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THOMAS

Date: 6/29/94

THOMAS, CHARLES

(OH-490)

65 pgs.

OPEN

Undersecretary of the Navy, Jan.-Aug., 1953; Assistant Secretary of Defense for Supply and Logistics, 1953-54; Secretary of the Navy, 1954-57

DESCRIPTION: Biographical information: education, World War I naval aviation service, early career in investment banking, World War II service; early political activity and formation of Republican National Finance Committee in California (1946); involvement in fund-raising for 1952 election; conflict with Earl Warren; the California delegation; Taft vs. Eisenhower sentiment; Nixon's early political career (successful races against Jerry Voorhis for Congress and against Helen Gahagan Douglas for Senate); Nixon popularity high (good campaigner, strong anti-communist stand); story behind Thomas' move to Washington as Undersecretary of the Navy; relationship with [Robert B.] Bob Anderson, Secretary of Navy; appointment as Assistant Secretary of Defense and Logistics; appointment as Secretary of the Navy (1954); assessment of [Charles E.] Charlie Wilson, Secretary of Defense; [pgs. 23-25 closed]; changes instituted by Thomas in promoting Naval flag officers (ages, wives, etc.); working relationships between service secretaries and service chiefs of staff; inter-service rivalries; [Robert T.] Bob Stevens [Secretary of the Army] and Senator [Joseph R.] McCarthy; Arthur Langlie (governor of Washington) and the naval air base at Sand Point; Thomas as chairman of National Finance Committee (1957); disgruntled Republicans; criticism of Eisenhower as leader of the party; Meade Alcorn [Chairman of Republican National Committee, 1957-59]; Admiral Hyman Rickover (career, relationship with Congress, contributions to Navy, criticism of); developing the nuclear submarine; the Bunker Hill incident; Admiral William F. Raborn and the Polaris missile program; Thomas' opinion of Congressional relations, past and present; Carl Vinson; costs of nuclear-powered naval craft; American-Soviet military superiority; Nixon's Moscow trip, 1959; Thomas' personal inter-actions with Russian citizens; post-Presidential relations with Eisenhower; Eisenhower's comments on Churchill and DeGaulle.

[Dwight D. Eisenhower Library Oral History, interview by Dr. Thomas Soapes, July 23, 1976.]