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McELROY

McELROY, NEIL H. (OH-26) 94 pages PRCQ (M)

Chairman, White House Conference on Education, 1954-56; Secretary of Defense, 1957-59.

Interview #1. Personal background, and initial contacts with DDE. Appointment as Secretary of Defense, and possible conflicts of interest. Feelings towards Congressional hearings. Satellites and missiles: Sputnik; Vanguard and Jupiter; DDE's attitude; U.S. versus Russia; Atlas. White House Conference on Education. Newsmen and the Secretary of Defense.

Interview #2. Trip to NATO meeting, fall of 1957: DDE testing his own physical capacity to be President; meeting with other defense ministers. Trip to the Far East, fall of 1958: comments on each country and its leader, including Pakistan and Ayub Khan and Vietnam and Diem (and the position of the Communist Chinese towards Vietnam); India and Nehru. Lebanon crisis. Quemoy and Matsu Islands.

Interview #3. Defense Department Reorganization Bill of 1958: setting up an Assistant Secretary of Defense for Research and Development; Polaris submarines; strengthening the chain of command up to the Joint Chiefs of Staff; people who put together the reorganization plan; testimony before the House of Representatives and the Senate. His working relationship with DDE. Gaither Report. Cuba, Castro, and Communism.

[Columbia Oral History Project Interviews by Ed Edwin, 1967]