



Memorable Quotations from Dwight D. Eisenhower

Jim Dell

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Born in Denison, Texas, Dwight David Eisenhower (1890-1969) was an American general and the 34th president of the United States from 1953 to 1961; his nickname was "Ike." A West Point graduate, he had a rapid rise as a military commander during World War II. He became chief of army operations in Washington, D.C. in 1942. Then he was chosen U.S. commander of the European theater of operations, and in 1943 he became supreme commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force. Eisenhower organized and directed the Allied invasion of Europe in June 1944. In December 1944 he was promoted to General of the Army, five-star general, and upon his return to the U.S. became army chief of staff (1945-48). Eisenhower was president of Columbia University from 1948 to 1950 and in 1950 was appointed supreme commander of the Allied forces in Europe. He organized the defense forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and then resigned in 1952 from the army to campaign for the Republican presidential nomination. Admiration as a World War II hero earned him an effortless election win over his Democratic challenger, Adlai Stevenson. One of Eisenhower's initial actions as president (July 1953) was to deliver a campaign promise to end the Korean War. Ike and his secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, sustained the Truman administration's policy of containing Communism, but efforts were also made to lessen cold-war tensions. Eisenhower stayed detached from the legislative process and took limited initiatives in domestic affairs. Notwithstanding a heart attack in 1955, he effortlessly won reelection in 1956. His administration then took a more energetic position in the increasing civil-rights movement. In 1957 he directed federal troops to Little Rock, Arkansas, to enforce a court-ordered school desegregation decision, and later Congress enacted federal civil-rights legislation. Additionally in 1957, President Eisenhower announced the Eisenhower Doctrine, which pledged the U.S. to a committed role in the Middle East to guard the region from Communist aggression. Strains with the Soviet Union swelled, though, and a summit meeting in 1960 with Nikita Khrushchev ended tersely because of discord over U.S. espionage flights over the USSR. In 1959 the emergence to power of the Communist Fidel Castro in Cuba created other complications, and Eisenhower ended diplomatic relations with Cuba before leaving office in January 1961.

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