



Allen, Richard V.: Files, 1981-1982

Finding Aid Type

White House Staff and Office File Collections

Subtitle/Office

Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (NSC), 1981- January 1982

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Record Type

Textual

Biography

Richard V. Allen was a national security expert working as a consultant with his own firm, publishing several books and multiple articles, and a national security advisor to President's Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan.

Richard Vincent Allen was born in Collingswood, NJ, on January 1, 1936, one of four children of Charles and Magdalen (Buchman) Allen. His father was a salesman. Richard graduated from St. Francis Preparatory School in Spring Grove, PA, and earned a bachelor's degree in 1957 and a master's degree in political science in 1958, both from the University of Notre Dame.

In the early 1960s, after postgraduate work at the University of Munich in West Germany, Mr. Allen taught at the University of Maryland, the Georgia Institute of Technology and the Georgetown University Center for Strategic Studies. From 1966 to 1968, he was a senior staff member of the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace at Stanford University; he had been a senior fellow of the institution since 1983. He was also a fellow of St. Margaret's College of the University of Otago in Dunedin, New Zealand.

Mr. Allen was the author of several books, including "Peace and Peaceful Coexistence" (1966) and "Communism and Democracy: Theory and Action" (1967). He wrote many articles and research papers for political journals and other periodicals.

Allen parlayed his extensive national security studies into a consulting career on international business. When not officially in the federal government he had cultivated clients in Japan and Portugal.

Allen's studies tended towards advising public international relations policy and he had earned a reputation as a political operative with conservative Republican credentials. Allen provided foreign policy advice to Richard Nixon in both his 1968 and 1972 presidential campaigns and was an economic adviser in the Nixon White House. Allen acted in the same foreign policy advisory role for Ronald Reagan's presidential campaigns of 1976 and 1980. In 1981, he was appointed the National Security Advisor to the President being in full accord with Reagan's approach to international relations, particularly regarding the Soviet Union.

Allen was a controversial figure from his early days with the Nixon campaigns. In both the Nixon and Reagan campaigns, accusations and rumors surfaced of "influence peddling" by Allen to gain clients for his consulting firm. The head of a Grumman Corporation subsidiary told a Senate subcommittee that during Nixon's 1972 campaign, Mr. Allen had solicited a \$1 million contribution to the Committee to Re-elect the President in exchange for promising to help the subsidiary win sales contracts in Japan. And in the fall of 1980, during Reagan's presidential campaign, Mr. Allen temporarily stepped down as the candidate's foreign policy adviser after an allegation surfaced in news reports that he had used his connections in the Nixon White House to obtain consulting contracts for himself with foreign

governments. Mr. Allen denied all the allegations, and no formal action was ever pursued.

On January 21, 1981, the day after Reagan's inauguration, three Japanese journalists, with Mr. Allen's authorization, interviewed Nancy Reagan, the new first lady, at the White House. Afterward, one tried to hand Mrs. Reagan an envelope containing a \$1,000 honorarium. Mr. Allen, thinking it unseemly, intercepted the envelope. In Allen's own words, "I brought it back to my office and told my secretary to make sure this gets turned over to the appropriate officials. Instead, she put it in my safe and forgot about it." Allen relocated from the office with the safe, and the cash remained in the safe for eight months.

In September 1981, the cash was found by the new occupants of Allen's old office. The new occupants reported the cash to Edwin Meese, Counsellor to the President, who reported it to the FBI. Also, it was belatedly discovered that around the same time, Allen had accepted three expensive watches as personal gifts from Japanese friends who were high-level governmental consultants. The first investigation of Allen's actions was conducted by the FBI in late September 1981.

Continued press interest in the issue resulted in an additional investigation conducted by the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice in late November 1981 and resulted in an additional report on December 7, 1981. Despite the release of this report, public questions and media interest continued. Finally, the President asked White House Counsel Fred Fielding to conduct an internal ethics violation investigation of the transactions. The White House Counsel's Office issued a report on January 3, 1982. Although Allen was never officially charged with any wrongdoing, he was forced to resign after the investigation ended.

While the Department of Justice and the FBI fully cleared Allen, he was unable to overcome his own missteps in handling the internal White House infighting that occurred in the early days of the Reagan White House. Long term "Reaganites" fought back against the reality of Republican mainliner James Baker's influence and power as the chief of staff to Reagan. Allen's access to Reagan in the White House was always limited and it was cut back after the controversy began with Allen reporting to Reagan through Edwin Meese. Allen also lost any support from the Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, by giving public speeches which appeared to

challenge the authority of the Secretary.

After leaving government service in 1982, he founded the Richard V. Allen Company, a Washington-based international consulting services firm, which closed when he retired in 2004.

He married Patricia Ann Mason in 1957, and the couple had seven children. The Allens had 22 grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren. The Allens had a summer home on Long Beach Island in New Jersey.

Allen died at a hospital in Denver, Colorado on November 16, 2024.

Scope and Content Note

The Library currently has no specific material for Mr. Allen. For a chronicle of his work, please see the [Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs: Chron File for 1981-1982](#). In addition, we have a small amount of Allen material from a meeting of the President-Elect's Interim Foreign Policy Advisory Board which took place prior to President Reagan taking office. It has been transferred to the Transition Collection and is currently unavailable for research.

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