

Prepared by: JH
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BURDEN

BURDEN, WILLIAM A. M. (OH-137) 83 pages w/index PRCQ

Member of National Aeronautics and Space Council (NASC), 1958-59; U.S. Ambassador to Belgium, 1959-61.

DESCRIPTION: Background in aviation and finance; friend of Nelson Rockefeller; Reconstruction Finance Corporation, 1939-41; Department of Commerce, 1942-47; active in civil aviation, both technical and financial; Special Assistant for Research and Development to the Secretary of the Air Force, 1950-52; comments on development of the hydrogen bomb and opinions of the scientists involved, (J. Robert) Oppenheimer and (Ernest) Teller; involvement in "Citizens for Eisenhower", 1952; appointed to National Aeronautics and Space Council (NASC), 1958; appointment as Ambassador to Belgium, 1959; comments on Council (NASC) meetings; Eisenhower's budget concerns; criticism of the organization of the State Department and comparison to the Department of Defense under McNamara; comments on job as ambassador and communication with the Secretary of State; the Belgian Congo crisis; [Henry] Cabot Lodge and the U.N. position; the Belgian position; Burden's several trips to Washington, bypassing State Department channels; friendships with Herter and Dillon; comments on the political and military leaders in the Congo; Burden's suggestions for the Congo NOT accepted (support Tshombe and separate Katanga); the U.S. and U.N. policy for independence in Africa; comments on reorganization of the State Department and the Wriston report; the lack of communication in the Defense and State Departments; the space program before Sputnik; the ballistic missile program; pilotless aircraft or rocket development; evaluations of various officials in the State Defense Departments; major achievements of the Eisenhower Administration.

[Columbia University Oral History Project, interview by John Luter, 1968]