

# Rusk Denies Johnson Intended to Deceive

Former Secretary of State Dean Rusk said yesterday that, despite the tenor of the Pentagon papers, during President Johnson's 1964 re-election campaign there was no "deliberate attempt to deceive anybody."

Rusk said the Johnson administration underestimated North Vietnamese resistance to the intensification of the Indochina war. But he declared in a taped television interview:

"During the campaign in 1964, I think of anyone looks at the full record of what President Johnson said, he'd get a balanced impression."

## Air Attacks

The Pentagon papers as reported in the New York Times June 14 said the Johnson administration had reached a "general consensus" at a White House strategy meeting Sept. 7, 1964, that air attacks against North Vietnam would have to be launched probably "early in the new year."

After the election, Rusk continued, North Vietnam sent units of its regular army into South Vietnam.

"That presented President Johnson with a new situation, Rusk declared. "I don't believe there was any deliberate attempt to deceive anybody during that period."

Earlier, during an interview with the Athens, Ga., Daily News, Rusk said of Mr. Johnson in 1964:

"He had no plans to bomb North Vietnam during the campaign, although there were people on the staff who were working out all sorts of contingencies, but these were not President Johnson's plans."

## Law Professor

Rusk served eight years as secretary of state under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. He now is professor of international law at the University of Georgia.



AP Wirephoto

RUSK BEING INTERVIEWED  
No 'deliberate attempt'

The television interview was taped by NBC-TV in the Atlanta studios of WSB-TV for network showing last night. Rusk was questioned by Edwin Newman and Barbara Walters of NBC.

At one point, Rusk said of the stepping up of the war in Vietnam:

"I personally think we underestimated the resistance and the determination of the North Vietnamese . . . I thought when we had established a position in Vietnam which it would be clearly impossible to overrun, then they would pull back or negotiate."

At another point, Rusk said of Vietnam:

"I think in retrospect that we made a mistake in not pressing much harder to insist that the United Nations take up this situation and make it their business."

### One Copy

Rusk said he talked with Mr. Johnson after the first installment of a series on the Pentagon report appeared in the New York Times June 13. The former cabinet member added: "He told me there had been delivered to the LBJ Library one copy of the report. Whether he's read it, I don't know."

In another interview, with Clair Benson of WGAU Radio in Athens,

Rusk was asked if he had sent a cable to President Kennedy in 1961 advising against General Maxwell Taylor's proposal to send 8000 troops to Vietnam.

"I might have," Rusk replied. "I don't remember actually, because I don't have any papers or records in my files."

When the Tonkin Gulf incident occurred, Rusk said, President Johnson was mindful that former President Truman had gone to the United Nations, and not to Congress in launching the Korean war, and had been criticized for this.

### Encouragement

So, Rusk said, after American destroyers reportedly were attacked in the Tonkin Gulf on two occasions by North Vietnamese, Mr. Johnson called in congressional leaders and "they encouraged him to come in with the resolution and assured him it would be passed immediately."

The Pentagon papers left a suggestion that Rusk had advocated the use of nuclear weapons in Vietnam if necessary.

"Under no circumstances at any time did I ever recommend the use of nuclear weapons," he declared.

Asked about charges that American escalation of Vietnam was a "colossal miscalculation," Rusk replied:

"How much is it worth to prevent World War III? How much is it worth to protect the reputation of the United States for fidelity to our commitments? How much is it worth to prevent a basic miscalculation in Moscow and Peking? . . .

"The overriding moral issue is how do you avoid World War III . . . I feel it is important to world peace that it be understood that those who set out to conquer their neighbors are not going to get away with it."

*Associated Press*