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U.S. PRESIDENT'S SCIENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Records, 1957-61
(A Component of Records of Presidential Committees, Commissions and Boards:
Record Group 220)

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The records of the U.S. President's Science Advisory Committee were transferred to the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library on August 24, 1966.

Linear Feet:	2.7
Approximate number of pages:	4,600
Approximate number of items:	1,600

Literary rights in the official records created by the President's Science Advisory Committee are in the public domain. Literary rights in personal papers which might be among the Committee's records are reserved to their respective authors.

These records were reviewed in accordance with the general restrictions on access to government records as set forth by the National Archives and Records Service. To comply with these restrictions, certain classes of documents will be withheld from research use until the passage of time or other circumstances no longer require such restrictions.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The records of the U.S. President's Science Advisory Committee (PSAC) span the years 1957-61. These records, a component of Records of Presidential Committees, Commissions and Boards: Record Group 220, were received at the Eisenhower Library in August 1966.

In 1951 President Harry S. Truman established a Science Advisory Committee as part of the Office of Defense Mobilization (ODM). On November 29, 1957, President Dwight D. Eisenhower transferred ODM's Science Advisory Committee to the White House Office, reconstituting and enlarging it as the President's Science Advisory Committee. Earlier in November 1957 Eisenhower had appointed Dr. James R. Killian, Jr., to the newly-created post of Special Assistant to the President for Science and Technology. PSAC members chose Dr. Killian to be the chairman of the Committee, a position he held until June 1959 when he resigned as Special Assistant. Dr. George B. Kistiakowsky then was appointed as Special Assistant for Science and Technology, and served in that capacity and as chairman of PSAC from July 1959 to January 1961.

The committee did not have operating responsibilities. Rather, its purpose was to provide advisory opinions and analysis on science and technology matters to the entire Federal Government, and specifically to the President. The Committee's eighteen members, each serving a set term, were all recognized to be among the best scientists in the United States. Through the Science Advisory Committee, they provided a mechanism for facilitating communication of objective scientific and engineering advice within the top levels of the Government. The Committee functioned by setting up small panels of its members to study specific matters of interest. After each panel completed a study, usually based upon consultation with outstanding scientists from industry, education, and Government, it would present a detailed report to the whole Committee for dissemination of the information to appropriate Government agencies. Members of the Committee's staff served as technical assistants to each of these panels, and helped to coordinate their activities. David Z. Beckler served as executive officer for PSAC during the Eisenhower Administration, and provided overall day-to-day guidance for the Committee staff.

About one-half of the panels' studies were directed to the question of how science could support the United States' national security objectives. The creation of Arms Limitations and Control, Limited Warfare, and Space Science Panels, for example, reflected the national security concerns of the Committee. Major topics covered were the establishment of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), missile development, satellites, testing of nuclear weapons, and arms limitations negotiations. Another major area of study was the strengthening of science and engineering in the United States and allied nations. Panels in this area include Basic Research and Graduate Education, Life Sciences, Scientific Information, and Science and Foreign Affairs. Among the specific matters with which these panels dealt were exchanges of scientific information with countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), encouragement of basic research and graduate education in the sciences, high energy physics, oceanography, radio astronomy, and creation of a Department of Science and Technology.

Two important themes common to many of the studies are the budgetary problems of funding projects, and the Administration's concern over competing successfully with the Soviet Union in science and technology. Finally, as a secondary theme, the collection also documents the administration of PSAC, including the establishment of the Committee, routine office matters, and lists of Committee members and consultants.

Among the individuals, organizations and government departments having contact with PSAC were the National Academy of Science and its president, Detlev Bronk, the National Science Foundation and its director, Alan T. Waterman, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Atomic Energy Commission, and the Departments of State and Defense.

The records are divided into three distinct series. Series I (boxes 1-2) consists of handwritten minutes and mimeographed agenda from PSAC's regular monthly meetings (except for August of each year, when there was no meeting), and handwritten notes from PSAC's annual meetings with President Eisenhower (1958 and 1959). Subjects covered in these meeting notes, which were presumably written by Mr. Beckler, include a full range of PSAC studies as described above.

Series II (boxes 3-5) is a subject file made up primarily of correspondence (original incoming letters and carbon copies of outgoing material) and memoranda, with other types of documents scattered throughout. Much of this material is over the signature of either Mr. Beckler, or Dr. Killian, or Dr. Kistiakowsky, and covers the full range of PSAC studies. The folders are arranged alphabetically according to subject titles, which are identical to the titles as they appear on the original folders at the time of deposit in the Eisenhower Library; annotations appearing within brackets on the container list were added by the archivist processing this collection. The arrangement within each folder (chronological) also remains the same as when deposited. A few documents from 1957 pre-date PSAC's creation in November of that year. In the front of most of the folders in this series is a calendar of documents which are stamped with PSAC document code numbers.

Series III (box 6) is an alphabetical file that contains primarily correspondence and memoranda. The material is filed in alphabetical order by the last name of the principal correspondent, usually the person from whom PSAC received the letter or memorandum, or the person to whom PSAC addressed the document. The folder titles and arrangement within each folder (chronological) are again the same as when the material was deposited. The annotated container list includes the names of the major correspondents and subjects for each folder.

Special Note: For a more detailed discussion of the history of PSAC and how it operated, see for background information the relevant documents in the subject folder titled "President's Science Advisory Committee."

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Box Nos. Series

- 1-2 PSAC Meeting Notes, December 1957 - December 1960. 2 containers. Handwritten minutes and mimeographed agenda from PSAC's regular monthly meetings, and handwritten notes from PSAC's annual meetings with President Eisenhower. Arranged chronologically by month.
- 3-5 Subject File, 1957-61. 3 containers. Primarily correspondence and memoranda, but also including calendars of documents, records of action and agenda, briefing papers, press releases, project reports, position papers, panel reports, and lists of members and consultants. Arranged alphabetically by subject title on the folders, and chronologically therein.
- 6 Alphabetical File, 1957-60. 1 container. Primarily correspondence and memoranda on both routine and historically significant subjects (see annotated container list). Arranged in folders alphabetically by name of correspondent, and chronologically therein.

CONTAINER LIST

Box No. Contents

SERIES I: PSAC Meeting Notes, 1957-60

- 1 Meeting Notes: December 1957
- Meeting Notes: January 1958
- Meeting Notes: February 1958
- Meeting Notes: March 1958
- Meeting Notes: April 1958
- Meeting Notes: May 1958
- Meeting Notes: June 1958 [includes notes from PSAC meeting with President Eisenhower]
- Meeting Notes: July 1958
- Meeting Notes: September 1958
- Meeting Notes: October 1958
- Meeting Notes: November 1958
- Meeting Notes: December 1958
- Meeting Notes: January 1959
- Meeting Notes: February 1959
- Meeting Notes: March 1959
- Meeting Notes: April 1959
- Meeting Notes: May 1959 [includes notes from PSAC meeting with President Eisenhower]
- Meeting Notes: June 1959

- Meeting Notes: July 1959
- Meeting Notes: September 1959
- Meeting Notes: October 1959
- Meeting Notes: November 1959
- Meeting Notes: December 1959
- 2 Meeting Notes: January 1960
- Meeting Notes: February 1960
- Meeting Notes: March 1960
- Meeting Notes: April 1960
- Meeting Notes: May 1960
- Meeting Notes: June 1960
- Meeting Notes: July 1960 [for notes of PSAC'S meeting with President Eisenhower in July 1960, see folder in Series II: Subject File]
- Meeting Notes: September 1960
- Meeting Notes: October 1960
- Meeting Notes: November 1960
- Meeting Notes: December 1960

SERIES II: SUBJECT FILE. 1957-61

- 3 Administrative [includes administrative material re establishment of PSAC, list of members and consultants, interoffice memoranda, and thank-you letters for service on PSAC: November 1957-December 1960]
- Air Defense--AICBM [anti-intercontinental ballistic missile]
- Arms Control [includes material re U.S. position towards arms limitation negotiations, and monitoring nuclear weapons tests]

Basic Research [material from Panel on Basic Research covering programs in basic research and graduate education, and funding of such programs]

Chemical Panel [as related to basic agricultural research within USDA]

High Energy Physics [mostly material from December 1960-January 1961 covering work on high energy accelerator physics by combined PSAC and AEC panel chaired by E.R. Piore]

International (1)(2) [Science and Foreign Affairs Panel material re U.S. funding for international scientific organizations, exchange of scholars with NATO countries, technical assistance to underdeveloped nations, and scientific exchanges with U.S.S.R.]

International--Clark Proposal [material re General Edwin N. Clark's proposal to use P.L. 480 funds to implement a "Plan for Scientific Cooperation in the Free World" to combat communism. Special Note: see original copies of some of this material, as well as supporting documents, in the White House Central Files, OF 146]

Meeting with the President, 7/12/60 [material re the PSAC meeting with President Eisenhower, including setting it up, meeting notes, and a briefing paper on basic research]

Miscellaneous Correspondence (1)(2) [includes letters from general public requesting published PSAC reports; correspondence re missiles and NASA, and a proposed Department of Science and Technology; and minutes of Federal Council for Science and Technology meeting, 12/16/60]

National Academy of Science [includes material re PSAC Space Science Panel and NAS Space Science Board, and material re Project Mohole; correspondence with NAS President Detlev Bronk]

- 4 National Aeronautics and Space Administration--National Aeronautics and Space Council (1)-(3) [material covers primarily the establishment of NASA and NASC in 1958]

National Medal of Science [material re Congressional and Presidential action creating the medal and establishing the panel to choose the recipients]

National Resources [material re hydrology, and general conservation of natural resources]

National Science Foundation (1)(2) [includes material re National Science Board;

NSF printed material; correspondence with NSF Director Alan T. Waterman]

National Security Council [primarily memoranda re NSC matters]

Naval Problems--Antisubmarine Warfare [material by Naval Warfare Panel re antisubmarine warfare and development of naval weapons]

North Atlantic Treaty Organization [material re establishment of NATO Science Committee, its chairman, and its programs to increase scientific cooperation among NATO countries]

Nuclear--Plowshare [material re use of nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes]

Nuclear Research [material re thermonuclear reactions, and basic research in nuclear physics]

Nuclear Weapons [includes material from Ad Hoc Panel on Nuclear Test Requirements]

Oceanography [reports and other material from Ad Hoc Panel on Oceanography, including funding of oceanography programs and the U.S. Navy's role in them]

Operations Coordinating Board [material re nuclear weapons, missiles, and satellites]

President's Committee on Scientists and Engineers [material re funding PCSE, and plans to terminate it and transfer its functions to OCDM; correspondence with PCSE Chairman Howard Bevis]

- 5 President's Science Advisory Committee (1)-(3) [material covering full range of PSAC subjects, including NATO, satellites, missiles, disarmament, science education, basic research, and administration of PSAC; material re PSAC meetings, including agenda, excerpts from minutes, and correspondence: November 1957 - July 1960]

President's Science Advisory Committee--Agenda and Correspondence Regarding Meetings [general PSAC material covering especially a test ban on nuclear weapons and the possible creation of a Department of Science Technology; material re PSAC meetings, including agenda and correspondence: August 1960-December 1960]

Radar and Radio Astronomy [material re construction of a large radar antenna (Big Dish), radar contact with Venus, and reserving frequency bands for radio astronomical observations]

Radiation [material re radiation hazards in food, Federal Radiation Council, nuclear

accidents, and testing of nuclear weapons]

Records of Action and Meetings--PSAC [primarily December 1957 through December 1959, but including extract from minutes of PSAC meeting of 3/14-15/60]

Research [subjects covered include the PSAC Research Panel, and setting up a Federal Science and Technology Council]

Research--PSAC [material from Research Panel, including minutes of its meetings and its final report, covering the subject of how to fund and conduct basic research: 1957-1958]

Scientific Information (1)-(3) [material from Panel on Scientific Information re establishing a U.S. Coordinating Center for Scientific Information to collect, translate, abstract, publish, and disseminate scientific information and material]

Small Business Administration [subjects covered include how small businesses can obtain government research and development information and contracts; correspondence with SBA Administrator Wendell B. Barnes]

Solar Furnace [material re Air Force's project for a large solar furnace for testing substances at very high temperatures]

Solid Propellants [material re rocket propulsion systems, especially the Polaris]

Space [Space Science Panel material covering NASA, satellites, missiles, Weather Bureau, and man-in-space report]

Telecommunications and Radio-astronomy [April-August 1959]

SERIES III: ALPHABETICAL FILE, 1957-60

6 Correspondence--B (1)-(3) [Robert F. Bacher, George Beadle, John Berdeen, Lloyd V. Berkner, Hans A. Bethe, Detlev Bronk, Harvey Brooks; subjects covered include NASA, missiles, nuclear weapons tests, and proposed bill on training scientists]

Correspondence--C [Britton Chance; his appointment to, and retirement from, PSAC]

Correspondence--D [James H. Doolittle; includes memorandum on possible conflict of interest problem]

Correspondence--F [J.B. Fisk; includes short comments on missiles and space]

Correspondence--H [L.A. Hyland; his relationship to the Hughes Aircraft Company]

Correspondence--K (1) (2) [James R. Killian, Jr., and George B. Kistiakowsky; subjects covered include conflict of interest question, space, missiles, NASA, nuclear research and negotiations with the Russians, and also material re speech by Killian on 6/21/58]

Correspondence--L [Edwin Land, and Robert Loeb; includes a document on relationship of science and technology to the national security policy process]

Correspondence--M [James W. McRae]

Correspondence--P [Emmanuel R. Piore, and Wolfgang K. H. Panofsky]

Correspondence--R [H. P. Robertson, and I.I. Rabi; includes correspondence covering possibility of security risks during Rabi's trip to Russia]

Correspondence--S [James Shannon, and Cyril S. Smith]

Correspondence--T [John W. Tukey; includes one document on negotiations covering tests of nuclear weapons]

Correspondence--W [Paul Weiss, J.B. Wiesner, and Alvin M. Weinberg]

Correspondence--Z [W.H. Zinn; covers testing of nuclear weapons]

END OF CONTAINER LIST