

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW
DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER & A. ROSS WALLEN
Gettysburg Office - Friday, 27 November 1964
for THE POINTER

ARW -- Sir, when did you meet General MacArthur?

DDE -- General MacArthur and I did not meet until 1930 when he became Chief of Staff and I was working for one of the Secretaries of War. I had been passed around like that from General to General in the service, and when he came in as Chief of Staff, soon afterward, I didn't meet him for I guess two or three months. After all, I was a Major and they had me working on industrial mobilization and he was going to present it to the Congress and I prepared the study. I went to see him about it and from that time on he began to use me, although I was working directly with the Assistant Secretary of War and partially for the Secretary, both of them I knew. But, after the Democrats won in 1933, all my secretaries were thrown out, you see, so he took me over and there is when I began to work for him, just on a completely separate basis about February 1933 -- no, no, no, the first of January '33.

ARW -- Sir, do you feel that his recommendations after this time possibly helped you somewhat in your rank?

DDE -- Oh, he always gave me the most glowing (compliments) - he was very apt to be quite colorful in his writings and in his speech so, when he put on an efficiency report something about you, he would always put on very, very high ... but the strange thing was, he and I used to have, even when he was a 4-Star General and I was a Major, some very tough arguments, but he was always very nice about it and he would laugh at me when I would get too vehement and tell me to go on back to my business.



He was a winning personality and anyone who was around him felt his influence and personality very deeply.

(Corrected by DDE and sent to West Point)

ARW -- The conduct of the Second World War in Europe was largely based on the combat decisions of your two commands. Did an examination of the Principles of War enter into decisions?

DDE -- Well, in all staff schools these principles were in the students mind and they tended, I think, to inculcate in him a logical approach to military problems. But I don't believe that any one would ever sit down with a military plan and ask himself, "Does this proposal conform strictly with all the 'Principles of War'?" For example quite frequently the desire for security might easily conflict with the desire for surprise.

(Corrected by DDE and sent to West Point)

ARW -- In the high commands such as you have both had, did you employ for the most part leadership or management?

DDE -- They're inseperable I think. If you get down to a platoon then the personal leadership, the acquaintanceship and relationship with your people becomes a little more important than your management for the simple reason that you're not responsible for any great amount of this. If you see that one man is not getting along well in one squad you transfer him until you get what you think is a better team - so you have some elements of management right there. On a high level the leadership that you exert doesn't reach down to the last man like it can in the platoon but I think any commander that neglects to get around and see the last man in the ranks when he can is making a great mistake.



ARW -- Sir, you mentioned that you had two Governments beneath you. Do you think that the friction that arose between yourself and General Montgomery and General Bradley, was that personal or was it just because you had two different governments?

DDE -- No, no, it was personal -- actually, of course, my problem was to keep these things from going ().

Frankly, Patton always did hate Montgomery. Bradley came to me ... I didn't blame Bradley, as a matter of fact, I think I made a mistake one time because I didn't realize how very sensitive this particular matter had gone. You see, I, having had the command of the Navy, air and ground and then the two nations, we had Polish, some French troops particularly in Africa, later I had French (I had something like seven divisions) but I had become a little bit more insensible to these things that arose out of nationalities than did most people. Actually, few of them came out of differences in nationalities. They did at first. Everybody, of course we were green, all of our divisions were untrained, these people had been fighting and had the great debacle of 1940 and many of them, almost all of the seniors, had been through the tactical phases of WW I (Junior Officers) so they looked upon us as probably colonials and that was their view at first. But as time went on, I think there was no better relationship possible between the British and ourselves. Now, if you will look at some of the _____ of the Civil War. Look how McCarnan, for example, and Sherman and Grant -- differences between them -- and Butler was worse. I think Banks was a better man than they gave him credit for. But a number of those people and even afterward ... McClellan -- McClellan finally ran for Presidency of course, and there was Hooker -- you don't hear anything that bad.



(Corrected by DDE and forwarded to West Point)

ARW -- Should the position of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff merit a five star rank?

DDE -- Not in time of peace. Matter of fact I personally opposed it in time of war and so did General Marshall. I thought the United States should not have to find a new grade every time we had a new war. I think that if we had five stars in time of peace then and then that would mean using your nuclear weapons. Well, then if we went to war again we would have six stars and there would be I think both sides would be helpless to move and we'd go our way and no end.

(Corrected by DDE and forwarded to West Point)

ARW -- Do you think the concept of a civilian army built about a professional military corps is still feasible?

DDE -- If you're going to have an exchange of nuclear arsenals then there is going to be no mobilization such as we have thought of it in the past. I would think if this would come about our whole regular Army and national components would have to be immediately used in the job of restoration and preserving order. But if you got into a fairly heavy, so called, brush war then there could be the calling up of some national guard units. Put it this way; the application of the theory of a citizen army inspired and led by a professional corps would be an entirely different think from when we were protected by our oceans. Actually, the day that the bom exploded over Hiroshima our concepts of war were immediately obsolete.

(Corrected by DDE and forwarded to West Point)

ARW -- If there were to be another World War, how long would it last?



DDE -- If we are talking about global war to the bitter end then that would mean using your nuclear weapons. Well, then I think both sides would be helpless to move and we'd go our way and I think probably new societies would spring up.

ARW -- Sir, back in the post-war period when you were Chief of Staff, do you think there was enough planning for missiles done then?

DDE -- Well, as a matter of fact, what happened, we got with the Joint Chief of Staff and the scientists (some scientific group) and not a single one that we had called favored ballistic missiles. We knew about it too from the war, of course. We had had it but they said the very fact that it was so ^{inaccurate} inadequate that they thought we had to go to the aerodynamic principle in the production of missiles and we did put quite a bit of money in that, but there was very little interest. In fact, on long range ballistic missiles there wasn't more before I became President than 15 or 16 million altogether, and I think the last year before I came in they had taken every nickel out of it. When I got into the Presidency, I immediately began to worry about this, so I called for reports from the scientists. This was the first from the Air Forces and they gave me an earlier report so then I showed that was a lot more to it, so I called up a bigger commission that finally gave me a report a year later and there is where our real efforts started. But long range Ballistic missiles had not much of a start except the Army with its (Jupiter?) and the air with its (*Thor*) -- they were doing this on their own and not in any centralized way until we really got their reports and then we went to town.



ARW-- To go back a second, were you informed by President Roosevelt perhaps about the atomic bomb during the war?

DDE -- Well, about every three months they would send a staff officer over to me (I have forgotten his name now) to tell me what they believed the Germans were doing. The Germans had two places (*Kina Marie?*) which was their experimental station and (*Chonheim?*) up in Sweden or Norway that they were trying to develop their heavy , so they constantly would come to me and say for me to watch for this and bomb it and I would send every once in awhile special bombing missions both to KM and C to delay them -- so they told me that this was going on but the success of the thing -- well, they didn't tell me such thing like this. Now, you got chain reaction. Now at that time they didn't even know if suppose you started with atomic chain reaction -- you might blow up the world -- no one really knew and so they would tell me these things and it would make your blood run cold occasionally, but it wasn't until after our war was over in Europe that I was with Secretary Simpson one afternoon and he told me then about the success that day at White Sands and he said something about a chicken was hatched. Now, from there on, of course, I was kept fully acquainted but during the war they kept me mostly acquainted so as to watch out for the Germans might send.

ARW -- Sir, General Bradley mentioned I think he said you made certain orders over there, if anyone got sick near a missile that had come in from Germany to report it in the fear that perhaps the Germans were sending some of the waste materials over?

DDE -- Well, I don't recall it, but I will tell you what we did. All through the war we always kept a gas defense equipment around



where we would get at it very quickly and we also kept along with ourselves gas of our own and in that way we got in a very embarrassing position. Once we had one of these ships full of material down in (Barre) -- we had a raid that night in Barre and it knocked the ship to pieces and we had quite a gas attack of our own -- but I don't recall, of course we talked, we would hear about bacteria and germ war but I don't recall that I issued any orders. He might have.

ARW -- Sir, while you were in the post-war period Chief of Staff and increasingly since then, there is coming to the Defense Department the young PHD's, called Defense intellectuals. As an Army man, do you think they are getting too much power?

DDE -- Well, this I will say, they have their place, we need them but it is only people who have been trained in the human factors of what suffering means, of what privation, what unhappiness and all the other and moral and spirit and dedication -- after all, the human spirit is still the great motivating world-wide force and whenever you try to take dramatic problems -- that is, the problems that involve grammar and try to solve them with a slide rule -- the cost plus, the cost benefit ratio and so on, is a little bit nuts -- if you keep this within reason it is all right. I will tell you what I did one day. I was tired of all these scientists and these experimental and natural sciences, I wanted to get some people into the social sciences. So, I said what will be the reaction of America -- at that time I think I was talking about 100 megaton bombs -- well, now this is something



that is almost unimaginable, and so I just told them to think about it and I had them come in before the next Security Council and give us their thinking. It was not something you could base on revolutionary planning but to give a clearer and better understanding of what would be the reaction of the people -- and I said, all the time we are talking about leaders who question everything you do -- if your logistics are properly taken care of and you are well protected in your security arraignment but when you come down to it, it is how you use the emotions of men to further the nation's efforts, and that is more important when the chips are down than all the intellectual capacities.

ARW -- When you asked for a budget increase as Chief of Staff, did you at the time consider the nation's economy before making these?

DDE -- Well, at that time we were not asking for the things that would hurt you. The power of the nation is, as I like to think of it, the produce of three factors, multiplied and put together: Moral or spiritual power, economic and military. Now, if any one of these three factors goes to zero - the whole equation goes to zero. So, you have to have a balance. Whenever you are talking about the defense of the United States, I don't care whether it is theoretical or practical basis, you got to think of the economy. The first thing, your economy has got to be able to produce the things you are going to want. Suppose you made such demands on high sophisticated weapons and delicate weapons that the nation just couldn't do it and you were basing all your plans on the existence of these things -- you would be wrong. Now, I will give you an illustration. When I was brought into the War



Department I got my orders five days after I got there, on a Sunday morning. It wasn't very long before General Marchall, whom I had never known, called me in and told me I was to develop the outline plan to go with Germany. This was in March 1942. Now, we had nothing. Our fleet had been sunk in the Pacific and we had one or two carriers still existing and a few things here and there -- we had no military force except what was scattered around the world and while we had a number in uniform, most of them (when I came out of Texas late in '41, my God we still had wooden machine guns and all that sort of thing) and so we had nothing. We had no shipping, no fleet, how are we going to get these people over to Europe and we had very little air-craft. Now, you had to plan for the time when these things would be so plentiful that you thought you would need so to say that a man could make a decent plan in the Chiefs of Staff without a very lively awareness of the economic strength of the nation is nuts. Now, I don't mean to say that he has to be an economist -- he has to go back and find out what is the capacity of your aluminium factories but you have to have people who know and keep him informed as to what is going to be demanded, and this will go clear into your finances and all the rest of it. So you see that the Chiefs of Staff is going to be so completely Military that it is almost like the fellow that is commanding the squad, it just makes no sense at all.

ARW -- Sir, if you ever thought you would have been President several years earlier, do you think you would have acted differently?

DDE -- Well, always people get interested in the 'what might have been.' I sometimes wondered this: So long as I had (

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I believe the Korean war would not have occurred had we not gone so far until the Chief of Staff finally came to this conclusion: We are so down in strength that (

) . We are in a general war, the possession of South Korea would be of no great significance. (

) No because of that, we went down and down and everytime we tried to make a new budget (after I was gone) the Chief of Staff decided to take the last element out of Korea and at the same time the Secretary of State made a speech in which he said South Korea is way outside our national defense. So this encouraged the Communists. I believe is there would have been an American division that would have stayed there while we had (

) . Now, I just can't tell you but my associates and I just went and put it, almost with tears in our eyes, for a little more strength. I had come to the conclusion with the dollar worth then was it was (

) we could have had a budget of 15 billion outside of all increases in pay which would have to be given and a complete new re-issue of uniforms and surplus, of course, which we had to do if we got 15 billion for purely military purposes - then we could keep enough strength (

) . Now, I believe later, if you would add when we found about these ballistic missiles, if you would add 10 billion to that and have a 25 billion budget, and again assuming the dollar is the same price, in early '46 (I think since that time the dollar is about half) so now we might set up to 35 billion which would have been enough but that just might have been -- the people were so anxious to get the army back again to where it was and all the defense



forces -- as a matter of fact, when I was staying at Columbia, they called me back because then they didn't have the authorization for Chairman -- I went back as you might say, ex-officio or emeritus or something they said -- but I was anyway presiding as Chief of Staff and it was right after Forrestal, I began to get orders to cut down and finally we got it down to 12.6 and General Gruenther was my assistant and we thought we would make one more effort () and the next thing I knew, () I just can't do a darn thing about it, (I think I know something about budgets) -- so I quit. I think the budget that they set up for 1950 was something below 13 billion, but I was gone ... that was in 1951 I guess. I left about June or July 1949 and that was the '51 budget.

ARW -- Sir you can discard this question if you care to as it might be a little too ticklish, but once that situation did evolve, would you have relieved MacArthur under those circumstances?

DDE -- Well, now I have worked for General MacArthur directly and indirectly for 9 years and I have a high respect for his intellect -- now he was sometimes very difficult, but just exactly what the trouble was that developed between him and the President I don't know but I am sure had I been in charge at that time, such a thing as that never would have occurred. When I became President, he always was very meticulous and I am sure the relations would have been better.

ARW -- Sir, I think in your book it is mentioned that you planned to be a Constitutional President. What did you mean by that?



DDE -- I believe this, for example: the other way of using the power of the Presidency beyond the spirit of the Constitution is in the long run wrong and what I am interested in is the perpetuation of self-government. Self-government with the citizen protected in his right to exercise his own initiative, his liberties, his opportunities and if we don't have that we are not going to have the America we have now. In talking about a strong President, or a weak President or indifferent or whatever, actually what I think, a President has got to have the comprehension of what is good for self-government and its perpetuation in this country and this is the reason we are making the mistake of our lives when only 62 percent of the eligibles vote. I think that any president that goes beyond the clear understanding and meaning of the Constitution to do things, except in this matter of grave emergency (Roosevelt had to re-act at Pearl Harbor before it got to Congress the next day) -- but any other time that a man exceeds his proper bounds, he is weakening the self-Government's condition. That is what I think.

ARW -- You mentioned that to consider a person as a Conservative or a Liberal, to consider yourself a Conservative or Liberal, would be making too narrow an evaluation.

DDE -- This is what bothers me. Not only is Jefferson suppose to be our great Liberalist but he is the patron saint of the Democratic party. Let us take some of the things he believed in. He said, "The least Government is the best Government." He said, "If he had to make a choice between Government or school, he would take schools." He also said, 'He could think of no greater evil to any self-governing national than to have a big and continuing debt.'



Yet, the people that want to take more power in Washington to control our lives and tell us what to do and all the rest of it, they are now called to get more funds in to do things -- Federal things -- they are the ones they call the Liberals. I often call myself a Jeffersonian Republican because I believe largely in his theories of Government and I think this, once you take away from this little town of Gettysburg a feeling of primary responsibility for its disabled and its hurt and its injured, then I believe the whole citizenry has lost something. They have lost their own sense of the right basis of democracy. People as a whole are good and the power is in the people. All that the man can do at the top as President is to direct that power wisely. He is not a source of power. I think then, when these people begin to relieve themselves of the responsibility because someone is going to have to pay the bill, we have lost something very great. We would like to think of the American soldier, who is a man of self-dependence, great initiative on his own, though in critical situations they often get up and match their leaders -- they get up and start out and pretty soon people are following them and they may be the lowest buck private in the damn squad. If we have lost all this sense of responsibility and duty to solve these local problems ourselves, then, how are you going to have that in the army? I still think that it is the spirit of man that is the most important item in this thing we call the civilization of man.

ARW -- Sir, Did you bring your staff, to a great extent, from the army with you into the Presidency?

DDE -- Only to this extent. . . to make sure that in really all of your work there is some coordination in the proper channels. Always around the White House you have economic advisors, you have a special legal advisor and all those others but when it comes to need this kind of a staff, it helped because he cannot always be running down to the Attorney General and up in the Commerce Department and so on, so you have to have someone who takes the communications and sees that they are coordinated among the staff and properly handled. So, I had set up what I called the assistant to the Chiefs of Staff for the personal staff that was around. Then, another thing I did, for any meetings that we had where you wanted advice, and that is why all of these conferences have advisers, to have the secretary of the Cabinet ----- so you would make a note of the subject and if there are differing phases, make a note of them, and then finally I would get these notes as records and then decide either to approve the thing as it was because there were no decisions to be made or make the necessary decision -- to that extent but it was not due to any extent -- I didn't have a G-1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and so on. I just had orderly staff procedure. Everybody had used staffs. I believe that if there had been a good staff system there never would have been the Bay of Pigs fiasco. There was just some individual talk and everybody thought this would be a nice thing down there to support, then the last minute they allowed the President to change his mind, and decided there wouldn't be any air support. Now, a man couldn't do this after he had made a final decision -- the man was still trying to make up his own mind.

ARW -- That happened to be my very next question. Plans for such an order were initiated under your order?



DDE -- Not this particular plan. All we could do -- there was no leader, no recognized leader yet, all we could do while I was there, and I told the succeeding President the whole story. We got the people who themselves as individuals wanted to go back -- so we organized them and began to arm them with suitable equipment, light equipment, and to be ready when they were ready and could organize themselves under politically. See, until you could recognize someone as a government in exile, a Cuban, what could you do from our viewpoint? You might as well go and attack them yourself. So, what was done, we got them trained, we did everything possible to get them ready but until they got their own leader, who we wanted to see -- we always felt we would put him ashore with them, then we would recognize him and we could help him. All of this didn't happen in five minutes but we had no way of making special studies.

ARW -- Sir, I often wondered, very famous picture shows President Kennedy and yourself at Augusta. This is right after the Cuban crisis and shows you walking together. Were you discussing the Cuban crises?

DDE -- Oh yes, as a matter of fact, he asked me to meet him. We agreed to meet at Camp David, up here and he came right down to the plane and he met me and we went off. We had a long talk -- he didn't know at that time apparently all of the things that had happened, like the story of Charlie Mercer ... unfortunately he wrote the story damn near accurate -- he might have had a few names wrong but that is all. So he was asking what to do now and he wanted to know what I thought would be the Russian reaction. Well, I said the Russian reaction would be nothing, because they don't do things by



reaction -- they figure out a plan and they follow it and sometimes too far but they don't do it by reaction at all. In other words, he was afraid, he said, the reason he didn't go ahead and let the world know that America had helped on that thing was because the Russians would be now tougher in Berlin but they don't act that way. They calculate whether something will be a dangerous thing to do or can they be pretty aggressive about it. He was more interested in what I thought he should do now, than what the Russians would like to do.

ARW -- National Security Council -- you used that too a great deal?

DDE -- I used the National Security Council for this reason. It used to be that anything that touched foreign affairs was State Department and State Department only. The Army or the Military establishment might be occasionally consulted by the State Department, but it really never was. I was there, I know. I mean when I was a young staff officer, the State Department and we fellows didn't even know each others secretaries. Now, the Foreign Affairs has gotten so complex that no State Department can even have control over it. When we export wheat -- export wheat to India, this has an effect on Burma for they lose their markets for they always sold India rice. Everything you do, and this was in the Commerce Department or the Agriculture getting rid of surpluses, then you have labor attaches abroad, you got commercial attaches, now the next thing is finances. Today you read much in your ~~4~~economix reports about the out-put of the gold and what it means. I am reading a book right now about this fellow, Russ, a great French thinker in this field. The Government and all of its phases is interested in the situation or I might say our position in the international world and its relation to



all the nations not just one or two but all of them. Consequently, you have your study, the agenda today and say now what are we going to do in Iran, Viet Nam or Guatemala on the agenda. Now, you have people who study these things all the way -- people who know the economics of Guatemala. The Defense knows the amount of defense forces they have there, i.e., all the rest of it. So, you hear all this and you find there may be many differing views of what might be done. You have behind this Board a committee made up of (a planning board they call it and they have a studied paper and usually the paper would be riddled with splits and you would come to one paragraph and the Defense would believe this -- Intelligence would believe this, and someone else and so you sit there and listen -- hear things debated once a week always. Now, I never, never when I was in town did I miss a National Security Council meeting and when I was out of town, either they had to have one under the Vice President's supervision and then he would report it to me or they would come where I was and have it there -- we did this a number of times. The thing is too complex for a President to make his final decision just by first talking to State, then to Defense, then to Commerce, then to Agriculture, then to Justice. In our scheme, we finally evolved to solve the arraigning thing involved really a violation of the Anti-Trust Acts. The combination of oil companies to pull them out of the hole. This was one of the phases. Well, now you had to get the Attorney General to say what the hell you have done something here that is legally unconstitutional, and if it isn't really law, can we do it under some escape law of emergency. So, the National Security Council in my mind was absolutely a necessity and I will tell you this -- now an outfit like that can't make a decision for you -- they can't do a thing for you except give you a greater comprehension



what it is, but it is based on fact and on studied examinations and analyses. It is a little bit you might say, you have in your military problems the estimate of the situation - this estimate of the situation might be a group of high ranking people in the Government, then it is presented to the President and his principle subordinates. That is, the heads -- they listen and then the heads -- each one, they often differ with his own staff occasionally and Dulles would (). So that is what it is for and it is a most useful thing -- to hear the debate right there across the table and you have a much clearer idea than when you meet this man and later this man -- then you run into persuasion. I will tell you, who ever runs into MacArthur -- he is the most persuasive devil -- he would have you sold on anything. You have to hear it debated. If there would have been a National security Council study on the Bay of Pigs, you never would have had the disaster we had.



ARW -- Sir, the final question. You had several illnesses while you were in office. Would you suggest any legislation concerning the Vice President?

DDE -- I gave a letter to Senator Beyh, head of the Committee, who studied that. I told him I believed that when a President or Vice President would die or be incapacitated in any way, that the President (or now there is a new President -- not a very old one) should instantly nominate another Vice President, made of constitutional () and that man when approved by both Houses of the Congress (so you don't have to go through the elective process again) you want the best confirmation of the wisdom of your selection and then that man becomes Vice President just like the other man he succeeds. Then, I think the biggest, toughest problem is to determine that you have an indisability under the Constitution of the President and now this

is the one -- I get disabled -- now when I had my heart attack in 1955, they put me in an oxygen tent (I think I was there about three days) and during that time they allowed no one to talk to me, but I think just about a week later that Adams came in the minute I started to function. But during that week, if there had been an emergency thing, who is going to do it? Well, I thought about this a long time and then I decided that the man who decided whether or now the President was disabled would be the Vice-President. He would decide it and act upon that basis and that I would exchange letters to that effect. So, Nixon and I, after about 1957, we had exchanged letters in which I told him he would be the man who would decide and no matter what -- my disability may be by being over the Atlantic, out of communication where I could talk to him. All right, that would be a disability as much as if I had gone off my rocker, you see. Then, the man who decides the disability would be the President, in his own right. The only place where I can see any resulting confusion -- suppose, your difficulties mended and I think I can have my job but you as a Vice President could not. Now, I think under that condition, time is not an element, no emergency - I think the Vice President should continue to serve until there could be convened a medical board and some other political figures, both sides, to decide whether this fellow is, as President, capable to handle the job. I don't think this would ever come out because if you assume men of good will want to serve the nation and not just their own damn personal and selfish ambitions. This, by the way, is my obsession in life - I believe that anybody in public service, military or what, if he is primarily satisfying his own personal ambitions, I have no use for



him whatsoever and I don't think he is worth a damn. I believe if you are not thinking first of all of the country and the nation, then you are not much of a public servant but I believe we got to assume in the two highest offices we have in our nation, that we are going to be animated by that kind of thing -- this is particularly true in all these later years when a man nominated for the Presidency has a right to really select his own Vice President. Now, I never did that personally -- now Nixon, I had his name on the top but I gave the Convention six or seven. Now-a-days they have gotten to the point where it is one man and that is and announces it. I believe in the great value of example -- the way a man acts. Now, if you are going to act dictatorial in that type of thing and give neither your own party nor the nation anything to say about it except that 'if you take me, you got to take him,' this I think is bad. Now, you wouldn't want anybody that you didn't think was completely qualified and you wouldn't want anybody whose views in broad generalities and you disagree with. But, again I go back to this -- this self-Government we want to preserve and to keep it healthy, strong and practict it.

