

Notes 60N, Copy 2

Gerhard Gesell

Dean Acheson

Metropolitan Club

January 10, 1964

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Interview with Gerhard Gesell and Dean Acheson at lunch at the Metropolitan Club, Jan 10, 1964, by F C Pogue.

Gesell was assistant to William Mitchell in the early days of the Pearl Harbor Inquiry. They ultimately quit because of interference from Committee.

Gesell says that I should talk with Bennett Buskey and Roger Nelson of Washington who had been clerks to Justice Stone; were detailed by Army to work up Marshall's case. Prepared his testimony. Went through engagement books of Marshall and at White House, talked to orderlies, chauffeurs, etc., to find where Marshall was. Even got films being showed at that period (Westerns, etc.) and showed them to Marshall to see if he remembered seeing them. We concluded that he had spent the evening at home. Marshall said that's what happened, but said he wouldn't testify to something he was not certain about. We said you will take a pounding. Gesell personally went through White House papers to see if there was anything to indicate Marshall was there.

Recalls talking to Marshall with Mitchell. Assumed Marshall would be surrounded by aides. Was by himself. Mitchell during preliminaries; said putting FDR, Churchill and yourself aside who did most for the war? Marshall said I don't count, but the man was Hopkins. Hopkins insisted on decisions. Roosevelt administration was confused; Hopkins got decisions. Mitchell said what about Ike? Marshall said-"Ike"? "I always used Eisenhower when I wanted a compromise."

Marshall told them how hard it was to get information from White House on what Fdr had discussed with British. Dill would come by every morning and show Marshall British messages.

Mr. Acheson recalled that he was sent for by Hopkins once. Went to Lincoln bedroom. I sat on Hopkins bed. Told me to get his coat. Took envelope from coat--had scribbled handwriting. FDR had a habit of trying to keep up with Churchill. Made a mistake of trying to drink with him. Once after several drinks, Churchill said "Now we have agreed on these points" and wrote it down; suggested Roosevelt sign it. Hopkins had come in and saw what was happening. Said let me have this. Discuss these matters at the office. This was scribbled note.

Acheson recalled story of Truman and Marshall. TIME had published a pocket size edition of the paper and mailed it to troops overseas. First edition attacked President. Truman told Marshall to stop circulation. Marshall said put it in writing and send it to me as Commander in Chief and it will be obeyed. You will get my resignation at the same time.

Gesell--Tells of Cong. Keefe's ugly attitude with Marshall. Played around with Marshall over Stimson message. Wondered why Marshall went to maneuvers. Said Marshall ended up by saying he discovered Patton on this/I don't find this in records and think he is confused./.

Gesell--Board of Inquiry brought up fact that no decoration had been given to the man who broke the code. Wanted him as a witness. Wanted the whole testimony about code. We said that there were important secrets that should be kept. We had a rule that we would proceed on matters only if there was unanimity. Marshall came in with letter from Truman said not to give

the information. Would have disastrous effect on intelligence service. Ferguson stood up and said he would not sit in same room with this traitor. Stalked out. Lucas followed him. Marshall never said a word. Barkely decided would have to put the whole message in. I understand all codes changed by Japanese in 24 hours. Factor in resignation of Mitchell and myself./This does not conform to story in published report. Ferguson said absolutely he had respect for Marshall.

Record shows the question was over letter to Dewey. Gesell was confused about story having gone out that code broken as result of getting information from office of Japanese representative in Portugal. Marshall shows in testimony that Donovan's people action in going into Portuguese office led attaches of Japan to change codes./

Acheson in chatting about Barkley said Barkley never very effective. Never bright.

Gesell--After we left, Richardson took over. Old friend of Kimmel. Kimmel spent some nights in Richardson home.

Surprised he took over. Thinks he was very tender with Kimmel and Short. Didn't push them.

Gesell--Recalls how all the people who got/warning went on the alert, except the people in Hawaii.

Acheson--said Senator Millikin took me aside one night at dinner and said tell Gen Marshall not to worry where he was. We will stand by him. We know where he was/he was intimating that Marshall was out with a woman/. I said you give him the message if you want.

Gesell--Army had archaic system. You sent out an order and expected it to be carried out. No follow up. Short was limited in ability. Kimmel was able. Big man; handled self well.

Gesell--Doesn't understand all this attack on Marshall and none on Stark.

Acheson--Repeats story of Marshall talking to MacArthur, MacArthur said "my staff tells me." Marshall replied: "You don't have a staff but a court."

Acheson--Told of how McCarthyism developed early in war.

Gesell--Wanted to call leaders last and get the main story from those at lower levels. Instead top men called first. /Due in part to fact Marshall had to leave/.