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Rusk Declares U.S. Policy Is Respected and Supported

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Secretary of State Dean Rusk, in a rejoinder to administration critics, says U.S. foreign policy is "widely understood, respected and supported."

In a New York speech last night, Rusk defended the main points of the Johnson administration's policies — many of which he, himself, helped formulate.

Speaking to the Council of Foreign Relations, Rusk avoided mentioning any of the critics by name. He also did not break any new ground in U.S. policy.

Rusk stoutly urged the influential group in the audience — and the thousands of others who saw him on television—to understand and support the U.S. policy in Viet Nam.

He repeated his pledge to go to Geneva immediately "whenever there is anybody there with whom to negotiate peace."

But until the Communists agree to negotiations, Rusk said, "I am confident that the United States will also continue to do what may be necessary to assure that aggression in Southeast Asia does not succeed."

"When the other side becomes convinced that it can not achieve its purpose by force, peace will come," Rusk said.

Attacks Critics' Views

By implication, he attacked the views of many leading critics.

He said there were those who cling to "obsolete notions of a bygone age . . . who think that what happens next door is necessarily more important

than what happens half-way around the world."

"Some of them can see across the Atlantic — but the Pacific is too broad for them, even though it can be crossed in less time than could the Atlantic before the Second World War."

This was a criticism of views expressed during the Viet Nam hearings of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee by George F. Kennan, former ambassador to Russia, and an ex-policy maker in the State Department.

Kennan said the containment policy toward Russia which he helped draw up in the late 1940s had no value in Asia, and could not work against China, Kennan also said Asia was not so important to U.S. national interest as Europe.

This view is also held by Sen. J. William Fulbright, D-Ark., chairman of the committee, and was indorsed by the national convention of the Americans for Democratic Action, the nation's leading liberal group.

Against "Influence Spheres"

Rusk also criticized the "sphere of influence" theory which he said has come down to us "from a simpler time" and which, he said, "has a certain superficial appeal."

The secretary asked who is to decide which "are to be the master nations and which the satellites?"

"Quite apart from the moral problems involved, it would be hard to devise a scheme more likely to lead to major conflict—surely history does not certify it as a structure for peace," Rusk said.

The "sphere of influence" theory has been asserted strongly by Walter Lippmann, the columnist, who has constantly attacked the administration's policies.

It has been suggested by Lippmann and others that Viet Nam is in China's sphere, and therefore it is going against history for the United States to try and limit China's influence.

Rusk also defended his legal reasoning for the U.S. presence in Viet Nam—the SEATO treaty of 1955.

In recent Senate Foreign Relations hearings, Sen. Wayne Morse and Fulbright have said the SEATO treaty was not designed for a Viet Nam war.

Morse even has gotten international lawyers to work on a brief in which he aims to show the illegality of the U.S. presence in Viet Nam.

Cites Collective Defense

"I do not find it easy to understand how anyone could have voted for that treaty—or

even read it—without realizing that it was a genuine collective defense treaty," Rusk said.

He said Article IV of the treaty sanctioned the U.S. intervention—a view he has stated before the committee—and he said this has been his view since 1961.

Rusk said "a large majority" of the nations of the free world are "sympathetic to our efforts in Southeast Asia and would be alarmed were they to fail."

"In my experience as secretary of state, I have found that the objectives of American foreign policy are widely understood, respected and supported," Rusk said.

The dinner honored the memory of the late Edward R. Murrow, the newscaster who later headed the United States Information Agency.