Extent

209 folders, approximately 27,542 pages

Summary

This collection consists of records from the files of Elisa Harris, National Security Council Director for Nonproliferation and Export Controls from 1993 through 2001. The collection contains correspondence, memoranda, reports, briefing and meeting materials, newspaper articles, emails, and notes regarding the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Scope and Content Note

The materials in FOIA 2016-0158-F are a selective body of documents responsive to the topic of the FOIA. Researchers should consult the archivist about related material. FOIA 2016-0158-F contains the National Security Council (NSC) files of Elisa Harris, Director for Nonproliferation and Export Controls from 1993 through 2001. Prior to joining the NSC, she was a staff consultant to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1980 thru 1984. After several years as an analyst at the Brookings Institution and a research fellow at Harvard University, Harris served in the NSC as Director for Nonproliferation and Export Controls during the entire Clinton administration. As Director, she was responsible for policy on chemical, biological, and missile proliferation. At the end of President Clinton’s 2nd term, Harris returned to academics to become Senior Research Scholar at the Center for International and Security Studies at the University of Maryland (CISSM). As of April 2017, she remains in residence at CISSM. Harris was a primary advisor for U.S. nonproliferation policy, most notably regarding the ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Under a law passed by Congress and signed by President Reagan in 1985, the vast majority of the U.S. chemical weapons stockpile was ordered to be destroyed. The CWC required that other countries do the same and eliminate existing stockpiles, under international supervision. At the very

end of the presidency of George H.W. Bush, CWC treaty negotiations were completed, and the treaty was signed. In November 1993, President Clinton submitted the treaty to the Senate for advice and consent. For over three and half years, the Senate held multiple CWC hearings and dozens of briefings. By early 1997, the U.S. was in danger of failing to ratify before an April deadline, due to minority opposition from several influential senators. In response, President Clinton and then-Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott established a process to work through the opposition's concerns about the treaty. Negotiations were led by Senator Jesse Helms and Senator Joe Biden, and an agreement was reached on the twenty-eight conditions that were included in the treaty's resolutions of ratification. On April 24, 1997, the Senate, by a vote of 74-26, passed legislation to ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention. The records responsive to this FOIA consist of the first segment of Elisa Harris' systematically processed NSC files. These files include the chron/subject files and copies of the NSC Records Management numbered documents that she received or worked on during her time in the Clinton Administration. The files also contain correspondence, memorandums, briefing materials, press materials, and notes concerning a variety of nonproliferation issues, mostly regarding the ratification and implementation of the CWC from 1993 thru 2001. The researcher should note that nearly a quarter of the records related to this FOIA case are closed for national security reasons.

Record Type

Textual

System of Arrangement

Records that are responsive to this FOIA request were found in this collection area—Clinton Presidential Records: White House Staff and Office Files. Staff and Office files were maintained at the folder level by staff members within their individual offices and document all levels of administration activity. Staff and Office files are processed at the folder level, that is, individual documents are not selected and removed from a folder for processing. While this method maintains folder integrity, it frequently results in the incidental processing of documents that are not wholly responsive to the subject area.

Access

Collection is open to all researchers. Access to Clinton Presidential Records is governed by the Presidential Records Act (PRA) (44 U.S.C. Chapter 22, as amended) and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552, as amended) and therefore records may be restricted in whole or in part in accordance with legal exemptions.

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Provenance

Official records of William Jefferson Clinton’s presidency are housed at the Clinton Presidential Library and administered by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) under the provisions of the Presidential Records Act (PRA).

Processed by

Staff Archivist, 2017. Previously restricted materials are added as they are released.

Last Modified Date

2017-09-28

Container List

The following is a list of documents and folders processed in response to FOIA 2016-0158-F:

Box 1

Clinton Presidential Records: White House Staff and Office Files
National Security Council
Nonproliferation and Export Controls
Harris, Elisa
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-[Abner] Mikva Speech, May 1995 [OA/ID 3124]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Conditions, 1997 [1] [OA/ID 3376]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Conditions, 1997 [2] [OA/ID 3376]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Conditions, 1997 [3] [OA/ID 3376]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Conditions, 1997 [4] [OA/ID 3376]
Clinton Presidential Records: White House Staff and Office Files (continued)
National Security Council
Nonproliferation and Export Controls
Harris, Elisa

Box 2

[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Conditions, 1997 [5] [OA/ID 3376]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Conditions, 1997 [6] [OA/ID 3376]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Cost Sharing/Lab Sample, 1997-2000 [1] [OA/ID 3376]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Cost Sharing/Lab Sample, 1997-2000 [2] [OA/ID 3376]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Draft NSD/PDD [National Security Directive/Presidential
Decision Directive] on CWC [OA/ID 3124]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Environmental Impact Statement [1] [OA/ID 3124]

Box 3

[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Environmental Impact Statement [2] [OA/ID 3124]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Implementation, 1997 [1] [OA/ID 3376]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Implementation, 1997 [2] [OA/ID 3376]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Implementation, 1998-2000 [1] [OA/ID 3376]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Implementation, 1998-2000 [2] [OA/ID 3376]

Box 4

[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Implementation, 1998-2000 [3] [OA/ID 3376]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Intelligence Activities and CWC [OA/ID 3125]

[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Japanese Chemical Attack, March 1995 [OA/ID 3125]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Lancaster CODEL [Congressional Delegation] [OA/ID 3124]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Lancaster Memos [1] [OA/ID 3124]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Lancaster Memos [2] [OA/ID 3124]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ocean Dumping [1] [OA/ID 3124]
Box 5
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ocean Dumping [2] [OA/ID 3124]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Previous CWC NSDs [National Security Directives] [OA/ID 3124]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Public Affairs Materials, 1993-94 [1] [OA/ID 3124]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Public Affairs Materials, 1993-94 [2] [OA/ID 3124]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-QFRs [Questions for the Record] 1995 Testimony [OA/ID 3125]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-QFRs [Questions for the Record] 1996 Testimony [OA/ID 3125]
Box 6
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification, 1993 [1] [OA/ID 3373]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification, 1993 [2] [OA/ID 3373]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification. 1993 [3] [OA/ID 3373]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification, 1994 [1] [OA/ID 3373]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification, 1994 [2] [OA/ID 3373]
Box 7
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification, 1994 [3] [OA/ID 3373]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification, January-August 1995 [1] [OA/ID 3373]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification, January-August 1995 [2] [OA/ID 3373]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification, September-December 1995 [1] [OA/ID 3373]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification, September-December 1995 [2] [OA/ID 3373]
Clinton Presidential Records: White House Staff and Office Files (continued)
National Security Council
Nonproliferation and Export Controls
Harris, Elisa
Box 8
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification, September-December 1995 [3] [OA/ID

3373]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification, January-March 1996 [1] [OA/ID 3374]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification, January-March 1996 [2] [OA/ID 3374]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification, January-March 1996 [3] [OA/ID 3374]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification, April-May 1996 [1] [OA/ID 3374]
Box 9
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification, April-May 1996 [2] [OA/ID 3374]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification, April-May 1996 [3] [OA/ID 3374]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification, June-December 1996 [1] [OA/ID 3374]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification, June-December 1996 [2] [OA/ID 3374]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification, June-December 1996 [3] [OA/ID 3374]
Box 10
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification 1997: January [1] [OA/ID 3375]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification 1997: January [2] [OA/ID 3375]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification 1997: February [1] [OA/ID 3375]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification 1997: February [2] [OA/ID 3375]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification 1997: March [1] [OA/ID 3375]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification 1997: March [2] [OA/ID 3375]
Box 11
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification 1997: March [3] [OA/ID 3375]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification 1997: April [1] [OA/ID 3375]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification 1997: April [2] [OA/ID 3375]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification 1997: April [3] [OA/ID 3375]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification 1997: April [4] [OA/ID 3375]
Box 12
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification 1997: Academics [OA/ID 3375]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification 1997: Action Items [OA/ID 3375]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification 1997: Blast Faxes [OA/ID 3375]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification 1997: Business [OA/ID 3375]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification 1997: Enviro [OA/ID 3375]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification 1997: Instruments of Ratification [OA/ID 3375]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification 1997: Kick-Off Event [OA/ID 3375]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification 1997: Letters Combined [OA/ID 3375]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification 1997: Religious [OA/ID 3375]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification 1997: Retired Military [OA/ID 3375]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification 1997: Scientists [OA/ID 3375]

[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification 1997: Vets [OA/ID 3375]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification: Administration Talkers/Statements 1996
[OA/ID 3374]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification: Congressional Budget Office Study on Cost,
1996 [OA/ID 3374]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification: Congressional Package, 1996 [OA/ID 3374]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification: Helms Administration Comments, 1996
[OA/ID 3374]
Clinton Presidential Records: White House Staff and Office Files (continued)
National Security Council
Nonproliferation and Export Controls
Harris, Elisa
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification: Helms/Lugar Comparison, 1996 [OA/ID 3374]
Box 13
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification: Helms/Lugar Comparison Reports, 1996 [1] [OA/ID 3374]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification: Helms/Lugar Comparison Reports, 1996 [2] [OA/ID 3374]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification: Legislative Updates, 1996 [OA/ID 3374]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification: Lugar Administration Comments, 1996 [OA/ID 3374]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification: Non-Governmental Organization Fact Sheets, 1996 [OA/ID 3374]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification: Op-Eds/Press, 1996 [OA/ID 3374]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification: Opponents Fact Sheets/Press, 1996 [OA/ID 3374]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification: POTUS Statements, 1996 [OA/ID/3374]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification: Press Packs/Fact Sheets, 1996 [1] [OA/ID 3374]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification: Press Packs/Fact Sheets, 1996 [2]

[OA/ID 3374]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Ratification: Trigger Point, 1996 [OA/ID 3374]
Box 14
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-RCAs [Riot Control Agents] [1] [OA/ID 3124]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-RCAs [Riot Control Agents] [2] [OA/ID 3124]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-RCAs [Riot Control Agents] [3] [OA/ID 3124]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-RCAs [Riot Control Agents] [4] [OA/ID 3124]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-RCAs [Riot Control Agents] [5] [OA/ID 3124]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Section 37 Report [OA/ID 3124]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-SASC [Senate Armed Services Committee] QFRs [Questions for the Record] 1994 Testimony [OA/ID 3125]
Box 15
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-SSCI [Senate Select Committee on Intelligence] 1994 Report [1] [OA/ID 3125]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-SSCI [Senate Select Committee on Intelligence] 1994 Report [2] [OA/ID 3125]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-SSCI [Senate Select Committee on Intelligence] 1994 Report [3] [OA/ID 3125]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-SSCI/SFRC [Senate Select Committee on Intelligence/
Senate Foreign Relations Committee] Draft 1994 Testimony [1] [OA/ID 3125]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-SSCI/SFRC [Senate Select Committee on Intelligence/
Senate Foreign Relations Committee] Draft 1994 Testimony [2] [OA/ID 3125]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-SSCI/SFRC [Senate Select Committee on Intelligence/
Senate Foreign Relations Committee] Final 1994 Testimony [1] [OA/ID 3125]
Clinton Presidential Records: White House Staff and Office Files (continued)
National Security Council
Nonproliferation and Export Controls
Harris, Elisa
Box 16
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-SSCI/SFRC [Senate Select Committee on Intelligence/
Senate Foreign Relations Committee] Final 1994 Testimony [2] [OA/ID 3125]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-SSCI/SFRC [Senate Select Committee on Intelligence/

Senate Foreign Relations Committee] QFRs [Questions for the Record] 1994 Testimony
[1] [OA/ID 3125]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-SSCI/SFRC [Senate Select Committee on Intelligence/
Senate Foreign Relations Committee] QFRs [Questions for the Record] 1994 Testimony
[2] [OA/ID 3125]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-SSCI/SFRC [Senate Select Committee on Intelligence/
Senate Foreign Relations Committee] QFRs [Questions for the Record] 1994 Testimony
[3] [OA/ID 3125]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-SSCI/SFRC [Senate Select Committee on Intelligence/
Senate Foreign Relations Committee] 1996 Testimony
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-Troika Visit, September 1995 [OA/ID 3124]
[Chemical Weapons Convention]-U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, "What
the CWC Means to Industry" January 1995 Video [OA/ID 3373]
Box 17
Cuban BW [Biological Weapons] Allegations-Thrips palmi [1] [OA/ID 2555]
Cuban BW [Biological Weapons] Allegations-Thrips palmi [2] [OA/ID 2555]
Cuban BW [Biological Weapons] Allegations-Thrips palmi [3] [OA/ID 2555]
Gulf War Illnesses [1] [OA/ID 2555]
Gulf War Illnesses [2] [OA/ID 2555]
Gulf War Illnesses [3] [OA/ID 2555]
Box 18
Gulf War Illnesses [4] [OA/ID 2555]
[Gulf War Illnesses]-Administration Testimony [OA/ID 3120
[Gulf War Illnesses]-Background for Fact Sheets [OA/ID 3120]
[Gulf War Illnesses]-Charter and Executive Order [OA/ID 3120]
[Gulf War Illnesses]-CW [Chemical Weapons] Related Information [OA/ID 3120]
[Gulf War Illnesses]-Compensation Info [OA/ID 3120]
[Gulf War Illnesses]-CCEP [Comprehensive Clinical Evaluation Program] Reports [OA/ID 3120]
[Gulf War Illnesses]-Decision Memo [OA/ID 3120]

[Gulf War Illnesses]-DoD [Department of Defense] Initiatives [OA/ID 3120]
[Gulf War Illnesses]-Fact Sheets [OA/ID 3120]
[Gulf War Illnesses]-[Intelligence Reports] [OA/ID 3120]
[Gulf War Illnesses]-Memos [OA/ID 3120]
[Gulf War Illnesses]-New Initiatives Fact Sheet [OA/ID 3120]
Box 19
[Gulf War Illnesses]-Ongoing/Completed Initiative Fact Sheets [OA/ID 3120]
[Gulf War Illnesses]-POTUS Statements [OA/ID 3120]
[Gulf War Illnesses]-PAC [Presidential Advisory Committee] Creation Materials [OA/ID 3120]
[Gulf War Illnesses]-PAC [Presidential Advisory Committee] Final Report [1] [OA/ID 3120]
[Gulf War Illnesses]-PAC [Presidential Advisory Committee] Final Report [2] [OA/ID 3120]
Clinton Presidential Records: White House Staff and Office Files (continued)
National Security Council
Nonproliferation and Export Controls
Harris, Elisa
[Gulf War Illnesses]-PAC [Presidential Advisory Committee] Interim Report [OA/ID 3120]
[Gulf War Illnesses]-[Presidential Advisory Committee Reports] [OA/ID 3120]
Box 20
[Gulf War Illnesses]-Press Guidance/Plans [OA/ID 3120]
[Gulf War Illnesses]-Press Releases [OA/ID 3120]
[Gulf War Illnesses]-Press Stories [OA/ID 3120]
[Gulf War Illnesses]-Riegle [Report to Senate] [OA/ID 3120]
[Gulf War Illnesses]-ToR [Terms of Reference] [OA/ID 3120]
[Gulf War Illnesses]-Tucker [Report to House] [OA/ID 3120]
Box 21
[Harris] Chron Files, January-February 1993 [OA/ID 775]
[Harris] Chron Files, March 1993 [OA/ID 775]
[Harris] Chron Files, April 1993 [OA/ID 775]
[Harris] Chron Files, May 1993 [OA/ID 775]
[Harris] Chron Files, June 1993 [OA/ID 775]
[Harris] Chron Files, July 1993 [OA/ID 775]
[Harris] Chron Files, August 1993 [OA/ID 775]
[Harris] Chron Files, September 1993 [OA/ID 775]

[Harris] Chron Files, October 1993 [OA/ID 775]
Box 22
[Harris] Chron Files, November 1993 [OA/ID 775]
[Harris] Chron Files, December 1993 [OA/ID 775]
[Harris] Chron Files, January 1994 [OA/ID 775]
[Harris] Chron Files, February 1994 [OA/ID 775]
[Harris] Chron Files, March 1994 [OA/ID 775]
[Harris] Chron Files, April 1994 [OA/ID 775]
[Harris] Chron Files, May 1994 [1] [OA/ID 775]
Box 23
[Harris] Chron Files, May 1994 [2] [OA/ID 775]
[Harris] Chron Files, June 1994 [1] [OA/ID 776]
[Harris] Chron Files, June 1994 [2] [OA/ID 776]
[Harris] Chron Files, July 1994 [OA/ID 776]
[Harris] Chron Files, August 1994 [OA/ID 776]
[Harris] Chron Files, September 1994 [OA/ID 776]
[Harris] Chron Files, October 1994 [1] [OA/ID 776]
Box 24
[Harris] Chron Files, October 1994 [2] [OA/ID 776]
[Harris] Chron Files, November 1994 [OA/ID 776]
[Harris] Chron Files, December 1994 [OA/ID 776]
[Harris] Chron Files, January 1995 [OA/ID 3539]
[Harris] Chron Files, February 1995 [1] [OA/ID 3539]
[Harris] Chron Files, February 1995 [2] [OA/ID 3539]
[Harris] Chron Files, March 1995 [1] [OA/ID 3539]
Box 25
[Harris] Chron Files, March 1995 [2] [OA/ID 3539]
Clinton Presidential Records: White House Staff and Office Files (continued)
National Security Council
Nonproliferation and Export Controls
Harris, Elisa
[Harris] Chron Files, March 1995 [3] [OA/ID 3539]
[Harris] Chron Files, April 1995 [1] [OA/ID 3539]
[Harris] Chron Files, April 1995 [2] [OA/ID 3539]
[Harris] Chron Files, May 1995 [1] [OA/ID 3539]
[Harris] Chron Files, May 1995 [2] [OA/ID 3539]
Box 26

[Harris] Chron Files, June 1995 [OA/ID 3539]
[Harris] Chron Files, July 1995 [1] [OA/ID 3539]
[Harris] Chron Files, July 1995 [2] [OA/ID 3539]
[Harris] Chron Files, August 1995 [OA/ID 3539]
[Harris] Chron Files, September 1995 [OA/ID 3539]
[Harris] Chron Files, October 1995 [OA/ID 3539]
[Harris] Chron Files, November 1995 [OA/ID 3539]
[Harris] Chron Files, December 1995 [1] [OA/ID 3539]
Box 27
[Harris] Chron Files, December 1995 [2] [OA/ID 3539]
[Russia]- Chemical Weapons Destruction, 1991-1992 [OA/ID 2384]
[Russia]- Chemical Weapons Destruction, 1993 [1] [OA/ID 2384]
[Russia]- Chemical Weapons Destruction, 1993 [2] [OA/ID 2384]
[Russia]- Chemical Weapons Destruction, 1993 [3] [OA/ID 2384]
[Russia]- Chemical Weapons Destruction, 1993 [4] [OA/ID 2384]
Box 28
[Russia]- Chemical Weapons Destruction, 1993 [5] [OA/ID 2384]
[Russia]- Chemical Weapons Destruction, 1993 [6] [OA/ID 2384]
[Russia]- Chemical Weapons Destruction, 1993 [7] [OA/ID 2384]
[Russia]- Chemical Weapons Destruction, 1994 [1] [OA/ID 2384]
[Russia]- Chemical Weapons Destruction, 1994 [2] [OA/ID 2384]
[Russia]- Chemical Weapons Destruction, 1996 [1] [OA/ID 2384]
Box 29
[Russia]- Chemical Weapons Destruction, 1996 [2] [OA/ID 2384]
[Russia]- Chemical Weapons Destruction, 1996 [3] [OA/ID 2384]
[Russia]- Chemical Weapons Destruction, 1998 [OA/ID 2384]
Smallpox Destruction [1] [OA/ID 2555]
Smallpox Destruction [2] [OA/ID 2555]
Smallpox Destruction [3] [OA/ID 2555]
Box 30
Smallpox Destruction [4] [OA/ID 2555]
Smallpox Destruction [5] [OA/ID 2555]
Smallpox Destruction [6] [OA/ID 2555]
Smallpox Destruction [7] [OA/ID 2555]
Smallpox Destruction [8] [OA/ID 2555]
Box 31
Smallpox Destruction [9] [OA/ID 2555]