

PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION SERIES

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Presidential Transition Series contains an estimated 1,700 pages and deals almost exclusively with the transfer of governmental power from Dwight D. Eisenhower's administration to the succeeding administration of John F. Kennedy. The date coverage is primarily from November 1960 to January 1961, although a few items pertaining to the Truman-Eisenhower transition can be found. Several items of farewell correspondence are dated as late as February 1961.

The series consists primarily of memoranda, staff correspondence, farewell correspondence, briefing papers, final departmental reports and press releases, and one Cabinet paper. This material arrived at the Eisenhower Library as part of a heterogeneous body of manuscripts within the Ann Whitman File labeled "Miscellaneous". A staff archivist organized it into three major segments: official staff correspondence and memoranda, farewell correspondence, and final departmental reports.

The segment containing official staff correspondence, memoranda, and briefing papers documents the mechanics of the transfer of governmental power to the incoming administration. A small quantity of correspondence between Eisenhower and Kennedy can be found here. Several foreign policy and defense matters are summarized in memoranda and briefing papers prepared for Eisenhower's meetings with Kennedy on December 6, 1960 and January 19, 1961. More thoroughly covered are the interactions between General Wilton Persons, appointed by Eisenhower to coordinate transition activities, and his counterpart on Kennedy's side, Clark Clifford. Much of the information contained in these memoranda pertains to personnel, appointments, and the functioning of various White House offices. A notable example is a seventeen-page summary of Gordon Gray's discussions with McGeorge Bundy regarding the position of Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. The outgoing President's strong desire to impress upon his successor the seriousness of the balance of payments problem is documented by a number of memoranda, including records of meetings in which the Secretary of the Treasury, Robert Anderson, briefed the President-elect on this subject. Also of interest is General Persons' record of a telephone conversation with John J. McCloy in which McCloy explains why neither he nor another Republican, Douglas Dillon, should take the post of Secretary of Treasury in the Kennedy Administration. Other individuals whose transition activities are documented include General Andrew Goodpaster, Christian Herter, David Kendall, Ralph Dungan, Fred Dutton, and Theodore Sorensen.

Approximately 30% of the series is comprised of exchanges of farewell correspondence between President Eisenhower and foreign heads of state, members of the White House staff, officials within the various executive agencies, and a few other individuals. Most of these letters are brief and contain only pleasantries, although an exchange of letters between the President and British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan does include comments regarding the Soviet Union and international affairs.

The remainder of this series consists of final departmental reports. Most of these reports are press releases containing letters between the President and executive branch officials. A few reports include summaries of the accomplishments of various departments during the Eisenhower Administration. Other items include printed reports, a Republican Congressional Committee newsletter, photographs of disaster areas included in an Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization report summarizing the Federal Disaster Relief Program, and a lengthy letter from Under Secretary of Commerce Philip Ray regarding the balance of payments problem.

Substantial quantities of information pertaining to the Eisenhower-Kennedy presidential transition may also be found in the White House Central Files under the code "OF 101 XE Transition to Incoming Administration," and in the papers of General Wilton Persons. Memoranda filed in the Presidential Transition Series may be duplicated in these other collections.

CONTAINER LIST

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1 Log of Correspondence - President and President-Elect Kennedy
11/9/60-1/11/61

President Eisenhower's Topics & Topics Suggested by Mr. Kennedy [briefing papers for use in DDE's conference with JFK 1/19/61--topics: emergency planning, defense, intelligence, Laos, Congo and Africa, Cuba, Dominican Republic and the Caribbean, Algeria and France, Berlin, limited war; plus letter from Secretary of the Treasury Robert Anderson on role of Treasury Department]

Topics Suggested by Mr. Kennedy [contains duplicates of briefing papers filed in the previous folder plus an additional paper on nuclear test talks & disarmament]

News Conference with President-Elect John F. Kennedy

Memos-Staff-re Change of Administration (1) [briefing papers for use in DDE's conference with JFK, 12/6/60--topics: Cuba and Latin America, NATO; Berlin, Laos, Algeria, disarmament and nuclear test negotiations with USSR; balance of payments, Formosa and Red China, balanced budget for FY 1962; memo on staff assistance to President and account of DDE's Dec. 6, 1960 meeting with JFK (published in DDE's Waging Peace, pp. 712-716)]

Memos-Staff-re Change of Administration (2) [contains correspondence between DDE and JFK; memorandum for record re DDE-JFK meeting of 12/6/60 with advisors--topics include Geneva nuclear test talks, USSR and talks, Berlin, Laos, Algeria, Morocco, Sudanese Wheat, Israel nuclear developments, defense discussions; Robert Anderson memo re his talk with Kennedy on balance of payments; list of Cabinet papers to be turned over to JFK; one 1952 transition item]

Memos-Staff-re Change of Administration (3) [several memos re mechanics of transition; extensive notes by Gordon Gray on discussions with McGeorge Bundy re personnel, functions, and responsibilities involving national security; lengthy memo by Robert Anderson on balance of payments; other memoranda re personnel and appointees]

Memos-Staff-re Change of Administration (4) [meetings and communications between General Persons and Clark Clifford on personnel, appointments, White House office; status of government information programs; memo re emergency planning]

1 Memos-Staff-re Change of Administration (5) [including telephone

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- (cont.) conversation between Persons and John J. McCloy explaining why he should not take Treasury post in Kennedy Administration]
- Memos-Staff-re Change of Administration (6) [meeting between James Hagerty and Pierre Salinger; David Kendall meeting with Theodore Sorenson; contacts between Persons and Clifford; published remarks by DDE after meeting with Truman in November 1952]
- Memos-Staff-re Change of Administration (7) [government reorganization matters; State Department matters; Clark Clifford and FBI investigation of JFK appointees; meetings with Theodore Sorenson]
- Memos-Staff-re Change of Administration (8) [balance of payments; Cabinet paper re preparatory arrangements for turnover of executive responsibilities]
- 2 Turnover-Memos for Record [memos re Emergency Action papers; Don Paarlberg's economic functions; internal White House office operations; history of Advertising Council; remainder of material consists of duplicates of memos found elsewhere in series]
- Transfer of Government [mainly duplicate material, including copy of presidential letter invoking executive privilege]
- Farewells/Replies: DE/Heads of State A-L (1-5) [includes State Department memos explaining need to send certain foreign leaders farewell messages]
- Farewells/Replies: DE/Heads of State M-Z (1-2)
- Heads of State that DDE sent messages to
- 3 Letters From Executive Br--End of Tenure
- Letters From WH Staff - end of Administration
- Letters From Others - end of Tenure
- Final Departmental Reports & Thank You Letters - Staff (1-4) [folder (3) contains lengthy letter from Under Secretary of Commerce Philip Ray re balance of payments; other material includes printed reports, Republican Congressional Committee newsletter; photographs of disaster areas]
- 3 Final Reports (1-5) [press releases containing exchanges of correspondence between

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(cont.) the President and various executive branch officials--sometimes including summaries of various departments' accomplishments]

[Continuity of Authority] [Correspondence between the Executive Departments and Wilton Persons concerning the designation of personnel to serve beyond January 20]

END OF CONTAINER LIST