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SECRETARY RUSK'S NEWS CONFERENCE OF NOVEMBER 18, 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: Well, I am glad to see some of the veterans of the Asian trip getting back home, things coming back to normal.

I called on the President this morning and was delighted to find him in fine fettle and filled with the usual, which means extraordinary, energy that characterizes him.

I went out to have a little round-up with him on things that have been happening in the last few days in the international field.

I would like to welcome a group of distinguished visitors here today, a group of European and Ecuadorean journalists who are with us on a visit to the United States, and a group of ten graduate fellows who are at the Washington Journalism Center. Glad to have you here to see the grilling of the Secretary of State.

Ready for your questions.

Q Mr. Secretary, how do you assess the prospects for a Christmas truce in Viet-Nam?

A Well, we, I think, ought to distinguish between what might happen at Christmas and the idea of a general pause of the sort that came during the Christmas and the New Year's season during January of this year.

We have not been able to get indications from the other side as to what would happen if the bombing were stopped. We have tried almost literally every week since last January to get an answer to that question. And so I would not want to hold out the expectation that a prolonged pause in the bombing might occur.

I think it would be for the South Vietnamese in the first instance, and to some extent depend on the Viet Cong, as to what might happen during such special days as Christmas and the TET period. But we will have to see what happens on that. I don't have any hard information on either one of those subjects at the present time.

Q Mr. Secretary, some people have the impression, as the American forces continue to build up over there, and the pressure continues, that the emphasis

of the United States and its allies, despite occasional concessions in the way of words of peace, is shifted more to military; that the affairs are in the hands of the military more than the diplomats and the ambassadors.

I am sure that you would probably not agree with this, but I wonder if you would assess the relative balance in the situation.

A Yes. If there is any weighting between those two, this is solely due to the fact that the other side has not been willing to undertake serious discussions or to come to a conference table, or to engage in a conference, or to start making peace here. This is not through lack of contact with the other side. And the men keep coming from the north.

Now, so long as these men keep coming from the north, and these North Vietnamese regiments in South Viet-Nam continue to operate, then there is a military problem, and that military problem has to be faced. It has to be faced at the level of the engagement of substantial units such as has been going on in this Attleboro Operation, and it has to be faced at the level

of pacification.

We would be glad to see this matter moved from the military to the diplomats at any moment, literally any moment. And we have tried to emphasize -- I think there can be no doubt at all about our view on this -- we have emphasized over and over again that we are prepared for a political process which will bring this situation to a close.

Indeed, I suspect that the efforts that have been made in that direction are literally without precedent in history -- where one side in a conflict of this sort has gone to such extraordinary efforts to probe the possibilities of a peaceful settlement, efforts which have been systematically and persistently rejected or refused by the other side.

So that if this appears to show more motion on the military side than on the diplomatic side at the moment, this is not because of inactivity on the diplomatic side, but because the other side refuses to move through diplomacy and its men keep coming from the north, and those men have to be met.

Q Well, sir, a related question. Are you aware of any specific plan whereby the authority of the United States Ambassador to Viet-Nam would be diminished, particularly in favor of the military?

A No. I saw a rumor on that today. There is nothing in it.

Q What about Ambassador Lodge coming home, sir?

A Well, I suspect he will take some leave at some point. But I have no indication he is coming home in any other sense. He is entitled to leave, and he is due for some leave. But there is nothing in the mill on the other side.

Q Mr. Secretary, there have been reports that the United States might be willing to consider in the United Nations a Canadian or an Italian proposal to have the Secretary General study the problem of admission of two Chinas to the United Nations. Could you tell us whether there has been any movement in the United States' position on this?

A Thus far there have been two resolutions tabled in the United Nations on the Chinese representation

question. The one, a resolution to declare that decisions on this matter are important questions which must be decided by a two-thirds vote. We think that resolution will pass by the necessary majority. The other, a resolution tabled by Cambodia, Albania, and certain others, that would expel the Republic of China and seat Peiping in its place. We think that resolution will be defeated.

There has been discussion among delegations as to possible additional resolutions, and I understand that the Italian Foreign Minister mentioned such^a resolution in his statement to the General Assembly today. I have not seen the exact text of such^a resolution. We know that there has been some interest in a study committee. We had a study committee in 1950 to look at this situation.

I would not wish to comment precisely on a resolution until I see the text. But I can confirm that that kind of discussion has been going on in the United Nations.

Q Mr. Secretary, there has been a disclosure by the President that you were going to the Far East on your way to the NATO meeting. There has been some

discussion or suggestion that President Eisenhower visit there next spring. There have also been some suggestions that Ambassador Arthur Goldberg would be going out there in December.

Can you say specifically, sir, the purpose of your visit, and perhaps the general nature of these other visits.

A Well, I can talk about mine a little bit. I would prefer not to talk about a visit which might be made by President Eisenhower. That would be up to him and the arrangements which might be worked out.

But I do plan to go to the NATO meeting by way of the Far East. In our Manila Conference it was quite clear that close consultation among governments involved in Viet-Nam was very much appreciated. It gives me a chance to stop in certain capitals -- I am not prepared to announce which capitals -- on the way to NATO in order to review the situation that exists at that time since the Manila meeting and to keep in close touch with the governments who have such an important stake in what happens out there.

There is nothing particularly dramatic about it, or unusual about it.

I expect among other places to visit Saigon on the way through, and that will give me a good chance to get a full briefing before I get to the NATO meeting, where I know our NATO allies will want to have the latest information about that situation.

Q Mr. Secretary, has a Christmas truce formally been proposed to the United States, and if so, by whom?

A No, not at this point.

Q Mr. Secretary, in the last month or so the atmosphere has seemed to have been improved between the United States and the Soviet Union especially in the Communist world. I wonder if you could assess this, and has this atmosphere been in your view worsened any by this recent case of this American, Kazan-Komarek, detained in Czechoslovakia.

A On the last point, the case of Mr. Kazan-Komarek, we are pressing very hard for immediate consular access to this gentleman, who is an American citizen. We

have been very much disturbed by the circumstances under which he was pulled off of an airplane that was making what was described as an emergency landing in Prague, and for reasons that were not disclosed to us, and without consular access.

He was a member of a travel bureau, accredited to Intourist. He had been invited to Moscow for a travel conference by the Soviet Union. He was returning on a Soviet plane that he had no reason to believe would be touching down in Prague. As a former Czech, obviously that is a matter in which he would have some interest.

We do not like the circumstances of this man's treatment. We are trying to get consular access. We would hope that it would be speedily resolved.

This is one of those things which can have an influence on bilateral relations between ourselves and Czechoslovakia, and we would prefer to see the matter settled expeditiously and in accord with general practice in matters of this sort.

As far as the general relationship is concerned we continue to get from Eastern Europe some severe criticisms and some very extreme

language about a number of problems, particularly the problem of South Viet-Nam. Nevertheless, it has been President Johnson's desire that we do our best to try to find points of agreement on one or another point as they arise in discussion.

As you know, we have recently signed the Civil Air Agreement with the Soviet Union.

President Johnson, last May, took an important initiative in proposing a treaty on outer space. That has been under consideration by the appropriate committee of the United Nations. We would hope that that could come to a conclusion very soon. That outer space treaty, somewhat on the analogy of the Antarctica Treaty, would be a step forward -- although it would not settle all of our problems here on earth.

We also hope that we can make some serious progress on the subject of non-proliferation. We have had discussions with the members of the Geneva Conference during the present discussions in New York, before the United Nations General Assembly. We have had discussions with the Soviet Union with us co-chairman

of that conference. We think that there has been some under-brush cleared away.

But I cannot tell you today that we see an agreement in sight.

In any event, if we see that there is a possibility that some real progress can be made, we will want to discuss this fully with our allies, particularly in NATO, and move on the basis of allied solidarity in concluding any such agreement.

We would like to see these developments. The President has put forward the East-West trade bill.

Now, there have been many reasons why people in this country can be annoyed with people in Eastern Europe. They have been saying some very harsh things about us. But we have not retaliated in kind on such exchanges. We would like to get on with the quiet business of trying to improve situations where they can be improved and where necessary to do our duty, as we try to do in Viet-Nam.

Q Mr. Secretary, do the circumstances of a plane being diverted to Prague have implications for a Civil Air Agreement for travel between Moscow and New York?

A Well, I don't believe that particular incident has an organic connection with the Civil Air Agreement, or we would not link the two. We are, of course, interested in the circumstances in which that plane stopped off in Prague and what the Soviet Union can do about one of its invited guests who was taken off the plane during its stop in Prague. And we are in touch with the Soviet Union on that subject.

Q Mr. Secretary, since your last press conference, Communist China has announced the testing of a nuclear missile. Can you give us your judgment, sir, as to what you regard as the strategic and political impacts of this?

A Well, I think that as soon as they exploded a nuclear device, it was clear that very shortly they would be able to produce a weapon which could be dropped from an airplane, for example, and that raised

the possibility that in a very short space of time they could have a weapon that would at least be capable of being dropped on one or another of their immediate neighbors.

We also have known that they have been engaged in missile experimentation and missile development, but it is not our impression that they have made important progress on that at the present time. I believe Chairman Seaborg commented on that just in the last day or so. I think there is some time before the Chinese are in the intercontinental system.

But I would myself suppose that, or hope that by that time that the Chinese will be sufficiently sophisticated about these matters to know that the use of these weapons under any circumstances anywhere on their own initiative would be a reckless act which could cause the greatest problems for them, even though they might just possibly cause some problems for others.

Q Mr. Secretary, the Washington Post reported the other day that the United States has refused to make public the files of Mr. Kiesinger which are contained

in the Allied Documentation Center in Berlin. If this is a fact, why was it so?

A Well, I'm not going to comment on questions which are very much involved in the internal political arrangements of our friends in Germany these days. The Allied files are not secret to the allies. All of the allies have access to those files.

Now, Mr. Kiesinger has made his statement in a letter to the Washington Post. I'm not going to get into that or get into the question of the Berlin Deputies voting because these are very much involved in the internal situation in Germany.

Q Mr. Secretary, the Italian UN proposal talks about existing realities in Asia and people have taken that to mean essentially the two-China idea. Could you help us understand what circumstances would have to be present for the United States to associate itself with this concept?

A Well, I prefer not to speculate about the future. Those circumstances don't exist today. So let's wait and see whether the circumstances change.

Q Mr. Secretary, on the East-West problem, the Secretary General of NATO, Brosio, in a speech here today made the point that progress towards detente should be accompanied by progress towards solution of the German problem. A number of people in Europe, and I believe Chancellor Erhardt himself, commented or indicated they felt that the President's speech in New York on this subject had put detente ahead of German reunification. Is there a priority there in American policy?

A No. As a matter of fact, as far as the President's speech in October is concerned, it reflected the views of President Johnson about bridge building and about trying to settle questions, large or small, wherever there is an opportunity and improve our relations with Eastern Europe.

In a broader sense, what that means is that we are trying to agree with our allies in Europe, including the Federal Republic, who have been increasing their trade relationships and taking other steps to improve their relations with the countries of Eastern Europe.

Now, there cannot be repose, serenity in Europe until the German question has been settled. And you will recall that in that October speech President Johnson mentioned the problem of reunification over and over again. Because so long as there is a German nation which is divided and German people who are not permitted to join each other and live together in a single country, then there is going to be restlessness and a lack of a genuine peace in Central Europe.

So, although we have been--we and all of our NATO allies have been taking certain steps to improve our relations with Eastern Europe, we look forward to the time when this German problem can be settled, and that would open up dramatic possibilities for a change in the world situation that could open the way for major steps in disarmament and other matters of the greatest importance to all the peoples of all the countries concerned.

Q Well, are you saying then that our policy remains what it has been since the end of the war, that reunification must come before a real detente?

A No, I didn't say that. President Johnson has put forward the space treaty. He has been making strenuous efforts on the nuclear proliferation matter. He has put to the Congress an East-West Trade Treaty. He decided that we should go ahead and sign the Civil Air Agreement. There has been some motion, some probing of the possibilities of improved relations. So that is not quite the same as saying that our policy is the same as it has been since the end of the war.

What I'm saying is it is hard to see how there can be a permanent solution in Europe that would bring the European scene to a condition of stability and contentment without a solution to the problem of reunification.

Now, it may be that improved relations with Eastern Europe on the part of all of us, including the NATO countries in Europe, including the Federal Republic, could open up some possibilities for movement on that question of reunification which have not been possible to find during the period of hostile confrontation and what might be called the worse period of the cold war.

We don't know. We don't know. But we are trying to find out.

Q Sir?

Q Mr. Secretary?

A Yes?

Q There has been a lot of discussion lately about the arms race in Latin America. First, do you feel that such a race is under way? And, secondly, do you consider that the purchases made so far are out of conscience with the Alliance concept?

A I think to a degree that arms race is more on paper than on the ground. The countries of Latin America spend on the whole less on defense in relation to their gross national product than most countries in most places. That is, in terms of the world situation, they are among the lowest in the world.

As far as American aid is concerned, I think only about 7 percent of our aid to Latin America has been on the military side compared to economic and social aid.

Now, we do not take part in, and we do not favor,

an arms race--as that word is generally interpreted. It is true that some of these countries are trying to modernize certain of their equipment. Some of it is World War II or previous, or prior to World War II in character. But the general trend has been not to build up large arms establishments there.

Now, we are not ourselves completely satisfied with the present situation. We have made that clear on more than one occasion. We would be glad to see some understanding among our friends in Latin America as to the level of arms and to the purpose to which those arms will be put. It may be that over time we could work toward better understandings in that field which would perhaps be related to closer coordination on a collective basis in case emergency military requirements arose. But these countries are not going pell mell into an arms race with each other. I think that issue has been considerably exaggerated.

Q Mr. Secretary, sir, India has made a request for more wheat. I believe it was in the month of July or August. I was wondering, sir, at what stage is the consideration of this request? And, secondly, whether it has raised any political or foreign policy issues?

A Well, we are giving very urgent consideration to India's food needs. I must say that we have been disappointed, as I know our friends in India have been, that the drought, which sorely beset them this past year, has been repeated in certain sections of India, with the prospect that this next year there will be a food problem. During October, the extent of this became evident, and I think that we and other governments, as well as the Indian Government, must now give urgent attention to what steps are necessary to help meet this very tragic problem.

But I cannot give you a date on when particular decisions will be made. We have representatives in India looking at this matter most urgently, and I would hope that we could bring this to a conclusion before too long.

Q Mr. Secretary--

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A On your particular question, as to whether political questions are involved; no, they are not. We all have problems in mobilizing our resources to meet emergency needs, and where the needs are on such a scale the problems are on an equal scale.

Q Mr. Secretary, given the results of the elections last week, I was wondering if you could give us your estimate of how Hanoi may read that as an indication of resolve?

A In general, I think the Communist World has read those elections as not affecting the situation in Viet-Nam significantly, and I think that's all to the good.

I can't suggest to you that Hanoi liked the elections. They wouldn't like them whatever the effect of the elections would have been.

But I think there is a reasonable chance that the Communist World has not made the kind of miscalculation about these elections that might have occurred.

There was a question back here. [Indicating] Yes.

Q Sir, Senator John Tower of Texas said, at

a press conference yesterday, that there is absolutely no guarantee by this country that the goods and services, wheat, for example, that we let the Soviet Union, and the satellites have, will not go into war munitions for North Viet-Nam. He said that wheat could be converted to industrial alcohol, and that could certainly give a diminution of war. What does the State Department think about that?

A I would like to see his statement. I haven't had a chance to see it. Of course, that could be said of almost any kind of peaceful trade.

We would like to see this Viet-Nam matter ended quickly, because there will be those who will find that it is an obstacle to improved relations with Eastern Europe on other questions. But I think the broader view is that we ought to keep trying, probing--and this is the President's view--probing for points of possible agreement, even though there are major issues in dispute; dangerous issues in dispute, such as Viet-Nam. Because, particularly with the Soviet Union and the United States, where so much sheer physical power is concentrated, it is very important that we try to remove unnecessary misunderstandings, that we

try to insulate, if we can, those differences which cannot be resolved, and try to find a way to live together a little better on this planet.

Q Mr. Secretary, NATO Secretary General Manlio Brosio today also warned against overoptimism on the question of detente, and against a troop reduction in Europe, as he has been here to prepare the NATO Conference. Would you please comment on this?

A Well, I think his statement today was a very frank exposition of some very important views on NATO.

On the matter of troops, let me repeat what I have said several times before the Stennis Subcommittee, and, that is, that we feel that NATO itself, as a whole, should have a common view on the nature of the threat which might exist against the NATO countries; that they should have a common view as to what ought to be done, in prudence, to prepare themselves against that threat on the defense side, and that we should also have common views as to how those burdens are shared within the Alliance.

Now, we ourselves would very much regret unilateral action taken by individual countries, except in

the framework of a total NATO position--which puts, as a number one item in its concern, the safety of the NATO area, because that is what NATO is all about. Undoubtedly, we shall be discussing these matters in the mid December Meeting of NATO, as well as East-West relations, and some other things. But I think the Secretary General properly posed these problems in his speech today at the National Press Club.

Q Mr. Secretary, you said the United States Government is talking with the Soviet Government at the present time about the Prague plane incident. Could you tell us what questions are of primary concern? For example, are you raising the question whether or not Soviet airliners, which might operate to the United States under the new agreement, would stick to the routes to which they are committed?

A No, Mr. Hightower, we would have no problem about that, because the agreement itself makes that clear. And, if there were problems on that side, then, suitable action could be taken very promptly.

What we are concerned about is an American citizen was invited to Moscow, by Intourist, for a

conference, and he boarded a Soviet plane without any way of knowing that it would touch down in his country of origin, his country of birth. And, that while that plane was in Prague, for an emergency reason, he was taken off that plane by Czech authorities. And, therefore, we feel that the consideration that was due him was not given him; that we are entitled to consular access, and that we feel that the Soviet Union, as well as the Czech Government, should take a real interest in this problem, and help us to resolve it as quickly as possible.

Q Mr. Secretary, with regard to troops in Asia, and the withdrawal of troops in Asia, is the United States Government concerned over the reduction, the level of and planned further reduction, of/British forces in the areas of Singapore and Malaysia, and that area?

A Well, we do not have from the British specific plans in that regard. We have had some indication that they would like to reduce their forces somewhat, following the end of confrontation between Malaysia and Indonesia. We would hope very much that Great Britain would retain its commitments in that part of the world,

and would retain forces in the area that would make it possible for them to meet those commitments. But, on details, I am not in a position to comment, because we don't have the details in front of us.

Q Mr. Secretary, at the outset, sir, you referred to the continuing problem of infiltration of North Vietnamese troops into the South. There have been recurring reports, Mr. Secretary, about a considerable increase in the level of Chinese labor and other forces in North Viet-Nam. Can you provide any information on this point, sir?

A Nothing, except that I have not seen evidence that there has been any significant recent increase. I have seen different figures, and I would prefer myself not to get into the numbers game.

I am reasonably confident that some of the figures that have been used are considerably exaggerated. But I have not seen indications that there has been any major change in that situation in the recent two or three months, for example.

Q Thank you, sir.

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