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SECRETARY RUSK'S NEWS CONFERENCE OF SEPTEMBER 16, 1966

The following is the State Department's release of Secretary of State Dean Rusk's news conference, which is authorized for direct quotation:

SECRETARY RUSK: Gentlemen, as you know, the General Assembly of the United Nations will be convening the first part of next week. As is my practice, I expect to go up for a period during the beginning portion of the General Assembly. The trade union of Foreign Ministers normally meets there. There will be a very large number of Foreign Ministers present, and I look forward to this chance to have a great many talks with them about problems right around the world.

Since I will be away next week -- I will be back here the following week -- I thought I might meet with you very briefly today. But since I have a good many things on the calendar, quite frankly, the briefer the better from my point of view. But I will take your questions.

Q. Mr. Secretary, the Chinese today have protested that American planes bombed Chinese villages on September 9 and that there was an air battle with Chinese fighters. Can you tell us anything about this alleged incident?

A. I checked back on what we had on that. There was an announcement in Saigon I think the following -- the day after that alleged incident, in which we reported that our pilots had encountered some MIGs about 30 miles south of the Chinese frontier. That is the only information we have. We will be looking into it further, of course, to see if there is any possibility of any mistake.

Q. Mr. Secretary, is there a new decision as has now been widely reported on the United States stand to keep Communist China out of the United Nations again this session?

A. Well, I am not aware of a specific and new decision in point of time. Actually the basic situation remains very much the same. Those who have been most active in promoting the membership of Peking to the United Nations have at the same time wanted to expel the Republic of China from the United Nations. I have no doubt that there is a substantial majority of the United Nations who would not be willing to undertake that course of action.

Further, so far as know, Peking has not changed its view that the United Nations itself must undertake substantial reforms before Peking is interested in membership, such as expelling those members who are looked upon by Peking as imperialist puppets.

Beyond that, Peking is a major obstacle towards a peaceful settlement of the situation in Viet-Nam.

We are in touch with the governments members of the United Nations regularly on this matter. We will be in further touch with them during the course of the General Assembly.

But we do not see the basis on which the United Nations is in a position to vote Peking into membership at this point.

Q. Mr. Secretary,

Q. Mr. Secretary, to clarify that a little bit, Ambassador Goldberg and a number of Administration spokesmen have been saying for months that this problem of Chinese representation issue was under review here.

Now, it seems to be that you have come to the conclusion in your review, and that you have decided to continue the previous policies. Isn't that --

A. No. The question has been under review since 1949.

Q. I am talking about this last vote.

A. The principal thing that we have tried to do in recent months different from the past has been to open up in our contacts with Peking the possibilities of some exchanges and some further contacts and some sort of effort to break through the walls of isolation that Peking has built around itself, thus far without any success. President Johnson has asked us to do that in our talks.

As you know, the Chinese Ambassador in Warsaw has protested rather vigorously about our making any comments at all on those talks. But the net effect of those thus far have been negative.

But of course these questions remain under constant consideration or review -- but those words are a little misleading because they are sometimes taken as meaning that major changes of policy are contemplated.

We always examine the situation. But as I indicated, the basic situation remains about where it was.

Q. Mr. Secretary, there is a growing concern among foreign correspondents about a lack of background briefings we used to get during the Kennedy days, but we almost get none now. Do you think that situation could be corrected?

A. Well, I would be glad to have you discuss that with Mr. Donnelley and my colleagues. Certainly there has been no review of that matter in recent days and a change of policy in that respect. But I will be glad to have them take that up with you.

Q. Mr. Secretary, recently a group of rather prominent Americans have petitioned the President that when Chancellor Erhardt comes here he be informed in no uncertain terms that West Germany is not to get a finger on the trigger of any nuclear weapons under NATO or any other basis. Do you have any comment on this suggestion?

A. Well, I think we need to keep certain things separate and not let these problems get confused and mixed up.

We are opposed to the proliferation of nuclear weapons. We have never discussed in NATO or anywhere else any arrangements that would involve the proliferation of nuclear weapons -- that is, the transfer of nuclear weapons into the hands of non-nuclear powers or the transfer of control of those weapons into the hands of non-nuclear powers. Our policy on that point is very strong indeed.

Now,

Now, the Federal Republic of Germany is about the only non-nuclear state that I know of that has formally forsworn the manufacture of nuclear weapons, its own nuclear weapons capability.

That is one thing.

And if the Soviet Union and others want to talk about the problem of proliferation, they will find that the United States is willing to go all the way to insure that there is no proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Now, if other issues become involved into that problem, simply to confuse it, then the matter gets complicated.

We have an alliance in NATO comprising members who are themselves the target of Soviet nuclear missiles. We have a NATO alliance, some of whose members have nuclear weapons, and the circumstances, the conditions, the occasions on which those weapons might be used are a matter of great importance to all the members of the alliance.

When we are talking about war and peace, I would remind you that whether we are talking about nuclear weapons or conventional weapons, the question of the circumstances under which the alliance would resort to military action in its own defense is a matter of concern to all the members of the alliance.

Now, we would hope that those things which have to do with proliferation in the true sense, in the genuine sense, could be isolated out so that we could all move towards progress and towards a treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. And we would hope that this question would not be complicated by the injection of issues which have nothing to do with proliferation.

Now, it is not true to say that NATO nuclear arrangements, or the possibilities of NATO nuclear arrangements stand in the way of a non-proliferation treaty, if those who are talking about a non-proliferation treaty are prepared to talk about non-proliferation and are prepared to put other questions to one side.

But we sympathize with the purpose that these gentlemen have in mind. We have no debate with them about the importance of non-proliferation. And I have no doubt that if we could all concentrate on the problem of preventing the further spread of nuclear weapons, that we could make substantial and rapid progress.

I will be having a chance, in the course of the next period in New York, at the General Assembly, to discuss this matter further with Foreign Ministers, and I hope we can make some progress on this.

Q. Mr. Secretary, President Marcos of the Philippines proposed an Asian Political Forum that would be capable of considering such problems as Viet-Nam and perhaps setting up conciliation machinery. He also spoke of efforts to get North and South Viet-Nam into contact with each other as a step towards a negotiated settlement.

Would you comment on these proposals?

SECRETARY RUSK: Well, on the first point we will see substantial advantage in the development among the Asian nations themselves of systematic machinery for consultation on political problems and security questions

questions in which they are all involved. We have been greatly encouraged by what has happened in the last several months in just that sort of direction. The meeting of the ASPAC countries in Korea, the recent meeting of the ASA countries which led to the formal proposal by these three nations that there be an Asian conference to take up the question of Viet-Nam, so we would think that any development in that direction would be very much on the plus side.

As far as contacts with North Viet-Nam, South Viet-Nam, or perhaps others on a settlement of Viet-Nam, we of course would welcome any contacts that would elicit from Hanoi a readiness to talk about a peaceful settlement in Southeast Asia. It is not my impression that the government of the Philippines has found thus far such a response from Hanoi. But this is one of the possibilities that ought to be kept open. All possibilities ought to be kept open. And perhaps something might develop from it in the future. But at the moment I am not aware of any major development in that direction.

Q. Could you evaluate General deGaulle's trip, at least the Asian part of his trip regarding Viet-Nam?

A. I will be seeing the French Foreign Minister, Couve de Murville, in the course of the opening stages of the General Assembly, and will have a chance to get his impressions, his evaluation of that visit. I have very little to add to what you know about the public aspects of that visit. I think we and the Government of France see the situation about the same way as far as Cambodia is concerned.

As far as peace in Viet-Nam is concerned, we did not detect in the important statement made in Phnom Penh any suggestion to Hanoi as to what contribution they were expected to make toward a peaceful settlement in Southeast Asia. In the absence of a balanced view we did not find that that was a complete statement of the problem or a complete description of the solution. But I really ought not to try to make a broader evaluation until I have had a chance to talk to the French Foreign Minister about his own impressions.

Q. Mr. Secretary, with regard to disarmament again, can you give us an assessment of the Geneva Conference which has just adjourned, and can you tell us whether or not in your judgment some kind of priority could be given to the ideas of unilateral declarations by non-nuclear countries who are ready to forego development of nuclear weapons?

A. The recent session of the conference in Geneva did not produce dramatic results; although I must say that I felt that the detailed discussions that went on behind the scenes appeared to me to be quite worth while. And I noted with some interest that at the time of their recess the delegates there of all persuasions seemed to speak with some optimism about the possibilities when the conference reconvenes. And my guess is that these questions that were to be discussed at the Geneva Conference will be discussed further in detail among some of the Foreign Ministers as they will be meeting with each other in New York in the next -- during the next two to three weeks. I do not despair myself of the possibilities in the field on non-proliferation. I would hope that we could conclude a space treaty that would insure that space activities are concentrated on peaceful purposes. I would hope that we could make some headway on some of the other proposals that have been made by us and by others having to do with a cut-off in production of nuclear materials for weapons purposes and a freeze on the nuclear delivery vehicles and other

matters

matters so that we can begin to make some progress on disarmament, even though some of the outstanding political issues that are so difficult and so dangerous are still unresolved; we can't afford to give up on this effort. And I think persistence might very well pay off. We would like to see some progress on a comprehensive test ban treaty. But thus far we have not been able to solve the problem of providing sufficient assurances and guarantees of compliance among all those who might be parties to the treaty.

Q. Mr. Secretary, there has been some suggestion that even though there were killings and quite a bit of propoganda that the Viet Cong effort to disrupt the elections was somewhat half-hearted. Do you have any analysis of that?

A. Well, I saw a story to that effect which came in after the elections. I must say that my own impressions, based upon reports before and during the election, were rather in the other direction. From what we heard from prisoners and defectors and from captured documents and from radio broadcasts by the Liberation Front, Hanoi, and by actual incidents on the ground, it was my impression that the Viet Cong had made an all-out effort to interfere with these elections. They did it through threats of assassination, they did it through the attempt to terrorize the voter by a seizing of voting cards, and by attacks on voting booths. So that I am skeptical of reports that somehow the Viet Cong did not really want to interfere with the elections, but were pursuing a different policy privately than the one they were pursuing overtly and with every means at their disposal.

Q. Mr. Secretary, on the election itself, it is being widely said here that this is -- hopefully, that this is setting a new political process in motion in a democratic sense in South Viet-Nam. Is the U.S. prepared to accept the possibility that the Assembly or successor body so elected itself might open negotiations with Hanoi?

A. The Assembly which has just been elected is a constituent assembly; its primary purpose is to draft a constitution. And based upon the program that had been announced as early as last January, the thought has been that they would draft the constitution, the constitution would be approved, there would then be elections under that constitution for a national assembly on the basis of which a civilian government would be constituted. And I think it may well be that on some matters there would be certainly consultation between the present government in Saigon and these elected representatives who come from all parts of the country and all elements in the population. But its primary purpose is to draft a constitution. I would not think that this constituent assembly would undertake negotiations with Hanoi, for example, or matters of that sort.

Q. Mr. Secretary, do you discern any shift of influence within the Peking-Hanoi-Moscow triangle, and if so, does this seem to portend anything hopeful as far as negotiations are concerned?

A. No, I

A. No, I would not be able to certify as to changes in that regard. It is a matter in which we are greatly interested, and that we try to be informed about. But I am not sure that the three capitals that you have mentioned are very well informed about the relative position of the three capitals in these matters. No, I would not be in a position yet to draw any conclusions on that subject.

Q. Mr. Secretary, could you give us some evaluation of what is going on now inside Communist China with the Red Guards and the cultural revolution?

A. I think I have said before that I suspect what is going on is of some importance, but if I were to be frank with you I would have to say that I don't know what it is.

We have been interested in this phenomenon of the Red Guards, the efforts which they have made in some parts of the country to attack elements in the Communist Party apparatus. We noted the period of what seemed to be excesses, followed by attempts by the leadership to restrain those excesses.

But I think that I would be fraudulent if I were to try to say to you that I think we know the real significance of these recent events. My guess is that there are some very important issues at stake there inside China on these matters, but we will have to wait a little bit to find out just what those are.

Q. Mr. Secretary, the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Internal Security held hearings this week in which various Cubans testified about the conditions and horrors in prisons there, in the imprisonment of a great many political persons. They, also, as a rule, appealed for U.S. help. Is there any help the United States can give in that area?

A. It is limited. It is limited because our influence in Havana is not very substantial these days.

We have tried to open up the question of the release of political prisoners to permit them to leave Cuba. But very little has happened on that of substance. I don't think that I can add very much to what has been taken up in the testimony on this matter.

Q. Mr. Secretary, do we have any information that the Soviets will release the Peace Corps worker who went across the border into the Soviet Union?

A. Not yet. We would hope that that could occur very quickly. As some of you know, from what has been said earlier, this incident occurred along some beaches where it is customary for people to go for recreation. Apparently there was a small stream across which one can walk without too much difficulty. Beyond that stream was a fence, which seemed to be the Soviet Frontier. Our Peace Corps man, Mr. Dawson, apparently waded across this small stream, and between the stream and the fence was picked up by Soviet Guards. There seemed to be no signs at the stream itself. I think he assumed that the fence was the border.

It was one of those trivial and unintentional and inadvertent acts -- if it did occur. And we would hope that the Soviet Union would

immediately

immediately recognize the nature of this infraction, if, indeed, it was an infraction, and release him very promptly.

We have asked for consular access to Mr. Dawson, and we would hope that will be accorded to us very promptly.

Q. Mr. Secretary, U Thant has made something close to a Sherman-like statement, and he has urged the U.N. to begin to consider alternatives. Have we begun to consider these alternatives? And, if not, why not?

A. Well, I think this is something that will be a matter of great interest to all of the Delegates as they assemble for the General Assembly.

As you know, we would hope very much that the Secretary General will continue to serve. I think there is a very strong consensus throughout the United Nations that it would be in the interest of the world organization if the Secretary General would continue in his present office. But I think it would not be helpful for me to answer your question directly at this point.

Q. Mr. Secretary, you said the non-nuclear allies have a right to be interested in the circumstances under which nuclear arms would be used. Where do we stand on the issue of actual physical sharing in the possession of nuclear weapons?

A. Well, exactly how NATO ought to organize its nuclear forces is under continuing discussion, but the point I want to emphasize is that we have never, at any time, talked in NATO about any arrangements that involved the proliferation of nuclear weapons; and, therefore, contingent possibilities about NATO organization ought not to be an obstacle to the conclusion of a nonproliferation treaty because we are opposed to the proliferation of nuclear weapons. We have demonstrated it, sometimes at the cost of relationships with some of our friends. We really do believe in nonproliferation, so that I would think that the question of nuclear matters in NATO is for NATO to continue to consider, but that these matters should not be allowed to interfere with the conclusion of a nonproliferation treaty.

Q. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

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