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SPRAGUE

SPRAGUE, MANSFIELD D. (OH-100) 48 Pages PRCQ (M)

General Counsel, Department of Defense, 1955-57; Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, 1957-58.

Interview #1. Background information: 1952 campaign in Connecticut and the Republican Convention; Sprague's opinion of Eisenhower; his work as deputy attorney general of Connecticut; anecdote on and assessment of Charles Wilson; Wilson's confirmation by the Senate; confirmation of Neil McElroy; conflict of interest issue; Eisenhower's high standard of integrity; hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee in 1956 re strength of USSR-U.S. air power; comments on Senator Symington; Secretary Wilson's testimony before Senate Armed Services Committee; Wilson's relationship with Eisenhower; Sprague's position with ISA; OCB meetings and operation; Planning Board; massive retaliation nuclear deterrent policy; meeting with President re involvement in Lebanon.

Interview #2. Secretary Wilson's approach to the operation of the Defense Department; Eisenhower's relationship with Dulles and Wilson; Robert McNamara and Clark Clifford; comments on Representative Carl Vinson; the National Security Council mechanism and Eisenhower's use of the NSC; the President's Committee on Information Activities Abroad (Sprague Committee) and its purpose; disclosure on CIA funding; Eisenhower's feelings on world opinion and U.S. policies; the impact of Sputnik on the country and world; foreign aid and military assistance program; the inner workings of the Sprague Committee; his meeting with Eisenhower in Newport, Rhode Island; impact of Dulles' death on Eisenhower; impact of Sprague Report on later years; Eisenhower's public appearance at Orly Airport in 1958 and his decision to continue as President; rivalry between defense services; Eisenhower's concern re defense expenditures; obsolescent equipment for the military assistance program; military assistance advisory groups; relations with Congress; impression of Richard Nixon; NSC position papers; NSC under President Kennedy; impressions of Admiral Radford, Nathan Twining, Thomas Gates, Donald Quarles, Reuben Robertson; his assessment of the Eisenhower Administration and the President's leadership quality; Sprague's last NSC meeting.

[Columbia University Oral History Project, interview by John T. Mason, Jr., October, 2 and 15, 1968]