

Richard W. Murphy Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2021

Contact information: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm96083928>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms009164>

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2009
Revised June 2021

Collection Summary

Title: Richard W. Murphy Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1951-2014

Bulk Dates: 1971-2004

ID No.: MSS83928

Creator: Murphy, Richard W. (Richard William), 1929-

Extent: 7,800 items

Extent: 24 containers plus 1 classified and 5 oversize

Extent: 11.8 linear feet

Extent: 2,129 digital files (12.82 GB)

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm96083928>

Summary: United States assistant secretary of state, diplomat, and author. Correspondence, speeches, writings, notes, and photographs in paper and digital formats; digital video and audio files; and United States Department of State papers, press clippings, and appointment calendars, chiefly relating to Murphy's position as assistant secretary of state and his subsequent activities as a consultant, editorial writer, speaker, television commentator, and member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Arafat, Yasir, 1929-2004.

Bush, George, 1924-2018.

Carter, Jimmy, 1924-

Christopher, Warren, 1925-2011.

Hussein, Saddam, 1937-2006.

Kissinger, Henry, 1923-2023.

Murphy, Richard W. (Richard William), 1929-

Nixon, Richard M. (Richard Milhous), 1913-1994.

Reagan, Ronald.

Organizations

Council on Foreign Relations.

Independent Inquiry Committee into the United Nations Oil-for-Food Programme.

Middle East Institute (Washington, D.C.)

United States. Department of State.

Subjects

Diplomatic and consular service, American.

International relations--Societies, etc.

Places

Mauritania--Foreign relations--United States.

Middle East--Foreign relations--United States.

Philippines--Foreign relations--United States.

Saudi Arabia--Foreign relations--United States.

South Asia--Foreign relations--United States.

Syria--Foreign relations--United States.

United States--Foreign relations--20th century.

United States--Foreign relations--21st century.

United States--Foreign relations--Mauritania.
United States--Foreign relations--Middle East.
United States--Foreign relations--Philippines.
United States--Foreign relations--Saudi Arabia.
United States--Foreign relations--South Asia.
United States--Foreign relations--Syria.

Titles

Richard William Murphy papers

Occupations

Diplomats.
Public officials.

Acquisition Information

The papers of Richard W. Murphy were given to the Library of Congress by Murphy in 1996. Numerous additions were given by him between 2003 and 2014.

Processing History

Part I of the papers of Richard W. Murphy were arranged and described in 1997 by Karen Linn Femia. The finding aid was revised in 2009. Part II was arranged and described by Katherine Duvall in 2020.

Digital files were received in Part II of the Richard W. Murphy papers on a variety of digital storage media. Each digital storage media was assigned a unique digital ID number. Use the digital ID number to request access copies of the files associated with each media. A description of the standard processes taken on all born digital records can be found in the Processing History Note: Born Digital Collection Material at <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.digital>.

Transfers

Audiotapes and videotapes have been transferred to the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division where they are identified as part of the Richard W. Murphy Papers.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Richard W. Murphy is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Richard W. Murphy are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Technical Requirements

The digital content is primarily image files in .jpg, .tiff, and .gif formats and text files in .doc and .wpd formats. Text files were created with Microsoft Word versions 97, 6.0, 2002, and 2010, and WordPerfect versions 5.1, 6.0, and 6.1. There are also moving image files in .mpeg and .VOB formats and audio files in .wav format. Most files can be accessed with a file viewer tool.

National Security Classified Information

Government regulations control the use of security classified material in this collection. Manuscript Division staff can furnish information concerning access to and use of classified materials.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Roman numeral designating the Part followed by a colon and container number or digital ID number, Richard W. Murphy Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1929, July 29	Born, Boston, Mass.
1951	B.A., Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
1953	A.B., Cambridge University, Cambridge, England
1953-1955	Served in the United States Army
1955-1968	United States foreign service officer, Southern Rhodesia, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan
1968-1971	Country director for Arabian Peninsula and director of personnel for Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Washington, D.C.
1971-1974	United States ambassador to Mauritania
1974-1978	United States ambassador to Syria
1978-1981	United States ambassador to the Philippines
1981-1983	United States ambassador to Saudi Arabia
1983-1989	Assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs
1985	Appointed career ambassador
1989	Retired from Department of State Fulbright scholar, London, England
1989-2004	Hasib J. Sabbagh Senior Fellow for the Middle East, Council on Foreign Relations
1993-2001	Chairman, Middle East Institute

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Richard William Murphy (1929-) span the years 1951 to 2014, with the bulk of the material dating from 1971 to 2004. The collection documents Murphy's thirty-four-year career with the State Department and his subsequent work as a consultant, editorial writer, speaker, television commentator, and senior fellow for the Middle East at the Council on Foreign Relations. The papers are primarily in English. The collection consists of two parts. Parts I and II largely document the same time periods and topics, with Part II making up the bulk of the collection. Almost all of the papers are professional rather than personal and are concerned with Middle East affairs and United States foreign policy. Further descriptions of each part follow.

Part I

Part I, dated from 1958 to 1996, primarily documents Murphy's term as assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs (1983-1989) and his later professional activities after his retirement from the State Department. Prominent correspondents include George Bush, Jimmy Carter, Warren Christopher, and Richard M. Nixon. Part I is arranged alphabetically by material type.

Part II

Part II spans from 1951 to 2014, with the bulk of the material dated from 1971 to 2004. Part II expands on the subject matter in Part I. It contains additional documentation of Murphy's term as assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs (1983-1989), in addition to documentation of his time as a U.S. ambassador to Mauritania, Syria, the Philippines, and Saudi Arabia (1971-1983). Material also includes some documentation of the early years of his State Department career as a foreign service officer (1955-1968). There is a substantial amount of material regarding his activities after his retirement from the State Department including with the Council on Foreign Relations, the Independent Inquiry Committee into the United Nations Oil-for-Food Programme, the Middle East Institute, and other projects. There is also substantial documentation of his activities as a speaker, television commentator, and editorial writer. Prominent figures featured in Part II, primarily in photographs, include Ronald Reagan, Jimmy Carter, Richard M. Nixon, Henry Kissinger, Saddam Hussein, and Yasir Arafat. Part II is divided into four series: [Department of State](#), [Consulting and Other Work](#), [National Security Classified Information](#), and [Oversize](#).

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in two parts. Part I is arranged alphabetically by type of material. Part II is composed of four series.

Part I:

Arranged alphabetically by type of material.

Part II:

- [Department of State, 1955-2008](#)
- [Consulting and Other Work, 1951-2014](#)
- [National Security Classified Information, 1976-2005](#)
- [Oversize, 1955-2004](#)

Description of Series

Container
BOX 1-7

Series
Part I, 1958-1996

Part I, dated from 1958 to 1996, primarily documents Murphy's term as assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs (1983-1989) and his later professional activities after his retirement from the State Department. Prominent correspondents include George Bush, Jimmy Carter, Warren Christopher, and Richard M. Nixon. Material types include appointment calendars, biographical material, correspondence, newspaper clippings, notebooks and notes, photographs, speeches and writings, State Department papers, and television transcripts. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.

BOX 8-12

Part II: Department of State, 1955-2008

The Department of State series documents Murphy's career with the agency. The series includes materials from Murphy's term as assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs (1983-1989), including travel diaries and photographs from trips to South Asia and the Middle East, photographs with various heads of state, correspondence, press clippings, notes, and memorabilia. Also included are correspondence, photographs, memorabilia, and clippings from his time as an ambassador in Mauritania, Syria, the Philippines, and Saudi Arabia (1971-1983), including photographs of Henry Kissinger's visit to Damascus, Syria, in 1975. The series includes limited documentation of his postings as a foreign service officer in the early years of his career and a limited amount of personal material. Material types include correspondence, photographs, notes, diaries, clippings, memorabilia, and certificates. Arranged alphabetically by subject or type of material and thereunder chronologically.

BOX 12-24

Part II: Consulting and Other Work, 1951-2014

The Consulting and Other Work series primarily documents Murphy's activities after his retirement from the State Department with the Council on Foreign Relations, the Independent Inquiry Committee into the United Nations Oil-for-Food Programme, the Middle East Institute, and other projects. There is also substantial material regarding his work as a speaker, television commentator, and editorial writer, documenting Murphy's positions and expertise on foreign policy and the Middle East over the course of twenty-five years. The Council on Foreign Relations material contains memoranda, correspondence, meeting briefs and notes, proposals, trip itineraries, and writings regarding projects Murphy was part of and his tenure at the Council. Other materials in the series primarily contain items related to activities Murphy undertook outside of his work at the Council on Foreign Relations, although the scope and timelines of his activities often overlapped with one another. These materials include consulting agreements, correspondence, travel and conference files, and notes. The digital files also overlap with other categories in the series, often complementing the paper materials, and include correspondence, memoranda, notes, itineraries, speeches, writings, and television and radio interviews. Duplicates do exist between the paper and digital files, but have not been identified and sorted out. Material types include correspondence, photographs, memoranda, notes, itineraries, speeches, and writings in paper and digital formats; digital video and audio files; and press clippings and appointment calendars. Arranged alphabetically by subject or type of material and thereunder chronologically. File structure of the digital content maintained as received.

BOX CL 1

Part II: National Security Classified Information, 1976-2005

The National Security Classified Information series includes correspondence, memoranda, and briefings.

Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were separated.

BOX OV 1-5

Part II: Oversize, 1955-2004

The Oversize series includes certificates and photo albums.

Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were separated. Some of the items are physically grouped and housed by size.

Container List

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BOX 1-7	Part I, 1958-1996 Part I, dated from 1958 to 1996, primarily documents Murphy's term as assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs (1983-1989) and his later professional activities after his retirement from the State Department. Prominent correspondents include George Bush, Jimmy Carter, Warren Christopher, and Richard M. Nixon. Material types include appointment calendars, biographical material, correspondence, newspaper clippings, notebooks and notes, photographs, speeches and writings, State Department papers, and television transcripts. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
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BOX 1	Congressional testimony, 1982-1988
BOX 2	Correspondence
BOX 2	From Murphy, 1984-1996 (2 folders)
BOX 2	To Murphy, 1984-1996, undated (4 folders)
BOX 2	Council on Foreign Relations, 1989-1995
BOX 2	Fulbright Commission, 1989
BOX 2	Guest book from American embassy, Damascus, Syria, 1974-1976
BOX 2	Newspaper clippings
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Part I, 1958-1996

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Part II: Department of State, 1955-2008

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Part II: Department of State, 1955-2008

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Part II: Consulting and Other Work, 1951-2014

The Consulting and Other Work series primarily documents Murphy's activities after his retirement from the State Department with the Council on Foreign Relations, the Independent Inquiry Committee into the United Nations Oil-for-Food Programme, the Middle East Institute, and other projects. There is also substantial material regarding his work as a speaker, television commentator, and editorial writer, documenting Murphy's positions and expertise on foreign policy and the Middle East over the course of twenty-five years. The Council on Foreign Relations material contains memoranda, correspondence, meeting briefs and notes, proposals, trip itineraries, and writings regarding projects Murphy was part of and his tenure at the Council. Other materials in the series primarily contain items related to activities Murphy undertook outside of his work at the Council on Foreign Relations, although the scope and timelines of his activities often overlapped with one another. These materials include consulting agreements, correspondence, travel and conference files, and notes. The digital files also overlap with other categories in the series, often complementing the paper materials, and include correspondence, memoranda, notes, itineraries, speeches, writings, and television and radio interviews. Duplicates do exist between the paper and digital files, but have not been identified and sorted out.

Part II: Consulting and Other Work, 1951-2014

Container

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Material types include correspondence, photographs, memoranda, notes, itineraries, speeches, and writings in paper and digital formats; digital video and audio files; and press clippings and appointment calendars.

Arranged alphabetically by subject or type of material and thereunder chronologically. File structure of the digital content maintained as received.

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DF	1992-1993 Digital ID: mss83928_55_010
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DF	1992-1996 Digital ID: mss83928_55_008
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Part II: Consulting and Other Work, 1951-2014

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DF	American University in Cairo, Wasat, 2006 Digital ID: mss83928_55_001
DF	"Images and Faces From Syria," 2007 Digital ID: mss83928_55_020
DF	Sultan Ahmet, circa 2011 Digital ID: mss83928_55_033
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Part II: Consulting and Other Work, 1951-2014

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DF	<i>Al Alam</i> , 2008, March Digital ID: mss83928_55_027
DF	<i>Press TV</i> , 2008, May Digital ID: mss83928_55_028
DF	<i>Press TV</i> , 2008, July Digital ID: mss83928_55_034
DF	<i>Al Alam</i> regarding attack on Syria, killing of Abu Ghayola and civilians at Abu Kamal, 2008, October Digital ID: mss83928_55_032
DF	<i>BBC Hard Talk</i> , Persian Service "Iran-Iraq War," 2011, September Digital ID: mss83928_55_036
DF	<i>BBC Hard Talk</i> , Persian Service "Iran-Iraq War," Farsi version, 2011, September Digital ID: mss83928_55_037
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DF	<i>Alhurra Presents</i> #207, undated Digital ID: mss83928_55_030
DF	<i>Deutschlandfunk</i> , interview with Heiko Wimmen, discussion of Syria, undated Digital ID: mss83928_55_031
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Part II: Consulting and Other Work, 1951-2014

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BOX OV 5	Meeting with Saddam Hussein, undated
BOX OV 5	<i>USS Forrestal</i> (aircraft carrier) visit, undated Consulting and Other Work
BOX OV 3	Certificates, 1992-2004