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Producer  
The Today Show  
NBC-TV  
New York, N.Y.

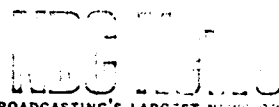
I would appreciate a copy of the transcripts of the Sean Busk interviews with permission to quote from them in my own writing.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

RECORDED

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**'TODAY': NOW IN ITS 18TH YEAR**

FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE DEAN RUSK, IN A FIVE-PART EXCLUSIVE 'TODAY' INTERVIEW (MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY, NEXT WEEK) TO GIVE HIS VIEWS OF 8 YEARS IN OFFICE AND DISCUSS FOREIGN RELATIONS

Former Secretary of State Dean Rusk will appraise his eight years in office and discuss his views on current and future problems confronting the United States in foreign relations when he appears in an exclusive, five-part interview on "Today" colorcasts over the NBC Television Network during the week of March 24-28 (Monday through Friday, 7-9 a.m. NYT).

Mr. Rusk will be seen each morning that week during the 7:30-8 a.m. NYT, segment of the NBC News program. Barbara Walters conducted the in-depth interview with the former Cabinet member. The interview was filmed ~~at the State Department~~ in Washington, D. C. It is the first such exclusive TV interview that Mr. Rusk has granted since leaving office.

On "Today," Mr. Rusk will speak on many facets of U. S. foreign policy, past and present, and his views range from his personal role as Secretary of State to his thoughts on the future of U.S. foreign policy. He will also analyze the Bay of Pigs and Cuban crises and the Johnson administrations policy in Vietnam.

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NBC-New York, 3/18/69

*"Today" March 24 NBC*

OPENING Part I First Day

WALTERS: *Mr. Secretary, may I thank you first of all for appearing on the TODAY Show and for giving us what I hope will be a good deal of your time.*

RUSK: *Well, thank you very much, Barbara. I'm delighted to be here; I'm a great fan of yours and of the TODAY program... I wake up with it every day and have for years, have a great regard for it; it's a first class program.*

WALTERS: *Mr. Secretary, in a recent Newsweek article, an inside story is brought to light regarding the President's decision to halt the bombing in Vietnam and what turned out to be his speech saying he would not run again for President. In the article, it is said that his original speech, some 83 hours before he made the speech, was the most hawkish yet, that it had your approval and high regard, that it called for very large escalation of the war, and the sending of some 200,000 additional troops, and that it was Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford who refuted this and convinced the President to change his personal course and the course of history. Are those the facts as you know them?*

RUSK: *Well, as you reflect the facts as stated in that story, they're just not true. In the first place, I myself recommended on March 3rd and March 5th that we prepare for a bombing halt in Vietnam. At no time was I ever in favor of an addition of 200,000 troops in Vietnam. When we were*

*working on the final draft of the President's speech, we obviously were not going to put into that speech decisions which the President himself had not personally made. And it was not until he made the decision to take the partial bombing halt March 31st that that was incorporated in his speech of March 31st. Now, the interesting thing to me about this Newsweek article is that no one in Newsweek talked to me about it. You would suppose that if they were putting words in my mouth or thoughts in my mind, that somebody could have picked up the telephone and spent 30 seconds asking me about it, or someone could come out to interview me. This did not occur. So I'm not surprised that this point of fact was grossly distorted.*

*WALTERS: Was there indeed a discussion in your office, in which Clark Clifford brought up and implored the President to change his point of view, and did indeed change the President's.....*

*RUSK: I don't recall that, myself; I can't recall any occasion in which Secretary Clifford and I wrestled on the rug in front of the President. The President and the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense met frequently, alone, the three of them. I never had any impression we came out of those meetings except on a basis of agreement. And this attempt to build up a great contretemps between Secretary Clifford and myself simply doesn't fit the facts as I recall them. And I think Secretary Clifford and the President both would confirm that.*

*WALTERS: President Nixon is now wrestling with the pros and cons of resumed...resuming bombing in Vietnam. What is your opinion on this?*

*RUSK: I have a rather personal difficulty because I do feel that it's not for me, having so recently left office to look over the shoulders of my successor and offer him unsolicited advice from the sidelines. This is a very serious problem because there's no question whatever that when we stop the bombing on October 31st, it was clearly understood and a major premise of stopping the bombing was that three facts of life would be recognized. One, that the South Vietnamese would be admitted to the conference table, secondly that the major cities of South Vietnam would not be subjected to rocket and other forms of attack, and third that the demilitarized zone would not be abused. Now if these... to the extent that these conditions are being flaunted by the North Vietnamese, then one of the underlying purposes of conditions in which we stopped the bombing would be frustrated. That gives the new administration some very serious questions that they are now in the process of trying to resolve. I hope you'll forgive me if I don't try to advise them at this point.*

*WALTERS: Mr. Secretary, during your eight years in office, you saw close friends and colleagues turn against your views on Vietnam, and yet you held steadfast to those views. Is this because you have the facts that other people did not have?*

*RUSK: I don't think that it's just a question of facts, although facts can get terribly distorted in the debate on a matter of this sort. I think part of it is the sober, ~~the~~ examination of all of the consequences of the alternatives that were open to us. Now when you look at the great alternatives open to us in Vietnam, make it into a bigger war, do about what we're trying to do,*

*or pull out, broadly speaking the overwhelming majority of the American people are in favor of the middle course. We were never under pressures to make it into a big war, significant pressure. And we were never under pressure just to pull out and abandon Southeast Asia. Those were minor and inconsequential in character. We were debating about the middle ground, How best to handle the attempt to produce a result in Southeast Asia that was reasonable and fair and just and consistent with the need to maintain peace. With the minimum cost and with the minimum agony. And there can be honest differences of opinion on those matters. But these are not easy questions, and one has to approach them on one's knees. One can never be absolutely sure that you're right in a judgement made of this sort. But those who carry the heavy responsibilities of government, now in the new administration, have to do what they can in the light of all the facts they have in front of them, the alternatives that give them their choices. And hope that the story comes out well. More cannot be expected from frail human beings -- we're all frail human beings.*

*WALTERS: While we're talking about Vietnam, why do you think it was so difficult for President Johnson to get through to the American public his views, your views about the Vietnam situation? The public seemed to turn more and more against the administration principles.*

*RUSK: I'm not sure what the historians will eventually say on that point. Because as I have said on other occasions, we never felt under any pressure to make this into a larger war. We never felt under any significant pressure*

*simply to abandon Southeast Asia. The broad middle course which we were on seemed to have more approval than any of the three main alternatives with which we were faced. There was a lot of debate and wrangling inside this middle alternative about details. But from the general strategic point of view, there were not sharp divisions among the American people. And when you sample not just a few metropolitan newspapers but newspapers right across the country, including the weeklies, and when you looked at the mail... not just some of the most prominent mail but the steady mail that comes in from ordinary citizens all over the country, I never got the impression that the American people were refusing to support the effort in Southeast Asia.*

*WALTERS: Mr. Secretary, there are many people who do believe that it was the continuation of the Vietnam war which toppled Lyndon Johnson, which made him decide not to run again. Is this not your view?*

*RUSK: It is not my view because -- I had the privilege of talking with him about that matter, oh, a year before he actually announced his final decision. There were other factors involved. I think that he did realize that if he could move dramatically toward a peaceful settlement in Vietnam he could do so more easily if he were not involved in a partisan competition, and that in that sense he freed himself when he announced that he was not running for office again. I think there were other considerations in his mind which led him to the final conclusion.*

*WALTERS: Could you let us in on some of them?*

RUSK: Well, I think one, for example, is that no vice president had succeeded to the office of President and run for two additional terms. And I think he was aware of that Constitutional tradition that had somehow grown up in our system. And there were perhaps other personal considerations that I prefer not to go into, but after all, it is the most awesome and burdensome and compelling and demanding job in the world. And if I feel in my limited and partial sense a sense of relief not to be Secretary of State, what a sense of relief he must feel in not being President.

WALTERS: But if the decisions were based on partly Constitutional and partly personal and partly seemed to imply health reasons, emotional reasons, then why was everyone so amazed that he came to this decision? If, indeed, you had discussed something similar with him a year earlier?

RUSK: Because he kept his counsel on it. And most people just assumed, I suppose, that he would inevitably run again. But he -- he did not discuss it at all publicly during all of that period. But came to his conclusion on the basis of all the factors involved, and as soon as he came to his final conclusion, he announced it. I think it caught a good many people by surprise, but should not have caught so many people by surprise as in fact it did.

WALTERS: And you feel it was not an impulsive....

RUSK: It was not an impulsive matter at all, that I'm quite positive about.

WALTERS: Were you surprised?

RUSK: Not at the time, because there had been some discussion of it before.



"TODAY" MARCH 25 NBC

PART II Second Day

WALTERS: Mr. Secretary, where do you stand on the controversy in the U.S. over the Anti-Ballistic Missile?

RUSK: When you have a very complicated question like the ABM question, the debate draws into itself a lot of ideas which... many of which are reasonable and well-founded, some of which are just plain nonsense. Now I'm afraid we've gotten quite a collection of pros and cons now focusing on the ABM problem. For example, I've heard it said that we mustn't do anything more about ABMs because this would somehow interfere with our negotiations with the Russians. Those who say that don't go ahead, and make the point that because the Russians are themselves deploying ABMs that we shouldn't talk to them. Now, we're prepared to talk with the Russians while they are deploying ABMs. I have no doubt the Russians will talk to us even though we are taking some additional steps in the ABM field. So this argument I think is just silly, just plain nonsense. The real question, seems to me is do we have from a scientific and technical point of view, a good horse to bet on? Do we have first class workable ABMs? If we don't have those, then let's put more in research and development until we have something that we think is worth deploying. Secondly, do we take decisions now which we would want to review if we got some agreement with the Russians? We ought not to make decisions now that could not be subject to review depending on what happens in the talks we have with the Russians, so that we don't prejudge or predispose those conversations. One of the problems, Barbara, is that our budget cycle in this country runs about 18 months in advance. So we're really debating what we do in

*the budgetary year of 1971, thereabouts. Certainly 1970. If we have some way to say, "Now look, let's be in touch with the Russians and find out what is possible here, before we make final decisions on how much deployment we'll undertake," that would be, it seems to me, a preferable course of action. But I would not stop research and development. I would not stop what we're doing simply because we have some talks with the Russians coming up. They're not stopping what they're doing.*

*WALTERS: Well, then, do you think the decision for or against the ABMs should be made by the military or by the scientists rather than by Congress?*

*RUSK: No, I think it should be made by the President in consultation with Congress. It should be made by the civilian leadership of the country. There are differences of view in Congress about this. Of course, the Armed Services Committee has one view and the Foreign Relations Committee might have another. But I should think we should make some preliminary decisions about what we do now, then find out from the Russians what is possible in terms of an agreement, before we make any large and far-reaching and long-term and absolute commitments about the future. But if we were to abandon ABM and they go ahead, they just might get a technical or scientific breakthrough, that would make an enormous difference in the strategic relationship between the two sides. We can't afford to let that happen. So we have to keep our hand in it until we know what the agreements are going to be.*

WALTERS: *What are your views on what is occurring on the matter of the Pueblo?*

RUSK: *One has to be a little careful about something that is in effect before the courts, ~~it~~ certainly is under inquiry. In the case of the Pueblo, we were conscious of the fact that we were not putting a combat ship into operation. This ship did not have combat capability. It was very lightly armed, in fact, it was for all practical purposes unarmed. It was relying upon the freedom of the high seas, for its protection. We have used ships for such missions for many years, and aircraft on such missions for many years. So it was not unreasonable to believe that ~~the~~ the high seas would be adequate protection for a ship engaged in that kind of mission. That proved not to be the case. So I think it's important not to let a ... as the lawyers put it ... a poor case make bad law. I would be inclined, myself, to put the whole incident behind us, as an unfortunate matter from beginning to end. Draw such lessons as we can from it, in terms of what type ships we use, where we send them, what their instructions are, but not deal with this matter as though this were a cruiser, which had refused to give combat.*

WALTERS: *What about the -- confessions of the men involved in Korea?*

RUSK: *We never took those very seriously because there was internal evidence in the confession that they were not saying what they really meant. There were many ways in which they could give us signals that what they were saying was blarney. But I myself was not particularly distressed by*

*the confessions because they carried on their face the obvious information that the confessions were phony. So they were sending messages to us through the confessions which let us know that they were falsifying.*

*WALTERS: Weren't you in somewhat the same position yourself?*

*RUSK: Well, yes, at the very end there when we got these men out, I authorized the signing of a confession accompanied by an oral statement saying this confession is no good, that this confession is false. Now, to me, this was a very distasteful kind of thing. I was surprised that the North Koreans accepted this curious arrangement; it's literally without precedent. But it did get the men back. And I was very much concerned to get the men back as quickly as possible. The testimony has shown the treatment they were receiving, so my conscience is reasonably clear about having gotten the men back.*

*WALTERS: And in general your advice would be that the whole situation be wiped out and that we learn from experience.*

*RUSK: Sort of take what lesson we can from it, but scrub it off and start over again.*

*WALTERS: Mr. Secretary, we have been talking primarily about the past, now I'd like to ask you some questions about the present. You saw President Kennedy take a good will trip to Latin America, to Europe, President Johnson to the Far East. How effective do you think trips like this -- I'm speaking also of President Nixon's recent trip -- how effective are they?*

*RUSK: I think one must distinguish between systematic negotiations at the summit, and visits which are in the nature of get-acquainted visits or visits to exchange regard for countries involved. Before I became*

Secretary of State, I once wrote an article in which I said some very severe things about negotiations at the summit. This is because negotiations on important questions take time. And if you don't have time to spend on them, then you better stay out of them. And people at the summit don't have the time, the weeks, the months, that are required to resolve many of these questions. But, ~~my~~ visits of the sort that President Nixon recently took to Europe are constructive and helpful. They help to give the leaders some personal impression about who is on the other end of the cable. What kind of man am I dealing with? What can be established in terms of personal confidence to reinforce the traditional confidence between governments, and to lay the groundwork for further moves that might be taken through other normal diplomatic channels? So I have no objection to the kind of trip that President Nixon recently made, or that President Johnson made, and President Kennedy made. It's the idea that somehow chiefs of state should undertake laborious and difficult, and complicated and dangerous negotiations at that level that gives me some concern.

WALTERS: So you obviously would not be in favor of any summit meetings in the near future.

RUSK: If the summit meeting is to conclude a negotiation which had already been very well prepared, or was to launch a negotiation which would be followed up by regular diplomatic procedures, then I would have no objection to that. But the idea that people will try to get together and settle all at once

*a major and difficult problem is I think a little illusory, and I think we would be expecting too much if we would think that two leaders could meet and in one or two days time shake off some of the most difficult problems confronting the human race. So I'd be a little modest about negotiations, but very much in favor of the personal contact.*

*WALTERS: Would you care to comment on your views, your opinions, of President Nixon? So far, now that you are no longer in the official position?*

*RUSK: It seems to me that, in the foreign policy field, the President and new Secretary of State have gotten off to a good start. They've acted with care, with prudence, with responsibility. I felt, for example, that they remained calm during the recent nervousness about Berlin. I think they're thinking very hard about their problems and are not trying to produce instant flamboyant results. So although I'm on the other side of the aisle and a member of the Democratic party, I would have to say that I feel that they've gotten off to a good start.*

*WALTERS: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. We're very appreciative.*

"Today"

Wednesday  
March 26

NBC

THIRD DAY Part III

WALTERS: *Mr. Secretary, when you were in office, you never seemed to court or to curry public opinion. You're now out of office; therefore, you can get a lot of things off your chest. Is there anything that you would really like to speak out on now that you could not talk about before?*

RUSK: *I think there's one point that I will be speaking about in the months ahead. Not because it is an overriding concern, but because we see the first signs on the horizon, and that is the danger of a return to isolationism in this country. I don't believe that there is any systematic isolationism organized in the country, in the way that we saw before World War II. But on the other hand, we have those who want to abandon our commitments in Southeast Asia, we have those who want to pull our troops out of Europe, we have those who support deep slashes in our foreign aid budget, those who would move toward protectionism and all sorts of quota restrictions and quota bills in our trade policy. Those of us who are my age are now almost a quarter century beyond World War II, and therefore we have tended to forget a lot of things that were central to us when we were trying to build peace at the end of that war, when we were creating the United Nations. Half the American people are too young to have had a chance to remember any of those things. And so some of those issues that gripped us at that time don't take hold of these young people*

these days. Now, what concerns me, though, is this, Barbara. Maybe there are better answers than the collective security that we invented at the end of World War II. If so, let's find them. But there are also worse answers. And this time we just cannot possibly afford worse answers. There are so many thousands of megatons being held in frail human hands. That if we let ourselves go down the slippery slope into general war next time, we won't draw any lessons from World War III. There won't be enough left. So, somehow, we've got to understand the problem of organizing a peace before that war happens in order to prevent it. Now, if through carelessness or neglect or feeling that we must take care of our affairs here at home and forget the rest of the world, or -- because of the pain of a thing like Vietnam, or because of discouragement, because other nations just don't snap their heels and salute when we speak out. If, for any of these reasons, we tend to abandon the effort, then we really are sunk, and the human race is sunk along with us.

WALTERS: But there is a growing feeling that we can no longer be the watchdogs for the whole world. Perhaps this means relinquishing some of our treaties. But can we be as involved in each country as we have been?

RUSK: You know, when one gets into an argument, one tends to scrape the bottom of the barrel for make-weight arguments. This



*notion of the world's policeman is one of those arguments. I once had a count made when I was in the Department; out of the 400 of the last crises in the world involving the use of violence, the United States had directly participated in only six of them. We don't go around the world looking for business, in this matter of the use of force. One can look at all sorts of violent coup d'etat and fighting between India and Pakistan or Algeria and Morocco or Somali and Ethiopia, or the civil war in Nigeria, or the fighting in the Middle East. We stayed out of them. So that is just not true that we pretend to play the role of the world policeman. Now, we did, in the most solemn fashion available under our Constitution, after World War II, enter into certain security treaties: on the other side of the Atlantic, on the other side of the Pacific, and in this hemisphere. And we did so because we thought that what happens in those areas was vital to the security of the United States. Now, if we no longer believe that these areas are vital to the security of the United States. Now, if we no longer believe that these areas are vital to the security of the United States, then we should say so, we should change the treaties. I happen to believe that we are vitally interested in these areas. But if we are not, then we better make it clear. Because nothing is more dangerous than to have a security treaty which you don't need. Nothing's more dangerous than a bluff*

*in this business. And so we better get our commitments clearly in line with our determination. Because the one thing that the United States must not get caught doing is bluffing. Because then we perish.*

*WALTERS: Was that one of your central themes, feelings, in the Vietnam situation, that there was a treaty we had to uphold?*

*RUSK: Yes, that was certainly a central element in it. Back in the 1950's, during the Eisenhower Administration, we thought long and hard and decided that Southeast Asia was vital to the security of the United States. We put that in treaty form. There was only one dissenting vote in the Senate, when that treaty was approved. Now, we pledged the good faith of the United States, as the treaty puts it, to take steps to meet the common danger, in the event of an armed attack from outside the treaty area. Now, whatever one wants to say about Vietnam, it's pretty hard to deny that there is an attack by means of armed attack, an aggression by means of armed attack against South Vietnam. We did not commit ourselves to go through a mere formula, to go through some sort of play-acting. We pledged ourselves to take steps to meet the common danger. And so the standard of the treaty is the steps required to meet the common danger, whatever that danger is. So it's very important for the*

*United States not to leave itself in a position where those who might become our adversaries think that our treaties are a bluff. If someone says to me that he will of course support NATO, but he will not support SEATO, then I'm inclined to doubt whether one can believe him. Because when the going gets tough with NATO, what will his view be? I don't know. And what is more dangerous, is that the Russians might not believe him. And then we could have the kind of miscalculation that could lead to a very grave and perhaps fatal crisis. So these are very far-reaching questions. No one that I know of enjoys the Vietnam crisis, no one ever did. It was agony from the very beginning.*

*WALTERS: Mr. Secretary, you said that one can not always be sure that he is right. My margin for error is very great, margin for error for a Secretary of State is very small. If you can't be sure that you are right, are there some things that you feel now in retrospect you were quite wrong about?*

*RUSK: Well, I think the greatest mistake we made in the eight years in which I was Secretary of State was the Bay of Pigs. I think the gravest crisis we had was the Cuban missile crisis. I think the greatest disappointment we had was in not being able to bring the Vietnam struggle to a conclusion before President Johnson and I left office. And I suspect that is also President Johnson's greatest disappointment. But when you go back over the story,*

*you never have a chance to live it over again. That's the great difficulty.*

*WALTERS: In the Bay of Pigs situation and in the Cuban missile crisis, were you in agreement with what was done? Did you advocate it? -Can in either case, did you.....*

*RUSK: In the case of the Bay of Pigs, I long since have publicly taken my full share of responsibility along with President Kennedy for that episode. In the case of the Cuban missile crisis, I myself made in writing the recommendation which the President adopted, as his course of action in the Cuban missile crisis.*

*WALTERS: Mr. Secretary, did you follow the President's policies in general, in foreign policy, or did he follow yours?*

*RUSK: It's almost impossible to answer that question because a Secretary of State is constantly making recommendations to the President, but the policy is the President's. There must never be any blue sky between the President and his Secretary of State because it is the President who is elected by the people to make these decisions. The Secretary of State isn't elected by anybody. He's appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate to carry out the instructions of the President. Now, when you're sending out a thousand cables a day, obviously you're doing a great many things, on behalf of the President, the President cannot personally know about. And you may from time to time make recommendations to the President that he will modify, or reject. But that's normal*

*in any human organization and certainly in our Constitutional system. Dean Acheson once said that the most important element in the relationship between a President and a Secretary of State is that both fully understand which is President. And I think that is where one starts. It is the President who has responsibility, and it is the Secretary of State who has responsibility for advice, and for carrying out the decisions of the President.*

*WALTERS: Are you a very different man, do you think, than the Dean Rusk who went into office eight years ago?*

*WALTERS: Oh, I think in some respects, yes; I'm eight years older and that makes a difference. I think one doesn't live through an experience like the Cuban missile crisis and come out of it quite the same man. Those are the most far-reaching and dangerous questions that human beings can face. I think both in the Soviet Union and in the United States we each came out of that crisis a little more prudent, a little more sober, a little more aware of the fact that we human beings can blow ourselves to bits if we're not careful. I also came out of it with a great stimulation about the goodness of the American people. When you think of the fantastic power that is in the hands of the United States, you think of Lord Acton's remark that power corrupts, and absolute power tends to*

*corrupt absolutely. Well, this power has not corrupted the American people. The powers and the wealth and the majesty of the United States is thrown behind a rather simple and decent purposes of ordinary Americans, live and let live, try to help people who are in anguish and try to make some peace in the world, try to settle problems by peaceful means. These are great things and it's one of the most important historical facts in our day that the power of the United States is harnessed to the simple purposes of the American people. Had this fantastic power been harnessed to something else, expansionism or imperialism, or selfish ambitions as a nation, it could have made an enormous difference to the history of the world. So I can be, I can be very touched by what the American people really think about their relations with the rest of the world.*

FOURTH DAY Part IV

NBC "Today"  
Thursday, March 27

WALTERS: Mr. Secretary, when you were still Secretary of State, you said, "Like every GI in a foxhole, I shall welcome my own replacement with a certain affection." Now that you are out of office, and have relinquished the power and prestige, do you feel relief or regret?

RUSK: Oh, I think one can't help but feel a sense of personal relief. The responsibilities were very heavy, the weight of the world was on the shoulders of the Secretary of State and the President, particularly the President. No happening was something of indifference. I think the ability to turn those responsibilities over to another man is something one cherishes. Eight crowded years were a long time, and were long enough. So I'm delighted that we have a man like William Rogers as my successor, and delighted he's going to carry on. I think he's going to be a good Secretary of State.

WALTERS: Most of us know you from television appearances, and we've seen you as a quite unemotional man, a man who never seems to lose his cool, doesn't get mad, doesn't seem to be personally hurt by some of the very strong attacks. Am I describing you accurately?

RUSK: I think you're describing a Secretary of State accurately. Because a Secretary of State must be able to control his temper,

always to talk with people in measured tones. If you lose your temper with a man like Mr. Gromyko, for example, this can have very serious consequences for our national relations. There are always aggravating and disconcerting and unexpected and irritating things happening in the world. The human race including ourselves has infinite capacity to be a little ridiculous. So that one must... you must try yourself as Secretary of State to remain calm, and take whatever comes in the best way that you can. Now, when you talk about the individual who is serving as Secretary of State, you're talking about a person with human reactions, with temper. Down in Cherokee County, Georgia, we have tempers. But you must learn to bit your tongue at the back end rather than the front end, on a job of this sort. I feel that diplomacy required calm. Diplomacy has worked for hundreds of years, to eliminate the accidents of personality from the conduct of state affairs. That's why, for example, we sign a diplomatic note, "Accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration," when in fact you're telling him to go to hell.

WALTERS: You served under two Presidents, John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. With which President were you more compatible?

RUSK: It's very hard to compare two men and get into that kind of question. I think President Johnson had a stronger sense of the *statutory*



and Constitutional responsibilities of the great departments of government, perhaps, than did President Kennedy at times. But I would think compatibility would be present with both of them; I had no sense of difference between them in that regard.

WALTERS: You worked equally well with each?

RUSK: Yes. Yes.

WALTERS: When you were tapped as Secretary of State, it came as a great surprise to many people.

RUSK: And to me. And to me.

WALTERS: Was it to you? Do you know why President Kennedy chose you?

RUSK: No. He never told me, as a matter of fact. I didn't ask him the direct question; it seemed a little unseemly for me to ask him. But I did tell him that a judgment as to my qualifications would have to be made by him. But I could not in honesty tell him that I was qualified to be Secretary of State. I do not think any American could say that. And that he would have to accept the responsibility for making that judgement. He smiled and said, "Well, I will make that judgement and I do want you to be Secretary of State." But I never discussed with him why he asked me to be. I told him some of the reasons why I thought I ought not to be, but he overruled those and proceeded.

WALTERS: Oh, I'd love to hear some of your faults, what were some?

RUSK: (LAUGHS) Well, I had no political base of my own, for example. I was not a party man, I had not run for political office, I had no particular constituency in the Congress. A man like Cordell Hull had an enormous influence in Congress because he had served there for many years. There would be some advantage in a Secretary of State's having a certain constituency of his own to add that strength to the strength that the President might have, you see. I had none of that, and that's one of the things I pointed out to President Kennedy.

WALTERS: Mr. Secretary, can you tell us your plans for the future?

RUSK: Well, at the present time, I'm still trying to disengage from the office I've held. I have a mass of mail, at the time that I left office and I'm trying to answer all those and I hope anybody that's listening who has written me and hasn't received an answer will be patient because the answer will come. Then I have a great many papers, at the Department of State that I must sort out and help the Department of State dispose of in one way or another. Some of them will be destroyed. Others will be put into permanent files and things of that sort. In the longer run, I haven't fully made up my mind yet. I'm looking forward to a good many visits to campuses.

*I was a college teacher before I was called into military service in World War II. Now I've been very much interested in the large number of invitations I've had from students to come visit with them and I want to take advantage of those invitations to the extent that I can, but when you ask about next year or the year after, quite frankly I haven't made up my mind yet.*

*WALTERS: Will you write a book?*

*RUSK: Oh, some time from now, not any time soon. I'm not going to rush it into print or stir up things in the public platform in the way that would complicate the current problems facing our government. Mr. Dean Acheson has just completed a book, I hear from gossip, that runs through 1952. That will be a most interesting book and I'm sure most people will want to read it. But that's 17 years ago. Now that's a decent interval. Whether I shall wait 17 years for a book, I'm not sure. But I certainly am not going to write a book in the next year or two.*

*WALTERS: Were you surprised or pleased that you were invited to so many campuses where some might think you were unpopular?*

*RUSK: I was pleased. I wasn't quite as surprised as all that because we had a good deal of mail from young people and I've talked with a great many young people who have come into the department or who*

*I visited in the course of a year. Some of the loudest and most strident voices don't represent the great majority of the young people and after all, as one of the fellows from Vietnam wrote me not long ago, they too out there are young people and they're performing their duty with a gallantry and professional skill that's been unequalled in our military history. So that there's lots of different kinds of young people. I have a great regard for them; they're a tremendous bunch.*

*WALTERS: As a former teacher, do you have any comment on the rebellions and the demonstrations taking place now at the colleges?*

*RUSK: Well, I personally would draw a sharp distinction between the types of dissent and protest and demonstrations permitted by our constitutional system and those that are illegal as being too much of an infringement upon the rights of others. I don't mind people demonstrating with marigolds and chrysanthimums. But I do object to the demonstrating with potatoes loaded with razor blades. Now one reason I feel personally very strongly about this is that I was a student in Germany when the storm troopers destroyed the democracy of Germany by denying the platforms to democratic elements in Germany and I felt then that this must never happen again. So storm trooper tactics is something that I feel very strongly*

*about but the rights of dissent, protest, demonstration within our constitutional system must be preserved. Democracy is a method. Most of all, it's a method for settling differences by peaceful means.*

*WALTERS: You're still a very young man, but I hear something quite nice happens to you when you're 86.*

*RUSK (LAUGHS): Well, apparently my old college at Oxford will extend to me the courtesy of room and board at college if at 86 I'm indigent and have need of it. I have more prospect of being indigent than I have of being 86, so I think that sweet suggestion on their part will probably not be made use of .*

PART V Fifth Day

NBC "Today"  
Friday, March 28

WALTERS: I know you don't have a crystal ball, but if you can look into the future, what do you think is going to happen in the Middle East? What is your counsel for what might possibly happen in the Middle East?

RUSK: I think in the short run, we're going to have difficulty because of the internal situation on both sides. In Israel they're having elections; the details of possible peace settlements, matters of partisan debate, highly tumultuous debate. It isn't easy for Israel to make peace and hold an election at the same time. Now on the Arab side, they have what is known as politics by assassination. There are governments in the Arab world who say that if they take particular steps toward peace that their leadership will simply be assassinated. So, you may have one of those difficult situations that we've seen before, where your two sides may be too weak to be wise, from the point of view of internal politics. Now, I hope this will not be the case. I'm encouraged to believe that the four principal members of the Internal Security Council, the so-called Big Four, will be able to put their heads together and come up with a useful suggestion for both sides. Because they can help the two sides to do things which otherwise the two sides would feel it very difficult to do without the prodding from the Big Four.

WALTERS: You mentioned Russia very often in our conversation today, you've not mentioned China. Do you regard China as an enemy very close on our heels?

RUSK: Not really close on our heels. They're very strange people not because they're Oriental but because they have a combination of ideology and isolationistic misunderstanding of the rest of the world. We tried repeatedly, year after year, to get some sort of conversation started with them, in the talks in Warsaw. We tried to exchange newsmen, and scholars, and scientists and doctors and plant materials for the production of foodstuffs, and goodness knows they ought to be interested in that. Exchange of weather information, things of that sort. But they kept saying to us that there was nothing to discuss unless we were prepared to surrender Taiwan, that is, Formosa, with its 13 million or so people. Now, that's not ours to surrender, we can't do that. Here they are, isolated even within the Communist world, with the exception of Albania. Here they are at daggers point with the Soviet Union, and they've abused diplomatic representatives from a number of other countries -- Britain, France and others. So, it's a very strange group of people to get along with. I would hope that when the next generation of leadership appears on the scene, and it's not going to be too long because after all, the years do pass, that there will be a more pragmatic approach to the

*problems of China by its own leadership. And that they would realize that the proper care and nourishment of 750 or 800 million people require them to put some of these ideological considerations to one side in order to get the world's work done. And that under those circumstances, some hope might be open for more reasonable relations with the rest of the world.*

*WALTERS: In our attempts to have effect some communication with China, we've not given them recognition in the United Nations.*

*Wouldn't that be a step forward?*

*RUSK: Well, but you see, they're saying, "Nothing doing on that unless you expel the Republic of China on Formosa." Now, the Republic of China has been there as a charter member of the United Nations since 1945. They're one of the middle-sized powers in the United Nations, they have more people and more resources than many of the present members. A majority of the present membership of the UN is just not prepared to expel the Republic of China as a condition for bringing in representatives from Peking. Now, maybe Peking will change its view on that. I don't know; this is only speculation, but I would even suggest that if we were to offer tomorrow to recognize Peking without surrendering Formosa, Peking would turn it down.*

*WALTERS: What do you think at this point of the future of NATO?*



RUSK: NATO has suffered some of the dividends of success. The more successful an alliance is in maintaining the peace, the less apparent its benefit. And the fact is that NATO has succeeded in maintaining the security and the integrity of all its members for 20 years. That's a formidable accomplishment. But it also means that people don't attach the same importance to NATO as they did 20 years ago when there was an immediate threat on the horizon. So that it has some public relations problem, deriving from its very success. I would think that the commitments of NATO would continue into the future, it is sometimes said, incorrectly, that NATO has to be renegotiated or redone, at the end of this 20th year. That isn't true. NATO continues into effect, automatically. Except that any member of NATO has the privilege, on one year's notice, of withdrawing from NATO. I don't know anyone who is planning to withdraw from NATO and my guess is it will continue.

WALTERS: Do you think we're going to have in our lifetime, yours and mine, a secure peace?

RUSK: I think we're moving in that direction steadily. I think the causes of war are being reduced in variety. You don't have colonial wars any more. You don't have wars for Lebensraum, in the Hitler sense. No government today, not even the Communist governments, are putting forward a Lebensraum doctrine as a basis for moving on.

*its neighbors. The causes of war tend to be concentrated on minor territorial disputes between immediate neighbors, or the great ideological confrontation between the free world and the Communist world. My guess is that ten or twenty years from now the ideological factors will be less important. We in the West who start from the major premise of individualism, have been groping for better answers in the direction of social responsibility. In eastern Europe, where they start with the major premises of the collective, they have been groping for greater responsibility for the individual. My guess is that there will be a softening of the ideological conflict over the next decade or so. So in the long run I'm optimistic, even though in the short run we have some painful and dangerous problems immediately ahead of us, such as Vietnam.*

*WALTERS: Mr. Secretary, how close do you think we are to actual peace in Vietnam?*

*RUSK: Very hard to say, but I would think we'll see a significant change in the situation within the year... I certainly hope so.*

*WALTERS: Mr. Secretary, what would you say was your most important achievement as Secretary of State?*

*RUSK: I think perhaps the most important thing that happened in the last 8 years has been a move away from the sense of total hostility across the board. Into a period of pragmatic exploration of the*

possibilities of finding points of agreement even with those with whom you have the most serious disagreement and dangerous disagreement. President Kennedy and President Johnson both tried to find those points with the Soviet Union. We tried with China but without success. But we've had the partial test ban treaty. We've had the space treaty. We've had the non-proliferation treaty and we've had other agreements, the consular treaty that demonstrates that it is possible to take some small steps forward even though some of the great questions are unresolved. Now, the reason this is important, Barbara, is that we've entered a new chapter in human affairs. These thousands of megatons create a whole new condition for the human race; unless we begin to think of ourselves as the human family, inhabiting this small planet as seen by astronauts when they were circling the moon. And look at those things in which we have a common interest then we have to wait for lost. Now, no other President has had to think about that before President Eisenhower's second term. But we have to think about it now so all Americans ought to bear in mind that total hostility is just passe; it's just too late in history to take a sharply ideological approach to every issue and say, "Under no circumstances will we trade with that fellow because we don't like him. Under no circumstances will

*will we make an agreement with that fellow because we can't trust him." We've got to find those points large and small where we can make him advance towards peace, take advantage of it.*

*WALTERS: But do you think this is, in particular, your contribution? You're very modestly crediting the President. Is it your contribution, the release from total hostility?*

*RUSK: Well, I think it was working closely with President Kennedy and President Johnson, I had some part in it. But I'm inclined to give the credit where the responsibility lies, and the President is the one who has to carry the burden of responsibility; so just as he gets the blame for the things that go wrong, he ought to have the credit for the things that go right.*

*WALTERS: Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for spending this time with us. I wish you clear sailing and a good and well deserved rest.*

*RUSK: Thank you, Barbara; it's a great pleasure to be with you today.*