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ROBERTSON

**ROBERTSON, WALTER S.      OH-121      196 pp. w/Index      PRCQ (M)**

Assistant Secretary of State for the Far East, 1953-59.

DESCRIPTION – Interview #1: Personal background; Lend-Lease mission to Australia; began working for the State Department in 1944; working at the American embassy in China; attempts to resign and return home after V-J Day; George C. Marshall; family joins him in China; the Truce Commission; unsuccessful end of the Marshall Mission; confusion in Washington about Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Communists; feeling among the Americans in China that a coalition government was impossible; observations on Chinese government and history; Yalta Conference negotiations between Franklin Roosevelt and Joseph Stalin regarding the Far East; consequences of the agreement when the Chinese were later advised; Russian occupation of Manchuria; American inaction and cut-off of aid to China; Russian treaty violations; return to private life; testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee in 1948; John Service; Owen Lattimore; Theodore White; agrarian reform in Communist China; Service and classified documents; policies of China under Mao; Alger Hiss and Sol Adler; impressions of Mao and Chou En-lai; Korean armistice agreement; invitation from John Foster Dulles to work for State Department as Assistant Secretary; first memory of DDE as a potential Presidential candidate; working with Dulles; priorities in the Far East; first face-to-face meeting with DDE; reaction to Syngman Rhee's release of prisoners-of-war; meetings with Rhee and Mark Clark; return to Washington with confidential letters for DDE and Dulles from Rhee; dealing with the press; expectations for the Korean trip; situation in Indochina; DDE's position on Indochina; attempts to persuade Great Britain to go along with the US position; differences in dealing with Winston Churchill, Anthony Eden and Harold Macmillan; the Suez crisis; American position after French defeat at Dien Bien Phu; formation of Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO); the settlement at the Geneva Conference; aftermath of the settlement in Vietnam; U.S. military advisors; American position in Southeast Asia; Dulles' grasp of the situation in Asia; Dean Acheson and Asia; Indonesia; some impressions of Sukarno and Mao; Communist penetration of the Indonesian government; additional thoughts on Indonesia; Burma; Thailand; Quemoy and Matsu; DDE's stand on the situation; meeting with Walter George; security and security leaks at meetings; Joseph McCarthy; Bandung Conference; Jawaharlal Nehru and Chou En-Lai; split between Soviet and Chinese Communists; the Philippines.

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Interview #2: Significant problems and events in U.S.-Japan relations; the Girard case; Status of Forces agreements; cancellation of visit by Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi, economic relations and trade agreements with Japan; American points of view regarding competition from Japanese manufacturing; correlations with US-European tariffs; rearmament of Japan; population stabilization in Japan; fishing rights disputes; sovereignty of the Ryukyus; Communist threat in Southeast Asia; Congressional relations on State Department issues; key members of Congress regarding foreign affairs; Walter Judd; testifying before the Appropriations Committee regarding foreign aid; United Nations; Secretary General U Thant; Nehru; Southeast Asian leaders regarding the threat of Communism; Prince Sihanouk and Cambodia; information activities; comparison of Dulles and Christian Herter as Secretary of State; friendship with General Yeh Chin-ying; additional personal relationships formed during his time in China.

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[Columbia University Oral History Project, interview by Ed Edwin, April 18-19, 1967]