

EISENHOWER, DWIGHT D.: POST-PRESIDENTIAL PAPERS, 1961-69

1961 PRINCIPAL FILE

Series Description

Dwight D. Eisenhower's Post-Presidential Papers reveal the wide range of contacts and the busy schedule which he maintained during the 1960s. A large volume of mail kept his small secretarial staff busy, and he was in great demand as a public speaker.

Correspondence in the Post-Presidential Papers offers some interesting insights into Eisenhower's thinking on numerous issues. No longer burdened by the responsibilities of public office, he felt freer, perhaps, to express himself on various topics.

Among the issues discussed in documents found within the 1961 Principal File are the space program, the Berlin situation, Republican party politics, the U.S. economy and monetary policy, and the 1960 elections. Additional topics discussed include Cuba and the Bay of Pigs disaster, foreign aid, taxes, the alleged missile gap, the 1952 campaign, the U.S.I.A.'s mission, the Electoral College, Laos, Latin America, and public housing.

Eisenhower's correspondence in the 1961 Principal File reflects a virtual Who's Who of both foreign leaders and prominent Americans. Konrad Adenauer of Germany, John Diefenbaker of Canada, Anthony Eden, Harold Macmillan, and Queen Elizabeth of Great Britain, Prime Minister Menzies of Australia, President Mateos of Mexico, and King Saud of Saudi Arabia are among the foreign leaders who stayed in touch with the ex-president.

Many prominent Americans maintained contact with the former president as well. He corresponded with numerous former members of his administration, including Dillon Anderson, Ezra Taft Benson, Arthur F. Burns, Andrew Goodpaster, James Hagerty, Bryce Harlow, Gabriel Hauge, C.D. Jackson, James Killian, Gerald Morgan, Clarence Randall, William P. Rogers, Fred Seaton, and Maurice Stans. Eisenhower's files also document contacts with members of the Kennedy administration and such other national figures as Gary Cooper, Billy Graham, Herbert Hoover, Helen Keller, Edward R. Murrow, Henry R. Luce, Joyce Hall, William Pawley, and Leonard Hall. In a letter to Dean Rusk, Kennedy's secretary of state, Eisenhower defended his military decisions in World War II and refuted a Department of State booklet which seemed to blame him for some of the current difficulties in Europe.

The 1961 Principal File contains an extensive trip file on Eisenhower's travels to different cities for public appearances and speeches. The trip files include appointment information, schedules, travel arrangements, and speech texts.

One interesting matter which is found in this series is the fact that on at least three occasions journalists submitted to Dwight Eisenhower articles which they were writing about him. He then edited these articles and returned them to the authors. Another press-related item in these files is

a list of news correspondents whom Bryce Harlow and Dwight Eisenhower considered to be “unbiased objective” and “unbiased Republican.”

Eisenhower remained the most prominent Republican leader in the country, and many Republican politicians traveled to Gettysburg to seek his advice and endorsement. In December 1961 a group of Republican leaders met at Gettysburg to plan future party strategy. Former administration advisors continued to assist him by drafting speeches and messages and by offering political advice.

Besides containing references to important national and world issues, the documents in the 1961 Principal File also provide interesting details about Dwight and Mamie Eisenhower as well as miscellaneous information on a variety of subjects. Included is information on the general’s golf scores, Mamie’s favorite TV soap opera, favorite songs of Dwight Eisenhower, and Mamie’s Daughters of the American Revolution dues. Eisenhower’s policy on honorariums is referred to in this series, and his method of speaking is also discussed. His thoughts on religion and his explanation for joining a church in 1953 are also mentioned in his correspondence. Other interesting sidelights found in this series are a list of people whom Eisenhower wanted to call him “Ike,” and documents regarding his attendance at a White House luncheon on June 21, 1961.

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