and that is the question of the extent to which Britain and Europe can assist America in Vietnam. The question raised in our minds is, if we are going to be involved militarily in assisting America in Vietnam, would we like some arrangement by which we could be involved in the planning by which America gets involved in Vietnam or into the next crisis, some political arrangement which would give us a say in American policy in the area.

What is your thinking, sir, on that problem?

SECRETARY RUSK: Mr. Worsthorne, we are in South Vietnam very largely because of the Southeast Asia Treaty. Britain, if I may say so, is a party to that treaty. We have had full discussions with your government over the years on the problems of the security of the nations of Southeast Asia. At the present time we understand your own specific security commitments in Malaysia and the threats to the security of Malaysia and the very substantial part of your own defense budget that is now committed to those problems in Southeast Asia. But there is never any lack of contact between London and Washington on policy and on the decisions which have to be taken out there.

I might say that we here very much appreciate the very strong political support that we have had from Britain on this problem in Vietnam, and although we understand that you have some public opinion, perhaps some political problems there at home—and we have a few of those ourselves—we are grateful for the support that we have had from Britain in this situation. I think that you and we, our two governments, both understand that a course of aggression cannot be permitted to gather momentum and that the place to stop it is at the beginning.

MR. WORSTHORNE: Are you considering, sir, setting up of any new formal arrangement—perhaps America, Britain, Australia, New Zealand—conceivably bringing in at some future point Japan, and one hopes eventually Indonesia, into a new treaty arrangement for the containment of China, which would take the place of the rather ghost-like SEATO organization.

SECRETARY RUSK: I think that is the type of situation which could be discussed in the future. I would, myself, be a little hesitant about something that might be looked upon purely as a white man's club in the far Pacific, but I do think that the free nations of Asia have a very strong interest in their own security and that if you and we and others can somehow assist them in reinforcing that security, all the better.

Under the present arrangements we have bilateral treaties with Korea, Japan and the Philippines. The ~~Arizona~~ ~~Treaty~~ with Australia, and New Zealand, the Southeast Asia Treaty which includes Thailand as well as the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, Britain and others. It may be at some stage these treaty arrangements ought to be tidied up and should be consolidated, but I think that is pretty far in the future. I see no immediate developments in that direction.

MR. NEWMAN: Now, Michel Gordey in Paris.

MR. GORDEY: Mr. Secretary, there has been much speculation and lots of people, common people, very much worried in

Europe about Germany's getting direct or indirect access to nuclear weapons. On that question, it seems to me almost everybody in Europe, East and West, is frightened because of terrible memories of the possible consequences of a nuclear-armed Germany. Do you realize, the extent to which this fear grips the people in Europe, including, I think, a great majority of the West Germans, not to speak of the French, the Poles, the Norwegians or the British?

SECRETARY RUSK: Yes, Mr. Gordeny, we very much understand the misgivings which would arise if the Federal Republic of Germany should develop its own nuclear capability or have its own nuclear force. But let me make very clear, without any equivocation whatever, that the United States is opposed to the development of additional national nuclear capabilities by anybody, anywhere. No one knows that better than France. You can testify to that policy yourselves best of all.

We have not been talking about, in NATO, any arrangement, any scheme, which involves the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The United States is utterly and fundamentally opposed to such proliferation. This matter has been confused somewhat because there are those—and I now speak of the Soviet Union—who would like to use this subject of nonproliferation for other purposes. If the Soviet Union's objection to discussions going on in NATO have to do solely with proliferation, we can meet them on that, because we are fundamentally and completely opposed to proliferation ourselves. But if they are trying to break up NATO, if they are trying to weaken the ties between the United States and Western Europe, if they are trying somehow to insure that the Federal Republic of Germany is in a secondary position—second-class citizenship in the NATO alliance—we can't help them or those problems. But we are opposed to proliferation. So is the German government. They themselves are not interested in the development of national nuclear weapons or national nuclear decision. And so I would hope that in NATO we could find the arrangements which are completely satisfying to our friends in Western Europe, which do not involve the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and I think we can.

MR. NEWMAN: A question from Bonn and Mr. Kempfski.

MR. KEMPSKI: Mr. Secretary, to follow up the last question, I am sure you certainly know that the Bonn government is still very much interested in atomic co-determination, so I would like to ask you what would be your reaction in Washington if the German government would make the following statement: "In the interests of peace in Europe, West Germany is not eager to have even its little finger on the atomic trigger." Would Washington feel better about such a statement?

SECRETARY RUSK: I would prefer, Mr. Kempfski, not to comment on a hypothetical statement that I have not yet heard from the German government. You see this question of additional arrangements in NATO with regard to nuclear weapons arose on a European initiative back in 1960, and it came about because the Soviet Union employed hundreds of missiles in the Soviet Union aimed at Western Europe. Obviously those who have the bulls-eye, who live on the target, are interested and curious about what is happening in the nuclear field, and so they approached the United States in 1960 to have a larger part in nuclear matters. This led to Secretary of State Herter's statement before the NATO Council in December, 1960, suggesting some sort of NATO multilateral force of one kind or another.

In trying to deal with this question, thus far we have developed common guidelines in NATO on nuclear strategy. We have a NATO nuclear staff in Paris under General Lemnitzer's CINCPAC command, and we have NATO officers as liaison in Omaha with our own Strategic Command. We are prepared to do in this field whatever our NATO allies would like for us to do, subject to our opposition to the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

I hope you will forgive me if I say that one of our problems has been that there is no consensus among you gentlemen in Western Europe—that if our friends in Western Europe had an agreed policy and attitude on these questions, we could move very promptly. But we have not been able to find that consensus on which we could move together on a total alliance solidarity basis.

MR. NEWMAN: A question now from Ettore Della-Giovanina in Rome.

MR. DELLA-GIOVANINA: I wonder, Mr. Secretary, if you could tell me something of particular interest for Italy. Apparently Mr. La Pira, the former Mayor of the City of Florence, as a peace intermediary in Hanoi has been a dismal flop. But I have never quite clearly understood why you gave to the press the whole story, encouraging at the same time Mr. Fanfani, the President of the General Assembly of the United Nations, to push on the same peace mission. The reason I ask you that is that in some political circles in Italy it is frequently repeated that it would have been easy to forget about the story in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, while the publicity given to Mr. La Pira's intervention in Vietnam undermined the possibility of starting peace talks between Washington and Hanoi.

SECRETARY RUSK: Your question comes at a time when a full reply from me is a rather delicate problem, because there has been a crisis in the Italian government and personalities are involved. But let me say quite honestly that we have had many indications from third parties of some sort of contact with Hanoi

or somebody else, never on the initiative of Hanoi so far as we can tell. These are reported back to us in various ways and we check them out. We try to find out whether there is any reality in any such discussions.

In the particular instance that you referred to, Mr. Fanfani was in New York as President of the General Assembly. He apparently had a report from Mr. La Pira. I am not commenting on Mr. La Pira's role in the situation, but let me say quite directly and honestly that Mr. Fanfani's role was professional, was competent and was helpful. He understood what he had heard from Mr. La Pira very accurately, as a trained diplomat, and he reported that to us. We expressed our appreciation and invited him to follow up if he felt that he wished to do so, to see whether there was any further clarification that might be forthcoming. But this is one of, may I say, dozens of instances where some third party has some sort of a conversation with somebody in Hanoi or some representative of Hanoi somewhere else, and it is the third party who seems to feel that they have something of great importance.

Most of them don't really understand what they are hearing, and yet when these are reported to us we look at them, and if there is anything of interest, we take them up. I will just conclude by saying that we have ways of testing directly, professionally, without any possibility of misunderstanding, with the other side any suggestions that come to us from these third-party amateurs who are so busy in this situation at the present time.

MR. NEWMAN: A question from Mr. Spivak in Washington. MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Secretary, there are many Americans who are puzzled by the kind of war we are waging in Vietnam. They say instead of trying to defeat the North Vietnamese we are just trying to drag her to the negotiating table; we are trying to bring about a stalemate. Since we have the power to smash her and smash her easily, I think, why don't we do it? Why don't we bomb Hanoi? Why don't we bomb Haiphong?

SECRETARY RUSK: Well, Mr. Spivak, a larger war is the easiest thing in the world to think about and is the easiest thing to get into that I could imagine. If we who are responsible for policy in the various capitals of the world just turn our backs on these problems for five minutes, we could be in a general war with the most devastating results for all the peoples concerned.

If you look at all the crisis since 1945 in which the United States has been involved, the object of the United States has been peace. This was true with the Greek guerrillas; it was true with the problem of Iran; it was true with the Berlin blockade; it was true with Korea; it was true with the Cuban missile crisis; it has

been true in Southeast Asia.

The escalation of this affair is a responsibility of the aggressor. As far as the United States is concerned, we would like to see an organized peace established in the world, and therefore, although we are determined to meet our commitments, we also in this post-war period have exercised a certain patience and restraint, because the general object has been a peace in which men can be free rather than simply the destruction of the enemy.

MR. SPIVAK: Are you saying that indefinitely we are just going to fight to hold her back and not fight to win?

SECRETARY RUSK: No—this question of winning is a very tricky phrase, because what we are interested in is the safety and independence of the South Vietnamese people and their chance to make their own decisions about their future.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Secretary, how far can you get when your enemy tries to smash you and tries to win, while you simply try to fight for a stalemate?

Is that a way to fight a war?

SECRETARY RUSK: I think that in the modern world, Mr. Spivak, we had better be very careful in thinking about other ways to fight a war, because we are in a nuclear period, and these events can get out of control. Unless the statesmen of the world keep these matters under control, then dangers of which we have never dreamed will be immediately on our threshold, and the survival of the human race is literally at stake.

MR. NEWMAN: Mr. Worsthorne, in London.

MR. WORSTHORNE: I'd like to bring you from Asia to Africa, sir, and ask you: We have seen in recent weeks that international sanctions against a white minority government in Southern Rhodesia could have the most devastating economic effect and perhaps even bring about the political overthrow of its regime. My question, sir, is what is the implication of the success of sanctions against Southern Rhodesia in relation to future possible action of the similar kind of action against South Africa?

SECRETARY RUSK: I am sure you will forgive me if I say to you that I would prefer to take my crises one at a time, if possible. We have supported the British Prime Minister and the British Government in the actions taken against Rhodesia. Our attitude on apartheid in South Africa is just as simple and clear as it is in most of the rest of the world.

We do have some problems about the circumstances under which sanctions are applied in such matters. I do attach great importance to the case on Southwest Africa which is now before the World Court, but I hope that I will be [given] the opportunity to look at that question when it becomes a little more timely than it is at the moment.

MR. NEWMAN: Mr. Gordey in Paris.

MR. GORDEY: Mr. Secretary, as seen from here, it seems to me that with such problems as disarmament, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and especially the danger of Chinese expansion in Asia, there could be some measure of agreement or, let's say, some degree of common worries between Washington and Moscow.

From your recent talks with Mr. Kosygin and other Soviet officials, do you have any indications that such problems could be solved in spite of "the shadows cast by the Vietnam crisis"—as you said in your own words Friday?

SECRETARY RUSK: As far as we are concerned, we would be ready to try to go ahead to find with Moscow other points on which there could be agreement, despite the shadow which is cast by South Vietnam.

I think perhaps this is somewhat more of a problem for Moscow than for Washington because the Soviet Union is involved in a very bitter discussion and debate with Peiping. It may be that they do not feel that they have the same freedom of action in this regard as does the United States.

We do believe that it is important that we continue through diplomatic channels to probe every possibility of solving questions, small or large, and, I would emphasize, upon a disarmament, which you mentioned.

It seems rather ludicrous in a certain sense to be convening another meeting on disarmament in Geneva at a time when there is such a serious struggle going on in Southeast Asia and when our defense budgets have to be increased substantially for that purpose. But, nevertheless, we must continue the effort, because far too many of the world's resources are going into arms which create great dangers for the human race, and we must never give up this search for ways and means of reducing that burden and reducing the tensions that go along with the existence of large and devastating military establishments. So we are going to continue with it. As far as we are concerned, we will be glad to take up these questions, one by one, small or large, and try to find some basis for moving ahead.

You may recall that President Johnson in his State of the Union Message suggested to the Congress that we do move ahead on what is called East-West trade, that we have legislative permission to make agreements on trade with Eastern Europe of a sort that we have not thus far been able to achieve.

MR. NEWMAN: Mr. Kempinski in Bonn.

MR. KEMPSKI: Perhaps you would like to know, sir, that a good many people in Germany are uneasy today about the possibilities for United States troop reduction in Germany.

May I ask you, sir, under which conditions could you consider an essential troop reduction in Germany a practical or a necessary step?

SECRETARY RUSK: Mr. Kempinski, let me very frank on that question if I may.

In the first instance, you should not worry. The United States has indicated in NATO that we do not anticipate the redeployment of major combat units from the NATO areas. But I would ask you and your fellow Germans not to underestimate the problems which we face in fighting on the other side of the Pacific while maintaining our full commitments in Western Europe. We would like to have as much help as possible in these other problems, and we would like to have everyone in NATO look to their own commitments in NATO, do what is required in their own defense budgets, take as much of the NATO burden as is possible as a part of the general struggle which all of us are involved with between the Communist world and the free world. So I can tell you the answer to your question is that we do not expect to redeploy major combat units from Europe, but it is a question that quite frankly we don't appreciate too much on this side of the Atlantic.

MR. NEWMAN: A question now from Rome and Mr. Della-Giovanna.

MR. DELLA-GIOVANNA: President Johnson in his State of the Union Message said, among other things, that he wants to promote "a world-wide attack on the problems of hunger and disease and ignorance."

President Johnson spoke also of internationalization of the Great Society that would cost one billion dollars a year.

Since the primary interest in Vietnam has given us small opportunity to know more about this new program, I would appreciate it if you, Mr. Secretary, could be so kind as to explain it briefly for our understanding.

MR. NEWMAN: Mr. Secretary, I would appreciate it if it were brief also. We have about two minutes.

SECRETARY RUSK: Under those circumstances, I can't go into much detail, but one of the most important facts in the present day situation is that hundreds of millions of people all over the world live in misery at a time when there is knowledge and science and technology of a sort that could bring relief to them.

Our real problem these days—all of us represented around this table today—all of us have the capability of helping other nations deal with these issues, and we should exert ourselves strenuously to bring the benefits of science and technology to their solution.

We shall be approaching this ourselves in a great many different ways: through the international organizations, bilaterally,

through education, through scientific exchange, through every means that can be found to bring the benefits of modern knowledge to the solution of the common, practical problems of everyday men and women.

I am afraid time doesn't permit detail, but we shall be working very hard on this in the months to come.

MR. NEWMAN: Mr. Secretary in Washington.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Secretary, there have been reports that the Saigon Government is dead set against peace talks and that this has been kept from the American public. Will you tell us what the attitude of Saigon is?

SECRETARY RUSK: I have just come from Saigon myself, Mr. Spivak, and I have had a chance to discuss these matters fully with the leadership in Saigon and with our own representatives there. When I was there on January 17th, we issued a joint communique in which we agreed that we should continue our effort to resist the aggression and to remain alert for initiatives which open up the possibilities of peace.

If the North should show any indication that it is interested in peace, then, of course, that would be a very important and dramatic change in the situation. I don't anticipate that we and the government in Saigon would be on different tracks in this matter.

MR. NEWMAN: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I must stop the questioning there, because our time for questioning is up.