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Folder Title:
Truman Christening-Background 9/7/96

Staff Office-Individual:
Speechwriting-Blinken

Original OA/ID Number:
3381

Row: 48  Section: 5  Shelf: 10  Position: 2  Stack: V
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**COLLECTION:**
Clinton Presidential Records
National Security Council
Anthony Blinken (Speechwriting)
OA/Box Number: 3381

**FOLDER TITLE:**
Truman Christening-Background, 9/7/96

**RESTRICTION CODES**

- **Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]**
  - P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
  - P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
  - P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
  - P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
  - P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
  - P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

- **Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]**
  - b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
  - b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
  - b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
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  - b(7) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
  - b(8) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.
August 23, 1996

MEMORANDUM FOR JULIA MOFFETT

FROM: JOSEPH SESTAK

SUBJECT: Christening of HARRY S. TRUMAN

There has arisen a question regarding whether Presidents “do christenings” of Navy ships. The President is always the principal “christening speaker”; the “sponsor” of the ship (in this case, Mrs. Margaret Truman Daniel) actually “christens” the ship by breaking the champagne bottle on its bow. For example, President Bush was the “christening speaker” at the christening of the aircraft carrier “GEORGE WASHINGTON” on July 21, 1990, and the “sponsor” of the ship was Mrs. James Webb (the wife of the Secretary of the Navy); (of interest, Vice President Gore was “christening speaker” for the CARL VINSON and the “christening speaker” for the aircraft carrier KENNEDY was President Johnson).

A christening is when the ship, nearing completion in the shipyard, is “named” by breaking the champagne bottle; a commissioning is when the Navy “takes charge” of the ship by having a Navy officer “read orders” which designates the vessel as a “USS” ship (“United States Ship”). Presidents are “principal speakers” at both christenings and commissionings -- not the ones who “do” the christening and commissioning. For example, President Reagan was the principal “commissioning speaker” at the (re)commissioning of the NEW JERSEY, while the senior Navy officer present “did” the commissioning by reading the orders “taking charge” of the ship. One final example: President Clinton was the “principle speaker” at the commissioning of the graduating class of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy last June; but the senior Coast Guard officer actually “did” the commissioning.

Christenings -- which occur when a shipyard is ready to “launch” the ship into the water with Navy personnel and industrial workers present, -- provide the opportunity for the President to emphasize his support for both a strong defense industrial base (with associated defense jobs) and a strong military in his national defense program. The commissioning of a ship, however, is done solely in a “Navy/military” environment (missing the “job and strong industrial base aspects). The next opportunity for a christening of the Navy’s capital ship -- the aircraft carrier -- is 2000. Newport News Shipyard expects over 20,000 attendees at the event: a ship which shares its construction in 30 states.
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- National Security Council
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**FOLDER TITLE:**
- Truman Christening-Background, 9/7/96

**RESTRICION CODES**

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As I mentioned, I've been dumping odds and ends of Truman trivia into a computer file for later use -- no particular order, but pretty easy to understand.

The christening is designed to be an occasion for strong remarks on both our commitment to a strong defense and our record on jobs -- because as of now, the Navy doesn't own the ship; it still belongs to the shipyard, and its builders are more attached to it than its future sailors.

At the same time, the Truman connection gives us an opportunity to make a broader statement about our values and ideals -- about the strength of our nation stemming from within.

If Joe is correct that the remarks are only 10-12 minutes, that doesn't leave me a lot of room to play with. An early sense of your/Don's/TL's priorities would be much appreciated.

If I don't see/speak with you before you go, have a great trip!! I'll be rooting for you all. P.S. I sent this Truman quote to Waldman, but I'll pass it on to you too -- it might be useful in a convention speech: "To me, party platforms are contracts with the people." (Memoirs, 1955) Remember -- HST was the original "plain-speaker." Have fun! V.

P.S. I sent this Truman quote to Waldman, but I'll pass it on to you too -- it might be useful in a convention speech: "To me, party platforms are contracts with the people." (Memoirs, 1955) Remember -- HST was the original "plain-speaker." Have fun! V.
HST -- from Independence, MO

Jan 21, 1966 -- LBJ presented Medicare card #1 to Truman (and #2 to Bess) in recognition of the fact that Truman had been the first to propose a system similar to Medicare. (Medicare bill signed in Independence, MO July 30, 1965)

LBJ: "a country can be known by the quality of the men it honors."

HST: "We are a people who not only cherish freedom and defend it, if need be with our lives, but we also recognize the right of other men and other nations to share it. While the struggle for the rights of man goes forward in other parts of the world, the free peoples of America cannot look on with easy detachment, with indifference to the outcome."

vigilant defender of civil rights. Feb 2, 1948 submitted first comprehensive civil rights program ever proposed by a president. formed agenda for revolution of 60-70s -- but congress wouldn't touch it. July 26, 1948 -- issued executive order to desegregate armed forces. First President to address NAACP, from steps of Lincoln Memorial: "When I say all Americans, I mean all Americans."

farewell address: "I tried to give it everything that was in me."

"Building a peace requires as much moral stamina as waging a war. Perhaps it requires even more, because it is so laborious and painstaking and undramatic. It requires undying patience and continuous application. But it can give us, if we stay with it, the greatest reward that there is in the whole field of human effort."

strong internationalist, moral leadership. Understood we could not find security in isolation. strong alliance, united nations, foundation for global trade

Key achievements: Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan, Berlin Airlift, NATO, Point Four program of technical assistance to developing nations, reconciling with Japan and Germany, recognizing israel.
Here is the latest Truman draft.

Tony B., please let me know when I should send it to Lake and co. Don has had it since yesterday afternoon but I have not heard from him. Nancy, Joe and Bob have all seen. Thanks, V.

<<File Attachment: HSTCHR3.DOC>>
Acknowledgments:

Bill Fricks, NNS President [FYI -- NNS built the SS United States you rode to England]
Dana Mead, Tenneco Chairman
Secretary Hazel O’Leary [from Newport News]
Secretary of the Navy John Dalton
Mrs. Drucie Snyder Horton [will christen the ship as Matron of Honor]
Senator John Warner
Senator Chuck Robb
Rep. Ike Skelton [thank him for legislative proposals that helped make this day possible]
Mayor Joe Frank
Admiral Jay Johnson
Admiral William (“Bud”) Flanagan
Captain Tom Otterbein [otterbine] and the pre-commissioning crew

I wish Margaret Truman Daniel could be here with us. I know she is here in spirit -- as our
thoughts and hearts are with her. I welcome her husband Clifton Daniel and their sons... and all
of President Truman’s colleagues and friends who are in the audience today.

We come together to name a great ship, and pay tribute to a great American. Harry S. Truman
embodied the values that make America strong: love of family, devotion to country, taking
responsibility and doing your best. He hailed from common roots, but possessed uncommon
talent. And he never forgot the place from which he came -- or the people he served so well.

In the wake of the most devastating war the world had ever known, President Truman understood
the importance of American leadership. Our nation was weary from battle on distant shores --
and yearning to shift its energies to the quiet comfort of home. But President Truman, along with Acheson, Marshall, and Vandenberg, recognized that turning inward was to take a turn for the worse. They knew there could be no security in isolation... and no prosperity in protectionism. Together, they resisted the dangerous sirens who summoned America to retreat.

In a time of profound and rapid change, Harry Truman faced critical decisions about the world we want our children to live in. He rose to that challenge with courage and strength -- forging consensus, promoting cooperation, and shaping policies that showed our faith with other free people around the world.

Today, that challenge has fallen to us. We too face a world of rapid change -- where once-certain guideposts have crumbled. President Truman helped create the institutions that brought us five decades of freedom and prosperity. Our generation must secure those gains for the next 50 years and beyond. We must be just as creative and constructive as we build our bridge to the future -- shaping and renewing the global structures that shield our security and fire the engines of growth.

President Truman considered NATO one of his proudest achievements. We are reinforcing and modernizing NATO to take on new missions... and take in new members from Europe's new democracies. [NES wants to mention summit '97 if Christopher calls for on Friday...]

President Truman helped to launch the United Nations. We are leading the reform of the UN, so it can better play its essential role in the global quest for peace and progress.
President Truman helped create the institutions of global economic cooperation -- the IMF, the GATT, the World Bank. Now, we are shaping a new world trading system for the 21st century -- bringing down barriers to our products, lifting our exports to new heights, and creating good well-paying jobs at home.

President Truman fought in World War I, where the horror of chemical weapons was revealed to the world. Our generation has an historic chance to take chemical weapons out of military arsenals -- and keep them out of the hands of terrorists. The Chemical Weapons Convention being considered in the Senate this month will eliminate chemical weapons stockpiles around the world and give our law enforcement new powers to investigate and prosecute people who are planning chemical attacks. The CWC is in our national interest. We should ratify it now.

President Truman created the Department of Defense and secured America’s unparalleled military power. Today, as we complete our successful military restructuring, our readiness is at an historic high and our forces have never been stronger.

Just this week, we have seen their tremendous skill in a difficult mission in Iraq. When Saddam Hussein seized the city of Irbil, our armed forces in the seas and skies responded with freedom’s force. To all our men and women in the Gulf, I am proud to say: Mission Accomplished. Iraqi missile defenses in the south have been destroyed. We are implementing the expanded no-fly zone. We have shown Saddam there is a price to be paid for flouting United Nations resolutions.
And we have shown the world that our troops are second to none. Two years ago I visited with
the crew aboard one of the strike ships -- the guided missile destroyer LABOON. And I want you
to know that this week, for the very first time, this was a crew in which women took part in an
offensive combat operation. During our administration, some 260,000 new military positions
have been opened to women who want to serve. Our military reminds us of what we must strive
to achieve as a nation -- making the most of the talents of all... expanding our potential by
combining our strength.

We ask more of our servicemen and women today, and I am determined that we give more back.
So today I am announcing that I intend to sign the defense authorization bill for 1997 that was
agreed to by the House and Senate conferees this summer. This bill upholds our commitment to
our military personnel by giving them a raise of 3% -- almost 1% beyond what the law requires --
and by funding improvements for family and troop housing.

This bill makes good on our pledge to give our troops the finest equipment there is -- including
the Army's Comanche helicopter, the Air Force's C-17 transport, and the Marine Corps' V-22
Osprey. The bill also contains advance funding for a weapons system I know is of great interest
to you as you continue to build our nation's nuclear aircraft carriers and submarines -- the Navy's
New Attack Submarine. And the Future Year Defense Plan that I will submit when I send the
budget to Congress in February -- if you renew my contract -- will include $1.8 billion to build
that submarine.
I am determined to ensure that our military can meet the new challenges of our time. The ship before us is a symbol of America’s strength -- and our firm commitment to progress. Just think -- when Harry Truman was born, a debate was raging about whether our Navy should continue to build a wooden fleet. The ship that will take his name today is made of 100,000 tons of steel and other materials. When Harry Truman was growing up, his hometown of Independence, Missouri, had a population of roughly 6,000. This ship will be home to 6,000 men and women -- not to mention 80 aircraft. And since President Truman was renowned for his boundless energy, it’s fitting that this ship can run at high speeds indefinitely, and sail for 15 years without refueling.

I wish all of you who are working so hard on this ship could have shared the tremendous experience I had of visiting four of our seven other NIMITZ class carriers -- all of which were built here at Newport News. Like them, the TRUMAN will assert America’s presence and project America’s power around the world. It contains the finest technology in the world -- made strong because it is run by the finest sailors. From the aviators in their ready rooms to the engineers in their spaces... from the catapult officers who can launch four aircraft in one minute to the cooks who prepare 18,000 meals a day... the men and women of the HARRY S. TRUMAN will do America proud.

They will know that their ship was built by the very best -- the dedicated men and women of Newport News. As many of you know, Harry Truman came to prominence by leading a congressional commission that oversaw spending for national defense. He was a stickler for
quality and efficiency -- for serving our troops and protecting our taxpayers. To all who have had a hand in this extraordinary vessel, I say: Its namesake would have been very proud of you.

The TRUMAN reflects America's commitment to a strong defense industrial base. Today, the defense industry is changing with the times. But we will do what we must to preserve essential defense capabilities. We are encouraging closer ties between the military and commercial sectors, devoting resources to "dual-use" development to keep American industry high-tech and low-cost. We will continue to invest in defense conversion -- including new training, new skills, and new jobs -- so those who helped us to win the Cold War are not left out in the cold. And we will do what we must to enable our people to succeed in the global economy.

This shipyard, and the men and women who make it sail, is a wonderful example of productive partnership between government and industry... people pulling together to get the job done right. Three years ago, I launched a plan to help our shipyards compete and win in global markets. We did our part for industry, with new loan guarantees for export customers. You have made yourselves more competitive, and today, the results are clear: In 1994, Newport News became the first American shipbuilder since 1957 to receive an order from a foreign commercial buyer. Representative Scott was with me when we honored this achievement at the White House. The tanker being built astern the TRUMAN is testament to your skill -- and our shared success.

What you are achieving here -- side-by-side, step by step -- reminds us of a lesson President Truman knew so well: For America to be strong abroad, we have to be strong at home. He knew
that just as we came together in war, so we must stick together in peace. When he commissioned
the FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT in 1945, President Truman called on our nation to use its skills
“so that our people are better fed, better clothed, better housed; so that they can get work at good
wages, adequate care for their health, decent homes for their families, security for their old age,
and more of the good things in life.”

President Truman fought hard for public housing and education. He offered the first
comprehensive civil rights legislation, and was the spiritual forefather of Medicare. He ended
segregation in our nation’s armed forces and civil service. And though his aims were even greater
than the goals he achieved, he set an agenda for the future. When we work together, grow
together, live together and learn together, America never loses.

The great ship before us will govern the seas well into the next century. Its last Commanding
Officer has probably not even been born... and my daughter Chelsea may well be a grandmother
before the TRUMAN drops anchor for the very last time. It demonstrates our nation’s undying
resolve to stay engaged in the world we share, as President Truman would have wanted it.

Soon, this great ship will slip the ways... and take its place as a fortress of freedom on the seas
and the tides of history. We pray that its journeys will always be peaceful... but we know that this
ship and its crew are ready to defend America and the ideals we cherish. May the flag it flies and
the name it carries send a powerful message to the world -- hope to the oppressed, fear to the
oppressors, with liberty and justice for all.

###
I was asked by the President to begin my remarks today by expressing his deep regret at not being able to join you at the naming of this great ship for a great American. When the President was informed that his participation would likely be considered a campaign event, he decided not to attend because of the direct impact his appearance would have on this commemorative salute to President Harry S. Truman. The President asked that I let you know that this was particularly difficult for him since it had been his honor just last year to approve the naming of the Navy's 75th aircraft carrier as the HARRY S. TRUMAN. However, the President decided that only by his withdrawal could the tradition, solemnity and official nature of this time-honored event be preserved. Otherwise, the rules governing the attendance of our military and civilian defense officials at what would be a political event would have meant that: (turning to those sitting behind him) you could not have participated in this ceremony; the men and women in uniform in our audience could not have been here; there could have been no Navy honor guard; the Navy Band could not have played the National Anthem, nor could the U.S. Special Operations Command Parachute Team have performed. The flyover you will soon see of this ship's future airwing would have been absent as would the other support the Navy provided for this great event put together magnificently by the Newport News Shipyard. We would not have gathered for the post-christening reception to reflect upon what it means to the Navy to have its capital warship named after such a leader, and neither I nor the Chaplain could have been here to represent -- in Roy's case -- God, and, in mine, the Navy and its tradition of helping to christen the ships which its men and women will later bring alive. This, the President determined, was neither fair to the wonderful legacy of the Navy or to that of the great President we came here to honor.

Had the President been here, there are several other things he would have told you, and asked that I also include in my remarks to you.
The President had wanted to express to you the admiration he has for Harry S. Truman, a respect which he relayed to Mrs. Margaret Truman Daniel when he spoke with her yesterday.

To the President, Harry Truman embodied the values that make America strong: love of family, devotion to country, taking responsibility and doing your best. He hailed from common roots, but possessed uncommon talent. And he never forgot the place from which he came -- or the people he served so well.

In a time of profound and rapid change, Harry Truman faced critical decisions about the world we want our children to live in. He rose to that challenge with courage and strength -- forging consensus, promoting cooperation, and shaping policies that showed our faith with other free people around the world.

President Clinton knew that Harry Truman also secured America's unparalleled military power, and just this week, we once again saw Truman's legacy in the tremendous skill of our Armed Forces in a difficult mission in Iraq. After Saddam Hussein seized the city of Irbil, our armed forces in the seas and skies responded with freedom's force. To all our men and women in the Gulf, the President wanted to once again say with pride: Mission Accomplished. We have shown Saddam there is a price to be paid for flouting United Nations resolutions.

The President also wanted to recognize the accomplishments of all our Armed Forces. Whether restoring democracy to Haiti, deterring aggression in the Gulf, saving lives in Rwanda or bringing
stability to Bosnia, the skill, commitment, and enduring professionalism of our servicemen and women have proven time and time again over the last three years that our troops are second to none.

The President would have asked you that we ask more of our servicemen and women today, and that he is determined that we give more back. Which is why he asked me to announce what he had intended to tell you -- and will do so today in his radio address. To reaffirm his commitment to maintaining the strongest, most capable, most ready military force in the world, the President intends to sign the defense authorization bill for 1997 now before Congress. This bill upholds our commitment to our military personnel by giving them a raise of 3% -- almost 1% beyond what the law requires -- and by funding improvements for family and troop housing.

This bill makes good on our pledge to give our troops the finest equipment there is -- including the Army's Comanche helicopter, the Air Force's C-17 transport, and the Marine Corps' V-22 Osprey. The bill also contains advance funding for a weapons system the President knew would be of great interest to you as you continue to build our nation's nuclear aircraft carriers and submarines -- the Navy's New Attack Submarine. He wanted to tell you that the Future Year Defense Plan that he will submit when he sends the budget to Congress in February will include $1.8 billion in Fiscal Year 1999 to finish building that submarine.
The President is determined to ensure that our military can meet the new challenges of our time, and he recognized that the ship before us is a symbol of that commitment and of the very best of those who help do that -- the dedicated men and women of Newport News.

The President wanted this shipyard, and the men and women who make it work, to know what a wonderful example of productive partnership between government and industry you are... people pulling together to get the job done right. He wanted to remind you how, three years ago, this partnership was part of a new plan to help our shipyards compete and win in global markets. When the Government initiated new loan guarantees for export customers, you made yourselves even more competitive, and today, the results are clear: In 1994, Newport News became the first American shipbuilder since 1957 to receive an order from a foreign commercial buyer -- Representative Scott joined the President in honoring this achievement at the White House. The tanker being built astern the TRUMAN is the testament to your skill -- and government’s and industry’s shared success.

Soon, this great ship will slip the ways... and take its place as a fortress of freedom on the seas and the tides of history. The President asked that we pray that its journeys will always be peaceful... but remember that this ship and its crew are ready to defend America and the ideals we cherish, recognizing with pride that the flag it flies and the name it will now carry sends a powerful message to the world -- hope to the oppressed, fear to the oppressors, with liberty and justice for all.