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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 14, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR:

BOB HARTMANN
JACK MARSH
DICK CHENEY
PAUL THEIS

FROM:

JIM CONNOR

The President has asked that the attached be distributed to each of you.

Attachment:

Paper on "Presidents Ford and Truman vs. the Congress"

The President asked that copies be
distributed to: the speech shop, Jack
Marsh, Dick Cheney, Bob Hartmann.

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OCT 14 1975

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN.....

Presidents Ford and Truman vs. The Congress

President Ford's difficulties with the current Congress have often been compared with those experienced by President Truman during the 80th Congress (1947-48).

Democrats, however, insist that this comparison is unfair. They claim that in Mr. Truman's case, the President was prodding the Congress for action but the Congress refused to do anything. Today, they argue, the Congress is passing a great deal of legislation and the President is blocking it through vetoes.

The truth is, however, that the parallels between the current situation and the 1947-48 era are far greater than the Democrats like to acknowledge.

First of all, in both circumstances, the fundamental cause of the friction was that the Congress was controlled by one political party, the Presidency by the other, and a national election was about to occur.

But even more significant is the fact that, despite the "do-nothing" label pinned on the 80th Congress by President Truman, it was actually an amazingly productive Congress. From Mr. Truman's standpoint, the problem was not that Congress refused to act, but that Congress passed a considerable number of major bills which failed to carry out the President's recommendations. In this regard, the situation was precisely parallel to the present circumstance.

For example:

- A. Congress passed the Taft-Hartley Act to bring balance into labor-management relations. Mr. Truman vetoed the bill, but the veto was overridden.
- B. Congress passed a law continuing the U. S. Employment Service in the Federal Security Agency, rather than the Labor Department where the President wanted it. Mr. Truman vetoed, but the veto was overridden.
- C. Congress passed a law requiring an FBI check of nominees to the Atomic Energy Commission. The President's veto was sustained.
- D. Congress passed an antitrust exemption for certain rate-making by railroads (the Reed-Bulwinkle bill), and overrode the President's veto.
- E. Congress passed three tax-reduction bills, got back three vetoes, and overrode the third one.
- F. Congress passed a voluntary price control bill, whereas the President had requested mandatory stand-by controls.
- G. Congress passed an exemption for newsboys and certain other groups from social security, overriding a veto.

- H. Congress ignored an Administration demand that the Air Force be limited to 55 groups and voted appropriations for a 70-group force (a decision which looked pretty good two years later when the Korean War started).

Aside from these areas of dispute, the 80th Congress passed a great deal of major legislation: unification of the Armed Services; Greek-Turkish Aid; the European Recovery Program (i.e., the Marshall Plan); extension of the Reciprocal Trade program; a major housing program, etc.

Of course, the President proposed a number of bills which were not enacted; and many other bills originating in the GOP Congress were not enacted, largely because of Administration opposition. Precisely the same situation exists today.

On the whole, there is an amazing parallel between the current legislative situation and the Truman era -- despite efforts by the Democrats to blur the comparison.