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SECRETARY RUSK'S NEWS CONFERENCE OF AUGUST 5, 1966

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

Q Mr. Secretary, the Soviet Union has charged that the United States planes have attacked its ships in the Haiphong harbor. Has this occurred? And what is U. S. policy on this question?

A We have no information at all that would support the charge that we have attacked any shipping in the Haiphong harbor. Our strikes on the POL installations there were for that purpose, and that purpose alone. Indications from the strikes are that all of the bombs were in the target area. There was no indication that attacks on Soviet shipping occurred. We had a specific military objective in view. We hit that objective, and our information is, and I think it is very accurate, that we did not hit anything else.

Q Mr. Secretary, you spoke of bombs. I think the Soviet note charged that this vessel, the MEDYN, was hit by large caliber bullets.

A We have no information at all on that. In an earlier incident, when such a charge was made, our judgment was that if anything at all reached a

Soviet ship that it might well have been North Vietnamese anti-aircraft or something the North Vietnamese were doing. But it was not U. S. bombs that had anything to do with it.

Q Mr. Secretary, India is reported to be considering asking that the ICC be expanded to control and observe in the demilitarized zone more thoroughly. What do you think of such an idea?

A We would be very much in favor of a strengthening of the ICC to do any of the jobs that are its responsibility, including the assurance that the demilitarized zone is in fact demilitarized.

Now, as you know, very substantial North Vietnamese forces have come through the demilitarized zone, and have been engaged by our Marine and South Vietnamese Forces in the northern part of South Viet-Nam. Those North Vietnamese forces are back in the demilitarized zone, contrary to the understandings reached in 1954.

We would be glad to see the ICC move to clear out the demilitarized zone of all military action. And, in

that case, we would certainly respect it completely.

Another instance of ICC activity that we would welcome would be to assure the neutrality and territorial integrity of Cambodia. As you know, Prince Sihanouk has requested that that be done. We would be glad to see that that would be done.

All of these things relate back to our interest in peace in Southeast Asia, and our interest in applying the 1954 and 1962 Accords. And if everyone else is prepared to live with them and comply with them, there is nothing we would like better. And if that attitude could be accepted by the other side, we would have peace very promptly in Southeast Asia.

Q Mr. Secretary, is it true that the Polish member of the ICC is resisting proposals or efforts to get that Commission into the DMZ to investigate conditions there?

A Well, quite frankly, I don't have precise information on that point. I think probably we will know very shortly more specifically what their attitude is.

As you know, the South Vietnamese Government has repeatedly called the attention of the ICC to violations of the demilitarized zone.

Now, Hanoi has put in a protest to the ICC.

All right. Let's do something about it. Let's get going. And I would hope that the three members of the ICC could agree that they would assure the demilitarization of that zone. And I can assure you that any efforts on their side in that direction would be met with complete response by us, and that we would do everything we could to cooperate. We would hope the other side would.

Q Has the Commission--

A I beg pardon.

Q Has the Commission ever been permitted to conduct any excursions into the zone?

A Well, they have had a post in the eastern part of the zone all along, but these incidents have been occurring out on the western part of the zone.

Now, if the North Vietnamese troops are where we know them to be, there may be some problems in the ICC members getting into those areas safely.

But we would be completely cooperative with regard to transportation, or to facilitate their travel, or to do anything that would give them more of a role to play and help them to clear out this demilitarized zone, and at least consolidate one step that might have to do with the possible escalation of this situation.

Q Mr. Secretary, on another aspect of the Vietnamese question, Thailand has proposed an All Asian Conference on the problem of trying to reach peace in Viet-Nam, and has proposed that all the principals participate in such a conference. What would be your view on that, sir?

A Well, we feel that this is a constructive suggestion. I found, when I was in Asia recently, that the Asian countries, Asian and Pacific countries; for example, those who met at Korea, were very much concerned about the possibilities of peace in Southeast Asia, and the ability of these smaller countries to live unmolested. We would hope that this might--this suggestion might result in some constructive action.

As you know, we have been prepared for negotiations, discussions, conferences, contacts, through any

channels: Seventeen nonaligned nations; the two Co-Chairmen of the ICC, or any of the other many third parties who have come forward to try to establish some contact between the two sides; or, direct bilateral discussions between ourselves and, say, Hanoi or Peking.

I think this idea--that the nations who are really most immediately concerned, the Asian nations, might take some useful initiative--is a constructive one; and we will follow with great interest what results from it.

Yes.

Q Mr. Secretary, is there a policy inhibition on the possible use of American ground forces in the DMZ if the North Vietnamese continue to use it?

A Well, we have not wanted to go into the DMZ or cross the 17th Parallel. Our attitude has been that we don't want any shooting by anybody at anyone, and that we would be glad to see all of the shooting come to an end straightaway. We have no desire to destroy the regime in North Viet-Nam; we have no desire to drop any bombs on North Viet-Nam.

What we are interested in is peace out there. And there could be peace quickly if North Viet-Nam would stop doing what its doing to South Viet-Nam. We, of course, have to take measures to assure the security of our own and our allied forces in that area. But we have no policy desire to move into North Viet-Nam, or to disturb the demilitarized zone there. What we would like to see is the demilitarized zone respected by all parties.

Q Mr. Secretary, there are reports that the North Vietnamese are stepping up their infiltration into South Viet-Nam despite the bombing of its petroleum installations. What can you say about this?

A Well, their infiltration continues. There are some time lags between their infiltration and our precise knowledge about just how much it is, and what it is. But I think it would be a mistake to suppose that since infiltration is continuing, therefore, the bombing has no point. Because that overlooks what might have happened in terms of infiltration had the bombing not occurred. And we know that the bombing has made infiltration substantially more difficult; that many supplies, military supplies, that have come down the trails have been destroyed by the bombing; that there is

much less POL to support the trucks that bring men and arms into the South than there was before. We know that there are fewer trucks to bring men and arms down into South Viet-Nam. So the problem is not whether the bombing has stopped the infiltration, but what the infiltration might have been without it; and whether the bombing has made it more difficult and costly for the other side.

Q Mr. Secretary, do we draw any policy distinction between possible use of ground troops in the southern part of the demilitarized zone and moving troops over into North Viet-Nam?

A Well, I think that that is a matter that is for the future, and would turn on events. ^{is concerned}
As far as the immediate local, close-in situation, a commander will have to do those things that are necessary for the security and preservation of his own units, his own forces. But there need be no fighting whatever in the demilitarized zone, no bombing in the demilitarized zone, if North Viet-Nam would keep its troops out of there and not use that as a major infiltration route into South Viet-Nam; and we hope that they would realize that this would be an important thing to do in terms of

a further buildup of the violence. We would like to see this violence reduced just as quickly as possible.

Yes.

Q Sir, is your Government concerned about the possibility that in the Haiphong area a Soviet ship could be damaged by American attacks, and that would lead to a major world crisis?

A Well, if you ask about concern; yes. We are concerned about all sorts of things connected with Viet-Nam; but we haven't been concerned about a hypothetical situation. We did not hit Soviet ships in the Haiphong harbor. We hit the POL installations. So that I would think of that problem if we get around to it, as a matter of fact.

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Q Mr. Secretary, is there currently growing tension between the United States and the Soviet Union over this issue? The tickers from Moscow this morning report that the United States has refused to accept the Soviet protest note on grounds that it's inaccurate and abusive.

A Well, I think the principal word there is not the inaccuracy, because governments are quite familiar with the process of sending inaccurate messages to each other.

[Laughter]

But the abusiveness of the note is not in accord with diplomatic practice, and so we did not accept it on that basis.

Q Mr. Secretary, do you consider--

A Excuse me. Mr. Marder, I really didn't answer your main question, which was growing tension. I would have to say that the Soviet position, with respect to bilateral relations and the general situation, is a difficult one under the circumstances of the Viet-Nam situation. We regret that. We would like to find ways to improve our bilateral relations with the Soviet Union. But we cannot do so by giving away South Viet-Nam.

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What we would like to see is the use of the available machinery to bring peace to Southeast Asia. The Soviet Union, as a co-chairman, has not been willing to move with its British co-chairman to convene a conference or to take an active role in moving toward peace out there, not even with respect to Prince Sihanouk's request that the ICC step up its action to assist Cambodia.

So we have, we and other people have a problem here. There is a crisis in Southeast Asia which cannot help but affect bilateral relations. We would like to see that crisis moved to a peaceful settlement. We would like to see the appropriate machinery used to bring that matter to the conference table, or to any kind of political discussion or consultation that might open the way toward peace. But we can't do that without some help from others, primarily, in the first instance, Hanoi, but others who have an interest in this and are concerned about it.

Q Mr. Secretary, do you consider that there has been a continued escalation on the part of the North Vietnamese and possibly encouragement from Communist China to sending additional workers into North Viet-Nam to free their soldiers?

A Well, there has been a steady escalation of this problem by North Viet-Nam for the past five or even six years, despite the fact that for four or five years there was no bombing of North Viet-Nam, despite the major efforts made to find a political settlement in Southeast Asia, such an effort as the Laos Conference of 1962, hundreds of diplomatic contacts during the years '62, '63, '64, in trying to find the basis for a peaceful settlement in Southeast Asia. A full division of the North Vietnamese Regular Army moved into South Viet-Nam before there was U.S. bombing of North Viet-Nam, except for the strike in connection with the Gulf of Tonkin incident.

Now, the other side knows perfectly well that we are prepared to go into a conference on Southeast Asia or any part of it. We are prepared to have the two co-chairmen become active or the ICC to become active. We are prepared for direct bilateral discussions of some of these questions, perhaps preliminary to a conference. We are prepared for third parties to take a hand to see if they can work something out. We are prepared for other kinds of contacts that are private and discreet, to explore the situation. They know all that. They know all that, but they keep coming.

The demilitarized zone became an issue because a division of the North Vietnamese Regular Forces moved through the demilitarized zone into South Viet-Nam. Now, when you look at the chronology of escalation, it is based upon the fact that they keep coming. And this effort to seize South Viet-Nam by force is the thing which the United States and its allies cannot accept. If that ceases to be the problem, then peace can come very quickly.

Q Mr. Secretary, you spoke of willingness to try any kind of negotiations, including bilateral. In that connection, would you care to tell us what you think about Prince Sihanouk's proposal in an interview with the New York Times, that the United States try getting in touch with the Viet Cong and not looking to Hanoi and Peiping? It was answered in general terms here yesterday by your spokesman, but I wonder if you would address yourself more specifically to that idea.

A Oh, I think I had better stay to the general language, because there is no indication from those who have the real influence on the other side that they are prepared for serious talks. I have said to you many times that there has never been a problem here of lack of

contact with the other side. That is a pretty comprehensive statement. The National Liberation Front has an interest in peace. So the problem of contact is not the problem.

But we just don't know whether Prince Sihanouk's remark reflects any special information that he might have that we don't have, but I would just leave it in the more general terms for the present time.

Q Would Governor Harriman be investigating or looking into this during his visit there?

A Well, his visit will be largely on bilateral questions. We were pleased that he was invited to pay a visit to Cambodia. You see, we would like to have normal and good relations with Cambodia. We would like to see them stay out of this controversy and the violence in Southeast Asia.

Prince Sihanouk has done ^avery constructive and positive job in the development of his own country. He is in an area which is in flames at the present time. But I would hope that conversations between him and Governor Harriman could lead to some constructive results and the improvement of our relations on a bilateral basis. I would not suppose that he would get very much into these

other questions where other capitals are playing the dominant role.

Q Mr. Secretary, Nigeria is slated to get, along with a handful of other countries, the lion's share of the 1967 Development Loan in grant budget. Are you concerned about the situation there and could you elaborate on this situation?

A Yes. We are concerned about the difficulties which our friends in Nigeria have been having in this most recent period. These are matters which they must work out among themselves. But if I, without seeming to intervene in their affairs, could express a hope, it would be that the leaders of the different regions and tribes of Nigeria could talk these matters out among themselves, and find a solution which will maintain the integrity of this most populous of all African countries, and that Nigeria would be able to resume its important effort in economic and social development to which we are prepared to make a substantial contribution.

Q Mr. Secretary, may I ask another question about Haiphong?

A Yes.

Q One of the issues discussed before the bombing of the POL installations started was the question of foreign shipping in the harbor of Haiphong. Can you tell us what the volume of that shipping is in numbers of ships and what sort of U.S. policy applies to military flights over or combat operations over the harbor area?

A Well, we have not been hitting shipping in the Haiphong harbor. I don't have the exact figures on the shipping that might have been in the area at the time of our strikes, but that shipping was not in the area of the strikes and not in the target area and was not hit. There has been considerable reduction in the Free World shipping into Haiphong. I think last month there was only one ship, the month before there were only five ships.

But we have not undertaken a campaign against the shipping in Haiphong harbor and, on the basis of the most accurate information we have--and to me it is utterly convincing that we have not been striking such shipping.

Q Mr. Secretary, has the United States warned

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shipping of other countries in any formal way about the dangers in the area? Or do you just assume that they should realize that there is a certain amount of danger?

A We have not taken formal action in that regard. As you know, we have urged that Free World shipping stay out of there. And I think that perhaps the insurance companies have taken some of these things into account. But, in any event, there has been a sharp reduction in Free World shipping into Haiphong.

Q Mr. Secretary--

Q Mr. Secretary, the press seems to be calling more attention recently to the fact that three of the top positions in this Department are really up to be filled. Do you have any comment to make on the situation?

A Yes. We have one vacancy at the top of the Department, Mr. Mann's job, the number three job, if you wish, in the Department. The others are filled. And if they become vacant they will be filled. Of course, we are beginning to give thought to that, but those decisions are not made until they are announced. So I don't see much point in your trying to get too much ahead of us on that one.

Q Mr. Rusk, have there been any developments or any reason for a less pessimistic attitude as to the success or efforts to make some arrangement for our prisoners in North Viet-Nam?

A I think that it might be better not to get too much into a public discussion of that matter. We, as you know, are working very intensely on it. The President has indicated that we will be prepared to have a meeting or attend a conference on that subject. There has been no response on that from the other side. But we are working every day on the problem of prisoners. I think it would actually get in the way of the effort if I were to discuss that in any detail under these circumstances.

Q Mr. Secretary, despite various Administration ^{reports} statements on this subject, /or rumors or what have you that persist about the possible withdrawal of 75,000 American troops from Europe--I don't know whether everyone is as confused as I am on it--but could you state just what the situation is insofar as you can state publicly?

A Well, we do not anticipate any withdrawal

of our major combat units there at the present time. The action taken by France will cause some readjustment in our deployment, as far as certain forces in France are concerned.

You have heard in recent weeks the use of the phrase "double standard". This phrase suggests that what we are interested in is a common view in NATO about the nature of the threat and the efforts which all of us should take to meet whatever that threat appears to be to all of us, that this is a common alliance, that we should approach these matters with a single appreciation of what is required, and with a common effort to do what is required.

But we have not taken up the question of a reduction in our major combat forces there, and I have not had before me any of the figures that I have seen, on which I have seen some speculation.

Q Mr. Secretary, the President of Venezuela the other day spoke of a forthcoming summit conference of Latin American Heads or Hemisphere Heads. In view of the dismay and concern expressed over the actions of the Argentine regime, has that project been set back, and how forthcoming is it anyhow?

A No, I think that the discussions on that continue among Governments. It is still our hope that such a meeting will occur and that the Heads of State of the Inter-American system will have a chance to get together perhaps toward the end of the year. But there are problems of timing, agenda, and location that are under discussion. This question has not been dropped, but it's pursuing its normal course in consultation among Governments.

Q Mr. Secretary, --

Q Mr. Secretary, Indonesia has not only turned away from Communist China, but has been developing relations with Western and non-Communist countries. Can you assess for us what is the state of affairs between the relationship between your country and Indonesia now, in looking forward a little to future developments?

A Well, I think perhaps one should think of the developments in Indonesia as moving more clearly into the position of a nonaligned country with its own policy and its own interests to pursue and its own desire to establish good relations with its own neighbors.

We, ourselves, would like to have friendly and constructive relations with Indonesia. They face some important problems, particularly in the economic field. As you know, we have made certain emergency allocations of rice and of cotton to help them in their immediate situation. They have a substantial foreign debt problem which the creditor nations have been discussing to see if there are steps which could be taken to be of assistance.

Indonesia expects to return to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and I have no doubt those institutions will be very much interested in the economic plans of Indonesia for its own economic revival.

Here is a country which potentially is a very wealthy country, with enormous natural resources and highly intelligent people. So we would hope very much that a number of discussions now under way will result in constructive action which a number of Governments can take to help Indonesia get back on the path of constructive

development. We would hope that our relations with Indonesia would develop on a constructive and friendly basis, but we fully respect Indonesian desire to be non-aligned in this total world situation.

Q Mr. Secretary, about a month ago, the President expressed the hope that some compromise language could be worked out on a nonproliferation treaty. I wonder if you could fill us in on what possible progress might have been made?

A Well, we have been working at that in Geneva. Those discussions are continuing. I cannot report to you today that they have been successful, but I think there is a serious effort being made to find out whether the problem is with the different formulas that have been used or whether there are issues of substance which are so major as to postpone agreement for sometime. We continue to work at it. The E.N.D.C. in Geneva has been meeting regularly and the two co-chairmen have been discussing these problems. It is not true, as reported the other day, that somehow we have decided that we ought to postpone any further effort on these matters until sometime in the fall.

We are continuing on a day-by-day basis. I think not a day goes by that I do not address myself to

one or another point that comes up in the course of the discussions in Geneva. We think it's important to keep trying, and I think it's much too early to be pessimistic. I cannot report to you that I am optimistic about an early solution.

Q Mr. Secretary--

A Excuse me. There is a question back here.

Q Mr. Secretary, can you add anything to what Mr. Gordon said about his dismay, about the violence being used to take control of the universities and whether you think this will have any effect on U.S.-Argentine relations?

A I think I have nothing to add to what has been said on that subject. We were very much concerned about certain things that happened there. As you know, we had an American professor who was subjected to certain police action that we thought was not in keeping with what is required in these situations. I have seen this morning that the Argentine Government is planning to take some additional measures with respect to maintaining the position of the universities. And I think we better

let them work at that because I think they understand that universities are institutions which have to have certain special care if they are to maintain their great role as a university in the universal sense. But since this is before them and they are fully aware of the problems that have been created, I think we might let them work this out themselves for a bit.

Q Mr. Secretary, there has also been some speculation about the possibilities of a summit conference between the United States and France. Do you think this would serve any useful purpose and do you know of any reason to think that it's on the horizon?

A Well, I wouldn't want to speculate hypothetically on this. At the present time, there is no such meeting planned, and I think I had just better let that stand where it is.

Q Mr. Secretary, there is a continuing clamor in some Communist countries about the readiness to send volunteers to Viet-Nam if they are requested. How do you read now the prospects that such volunteers might be requested and that, indeed, they would go?

A Well, I can't be a prophet on that point. What we would prefer is that they send some negotiators to Geneva and I will be there. That is the way to avoid the necessity of sending volunteers or to let this matter become further inflamed. What we want are some people in striped pants, not people in uniform. And I will be there to talk about peace in Southeast Asia.

Q Mr. Secretary, in relation to --

A -- Perhaps not with striped pants.

[Laughter.]

Q In relation to what you said about Prince Sihanouk's proposal before, if the Viet Cong did show some indication that it was willing to sit down and talk with the United States, would the United States show a similar willingness?

A Well, you see, you're familiar with what President Johnson said about this in July of last year. Now, this is really not a question, and I don't mean to point my finger at you, Mr. Kurzman. This is not a question that can be discussed with those who can't stop the shooting, and I could sit here and negotiate that point with you, but I would much prefer to negotiate it

with somebody who can stop the shooting. The President said there would be no insuperable obstacle to obtaining the views of the National Liberation Front if this issue of aggression was brought under control. This is a problem. Let's talk about it. Let's talk about it in the forum and with the people where it would make a difference.

Q Mr. Secretary, have a nice vacation.

A Thank you very much.