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GREAT DECISIONS '75

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEWS WITH THE HONORABLE HENRY A. KISSINGER, SECRETARY OF STATE; DEAN RUSK, FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE; AND JAMES RESTON, NEW YORK TIMES. HOST: REG MURPHY, EDITOR, THE ATLANTA CONSTITUTION

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The Soviet Union Today

MR. RESTON: Obviously, the United States does business with all kinds of different nations and different systems, with monarchies, with dictatorships of the right, dictatorships of the left. You have to deal, after all, with the world as it is. You can't sit around waiting for the world to be the way you like it.

MR. MURPHY: Detente is a French word which originally meant to release the cocked hammer of a rifle. It has come to mean the relaxation of tensions between nations. The goal of American foreign policy in recent years has been to relax our relationships with the Soviet Union, to ease the cocked hammer back into the safety position, if you will. I'm Reg Murphy, your host on Great Decisions. We have come to the State Department to examine the status of detente. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger is the principal shaper of detente from the American side. He has been involved in the technological and trade negotiations as well as arms limitations. And though the events unfolding daily have been confusing, there still is faith in the procedures here at the State Department.

Mr. Secretary, what's the rationale for detente?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: There are two aspects, one negative and one positive. On what I might call the negative side is the problem that in the nuclear age a war would have totally different implications than ever before in history. None of the super-powers can afford or has the moral right to base its policy on the threat of war against each other, because when there are tens of millions of casualties involved on both sides, the leaders would assume a responsibility not only towards their own people but towards all of humanity. So whoever is in office in Washington, and I suspect whoever is in office in Moscow, will be driven sooner or later to the realization that the threat of nuclear war must be first reduced and then eliminated. Every President in the post-war period has come to this conclusion. And, therefore, from that point of view detente is not a partisan matter but is the national policy of the United States. On the positive side, when two nations have this tremendous power and, moreover, control so much of the world's resources, they have an obligation to contribute or constructing an international system that is less

unstable than those that historically have produced conflict. And for these reasons we have strongly emphasized detente in our foreign policy, and we would like to base it in such a way that it becomes irreversible on both sides.

MR. MURPHY: Does the United States benefit primarily from a military aspect from detente?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Well, I think all of humanity benefits from the reduction of the danger of war. We have made good progress in reducing some of the military aspects. We have one SALT agreement concluded, a limitation of strategic arms, and we are in the process of negotiating another one. If that succeeds, as I think it will, there will be a ceiling put on nuclear weapons, strategic nuclear weapons, for the first time in the nuclear age. But, in addition, we hope that over time a relationship develops so that crises can be contained, before they get out of hand, through political cooperation. And, of course, while we've had a setback in the economic field and the Soviet Union found itself unable to accept the Trade Bill under the terms in which it was offered, we consider this a temporary interruption.

MR. MURPHY: You said the other day that Congress would begin to consider some other kind of bill. Has that bill been formulated? And what does it attempt to do?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Well, we have not put a bill before Congress. I would like to consult with the Congressional leaders before we go back to Congress to see whether when we go back we could ask something that has a chance of being accepted without the controversy that marked the two years of the previous debate. We are not going to do this in any spirit of recrimination -- because as I've repeatedly said we are serious people with serious objectives -- but rather to see how we can solve the common problem.

MR. MURPHY: Is it fair to say that you feel optimistic about the future of detente, and that you believe that it will be worked out over a period of time with the full agreement of Congress?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I believe first that any foreign policy today must have the full agreement of Congress and secondly that I'm optimistic about the long range prospects of detente and that we'll work it out with the Congress.

MR. MURPHY: According to historian Theodore Draper the United States and the Soviet Union have a limited adversary relationship rather than a true detente. What we used to call the Cold War, we now call detente. It is, says Draper, in the mutual interest of the United States and the Soviet Union to avoid war and progress toward this goal may not in itself constitute genuine detente. Again, James Reston:

MR. RESTON: Well, obviously, it's in the interest of the United States and the Soviet Union to avoid a nuclear war. That's on the face of it, you're talking about -- you're really asking whether it's in the interest of the two countries to live or die. So, that is obvious. But it's also obvious, I think, that this is not detente in the normal sense. What we mean by detente is a study of limitation of tension. It's not only the options of war, but it is the creation by the two great nuclear

powers of an atmosphere in the world which enables the normal processes of life to go on.

MR. MURPHY: If in fact what we're calling detente is, as Mr. Reston says, not detente in the normal sense, what is?

MR. RESTON: We have, for example, in our relations with our two great neighbors in Mexico and in Canada a perfect illustration of what is meant by detente. Here in the north we have a boundary of over 3000 miles and in the south a boundary with Mexico of roughly 2000 miles. There is a condition of mutual trust there on the part of all three countries. These boundaries are totally undefended. And in that sense you have a perfect illustration of what detente ought to be.

MR. MURPHY: In September of last year the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held hearings on United States-Soviet relations. Testifying before that committee former Secretary of State Dean Rusk said, "I have just about reached the conclusion that if real progress is to be made, the approach must be wholesale rather than retail and must involve dramatic simplicity." Mr. Rusk, what did you mean by that statement?

MR. RUSK: Well, I've invested a lot of study in various efforts at disarmament since World War I, and I think that one can see that where the negotiations get involved in great detail -- how you equate a six-inch gun against an eight-inch gun, how you compare one fighter plane with another, or one missile with another -- that such efforts usually fail. My mind goes back to the Naval Conference of 1922 when Secretary Charles Evans Hughes cut through a lot of that detail and said, "Three, three, two: three for Britain, three for the United States, two for Japan." Now, I think that in the field of strategic missiles, we ought to try to do it very simply. I would prefer not a 2400 aggregate on both sides as agreed at Vladivostok, but 1800, 1200 -- get it down. I gather we tried to get a lower figure, but the Soviets would not agree. But we ought to get something that is so simple that everyone can understand it, that can be reasonably verified, and will not be paralyzed by the infinite discussion of detail in a fruitless manner, month without end.

MR. MURPHY: And I take it that you mean, when you say "wholesale and not retail," that you have in mind breaking apart one part of the negotiations from another. That is to say, not tying trade to military and all the linkages that are involved.

MR. RUSK: That's right. The more subjects you link together in a given negotiation, the more difficult an agreement becomes. For example, in the Law of the Sea Conference at the present time we have eight or ten major subjects that are all linked together, and the prospects for agreement there are rather negative. Usually, you can get agreement a step at a time on one issue at a time: Antarctica, or the Test Ban Treaty, or a Civil Air Agreement between Moscow and Washington. Let's take these things a bit a time, because we might be able to make some headway there; but if we put them all together in the same basket, sheer complexity will make agreement extraordinarily difficult.

MR. MURPHY: Is it possible to say how the Soviets react? Had they rather react to one area at a time and not make it more complex, or do they prefer to get all of the arguments going at the same time?

MR. RUSK: Well, I think we've found during the Sixties that they are willing to take up one subject at a time. Despite the terrible Berlin crisis of 1961-1962 and the Cuban missile crisis, nevertheless, we got the Test Ban Treaty, the Civil Air Agreement, the Non-proliferation Treaty, two space Treaties, and the Consular Agreement between us and the Soviet Union; so, I think, we have to understand that both sides understand that we have an extraordinarily important common interest, and that is to avoid nuclear war, because that's mutually suicidal.

MR. MURPHY: And any one step toward the negotiation is better than no step at all, in the sense that if we're taking a step in any one of these areas, we're not likely to go to nuclear war.

MR. RUSK: Right. And we shouldn't overlook the importance of a series of small steps. Now, it wasn't a big deal when the United States agreed with the Soviets that Pan America would fly into Moscow and Aéroflot would fly into New York, but every little bit helps. And you might then begin to broaden the base of common interest and narrow the range of those issues upon which violence can occur.

MR. MURPHY: So detente actually has to do with the one process of doing one simple thing at a time?

MR. RUSK: Yes. And despite major disagreements on other issues. Remember the Berlin crisis of the early Sixties and the Cuban missile crisis. We felt that we had to begin the process of probing for agreements, not despite those disagreements, but because of them. It was urgent for the two nuclear powers to try to find a way to get a meeting of the minds on something, and so we were prepared to go after little things as well as large things.

MR. MURPHY: Are we then making progress in our relations with the Soviet Union? In recent weeks we have seen the rejection of the Trade Bill, Soviet emigration has been restricted even more, and tensions continue to build in the Middle East. Where are we now?

MR. RESTON: Well, we're in a bit of a bind right now on the question of trade with the Soviet Union. As you know, primarily through the activity of Senator Jackson of Washington we have made an arrangement to grant to the Soviet Union equality of treatment or the so-called "most favored nation" agreement with the Soviet Union. But a condition was put in there insisting that the Soviet Union agree to a certain total of emigration of its minority people, particularly Jews to Israel. Now the Soviet Union has come along and rejected the Trade Agreement on the ground that the condition of emigration was an interference by the United States with the Soviet Union's internal policy, so that you cannot say that for the time being that detente is making progress under the Ford Administration. But on the other hand some advantage has been gained, I suppose, by the Vladivostok Arms Agreement between the two countries. They have managed, at least, to negotiate an agreement whereby both sides limit the number of offensive nuclear weapons. This is the first time that has ever happened in the relations between the two countries, and in that sense it's a good thing.

MR. MURPHY: Mr. Rusk, the Soviet rejection of the Trade Bill seems to be a setback for detente. Where do you see us going from here?

MR. RUSK: Well, detente is not a condition in which all problems are solved. It's a process of trying to find agreement despite differences of view. It's my impression that the Soviets were irritated because of the rather severe limitation on the lending power of the Export-Import Bank. I think they were hoping for and expecting very substantial long term loans at relatively low interest rates to help them buy high technology in this country. Now when there was so much public attention to the emigration issue, I think also they found it embarrassing to acknowledge that there was any kind of understanding of any sort on that matter, because from their point of view this was an intrusion into their internal affairs. So my guess is that on trade we will go back to square root one and start over again.

MR. MURPHY: Can we go back to where we were in 1972 and begin the negotiation all over again in the same kind of good faith that seemed to be available in the 1972 era?

MR. RUSK: Well, in trade matters I think the problem is the one of the old Yankee trader: whether there is a mutual advantage in trade. I, myself, would hope that we would not subsidize the Soviet economy with large long-term loans but would try to work out trade arrangements that would provide goods and services coming back to us in exchange for what we send to them. For example, I'd like to see us getting more minerals, perhaps energy supplies, perhaps the products of their forests; things that we need and could use, so that our economy benefits from the materials which they can send us. But trade is a rather special kind of negotiation because it can be practical; it can be down to earth; it can be very pragmatic: we'll send you this if you'll send us that. But in the case of the Soviet Union, they can't send us very much over the barriers of the old Smoot-Harley Tariff of the 1930s unless they can get "most favored nation" treatment, that is treatment like almost all of our other trading partners get. Our tariff walls are so high that they can't generate the foreign exchange in the American market to be used by them to buy things from us. So, I doubt that there will be much expansion of trade until "most favored nations" treatment can be accorded to them.

MR. MURPHY: They said at the time that they broke off the 1972 agreement that we had tried to interfere in the domestic affairs of the Soviet Union by talking about and imposing restrictions on the emigration policies that they had set for Jews who wanted to emigrate out of the Soviet Union. Were we, in fact, intruding on Soviet domestic policy?

MR. RUSK: I suppose in a sense we were, just as they're intruding on our domestic policy when they ask for long-term loans from the Export-Import Bank, because we've got to generate that money somehow. But we have to be a little careful on this. If you look at all of the nations with whom we have relations, only about thirty of them have domestic political and constitutional systems that we would find congenial. The rest of them are various forms of authoritarian regimes or dictatorships. I don't believe that we would let the Soviet Union condition trade on certain changes in our system; for example, that we must have eight blacks in the Senate or twelve women in the Senate. There'd be no trade. So, as I indicated to a Senate committee not too long ago, I feel that such conditions ought not

to be imposed by legislation. They should be handled by quiet conversations under the rug, trying to modify other people's policy, but not make them an unacceptable condition, because then you have an impasse which is very hard to break through.

MR. MURPHY: The man who most generally was recognized as the generator of all that discussion about what the Soviets should do about Jews was Senator Henry Jackson from Washington. It was said that he was intervening in all that because of domestic political reasons and his own aspirations to the Presidency. Is that true and is there a system by which we can keep aspirants to the Presidency out of those negotiations?

MR. RUSK: Well, I have known and liked Senator Jackson, but I'm not close enough to him to be able to assess his motivations. I do hope that these foreign policy matters would not be dealt with in terms of electoral politics, because we've had a strong tradition since World War II of handling national defense matters on a non-partisan basis. There is no substantial difference between the Republican and Democratic Parties on such issues, and I would hope that the leadership of the heavily Democratic Congress would do all that they can on their side to put their heads together with the President and the Secretary of State to try to find a national policy on these matters, not influenced by party politics and certainly not influenced by 1976 politics.

MR. MURPHY: It seems that Secretary Kissinger has begun now to brief Congressmen individually and in small groups at the State Department, trying his best to convince them that there is a possibility of staying away from these kinds of issues in the political races that are going to be run. First of all, does that have a chance of being successful?

MR. RUSK: I think so. You know, we have the most complicated political system in the world. Those who are in it have to spend an enormous amount of time just to make it work, to keep it from freezing up like an engine without oil. A Secretary of State will spend more than half of his time on the domestic arrangements that are required to have policy before he talks to the foreign at all. And so I think, now that Mr. Kissinger as Secretary of State, rather than the White House, he will find that he will be spending a great deal of time with committees and subcommittees and informal groups and individuals both in the Senate and the House of Representatives.

MR. MURPHY: As a matter of procedures and the way we're going to set priorities, is it more important that we begin to negotiate in the arms area, in the SALT area, in the trade area, in the emigration area? Where does detente have the best chance of success at this point?

MR. RUSK: I would think there are three examples at the moment. If I were a member of Congress and the Vladivostok Agreement came to Congress, I think that I would vote for it. But I would want to press very hard for negotiations as soon as possible to try to get that aggregate number of 2400 launching vehicles down to 1800 -- 1000. I would like to see zero ABMs, because if you have a hundred ABMs in one of these sites that we've now agreed on, if each one of them successfully destroys an incoming missile, that still leaves 2300 launching vehicles on each side and a fraction of that will do the job. So, I'd like to see us get at that for fresh talks continuously and not put it off until the 1980s along the lines of the Vladivostok Agreement. I think, also, that we ought to keep

in close touch with the Soviet Union about the Middle East. I believe, myself, that both Washington and Moscow have a common interest in an agreed peace in the Middle East, but I'm not sure that they perceive that. It may be that they feel an inclination to compete for influence by riding the Arab wave of hostility toward Israel and somehow driving Western interests and Western relationships out of the Middle Eastern area. So, it's a delicate and dangerous business, but I would hope that we would keep in touch with them to try to probe for possible common approaches to this very stubborn and intractable problem that exists in the Middle East. Finally, I think, there are some general international questions on which we can work together. I'm very glad, for example, that on most of the major items involved in the Law of the Sea negotiations, we and the Soviet Union are very close together. And so, in the broader forums I think we and they on occasion can work together.

MR. MURPHY: To talk about the Middle East for a minute, everybody has been concerned about whether that has the potential for an arms race of its own and that it may develop that the Russians, though they were kicked out of Egypt at one point, might go back in with heavier commitments of arms again. Do you foresee that as a possibility?

MR. RUSK: I think that's a real possibility. I have, myself, hoped that the outside arms suppliers could somehow put their heads together and agree upon a general level of arms in the Middle East.

MR. MURPHY: A SALT for the Middle East?

MR. RUSK: Yes. That kind of thing, so that we would not be in a position of competitive suppliers of arms in an unlimited arms race out there. Now we tried that during my period in the State Department, but the Soviet Union was not interested, and I had the impression that President de Gaulle wasn't very interested. But it's too dangerous a situation to allow an unlimited arms race to build up on the basis of an outside pply of weapons. I think this is a point on which interest in peace and good faith could be tested very directly and specifically.

MR. MURPHY: Do you feel that the Soviet leadership at the moment is interested more in peace in the Middle East than they were in the period when you were in the State Department, back in those days of the Sixties?

MR. RUSK: I hope I'm wrong, but I think that they are interested in a high degree of tension between Israel and its Arab neighbors, because they see in that an opportunity to undermine the presence and influence of the United States, of American interests, in the Arab world. Now there are times when they have been, I think, alarmed by the possibility of outbreak of war. I think at one point, just before the outbreak of the June of '67 war, they were trying to counsel modernation in the area. But just shortly before that, they had been stimulating the wildest rumors in the Arab world. So, I'm not sure that I have a very good feel for the basic long-term major premises of the Soviet Union in the Middle East.

MR. MURPHY: And the leadership structure seems to be slightly not clear at the moment; we're not quite clear about it.

MR. RUSK: Well, they have a sort of committee system, and there's a kind of inertia about committees that we all are familiar with, and so I think we cannot expect the dramatic moves for good or for bad that Mr. Khrushchev was capable of and there will be a kind of glacial aspect to their policy that we need to understand better than many of us do now.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I am certain that detente will have its ups and downs. I am certain that in each country there will be domestic opposition to it, and it will always be possible at any one moment of time to debate who gets the greater benefit. But if you look at the long term, there is no question in my mind that we will be driven to -- both sides will be driven to continue detente. And, therefore, in the long term of history I consider it to be a permanent feature. Indeed, if it isn't, there will be an intolerable risk of war.

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