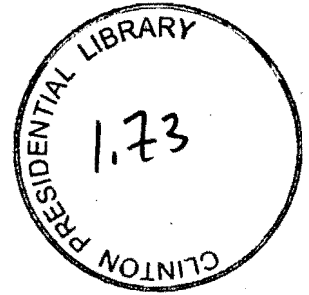


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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON



MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel

NOTE TAKERS: Jim Smith and Frank Jarosinski

DATE, TIME December 17, 1998 -- 12:02 p.m. - 12:06 p.m. EST
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: Hello. (U)

Prime Minister Netanyahu: Bill, how are you? (U)

The President: I'm fine. (U)

Prime Minister Netanyahu: How's it going? (U)

The President: Fine. I wanted to check in. We have some damage assessment that shows good results, all of our pilots have come back so far, but we have more flights today and British pilots will be up there. So far there are very low civilian casualties. They say not, but that is our information, that they're quite low. We're doing all we can to support you; beyond the extra Patriot batteries, we'll be standing by to support you if Saddam starts making threatening statements. Interestingly enough, the Gulf countries and Egypt are giving us all the cooperation we asked for. Mubarak made a pretty strong statement. My intelligence officer, George Tenet, was in today and said that so far all the military activity has been completely defensive in nature. (S)

Prime Minister Netanyahu: Do you have any indication of activity in western Iraq? (S)

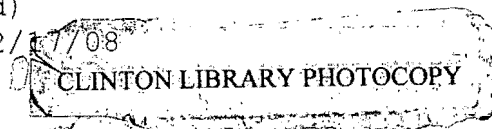
The President: No. All the military activity so far has been defensive. You know, the first thing we try to take out is

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Classified by: Glyn T. Davies

Reason: 1.5 (a) (d)

Declassify on: 12/17/08

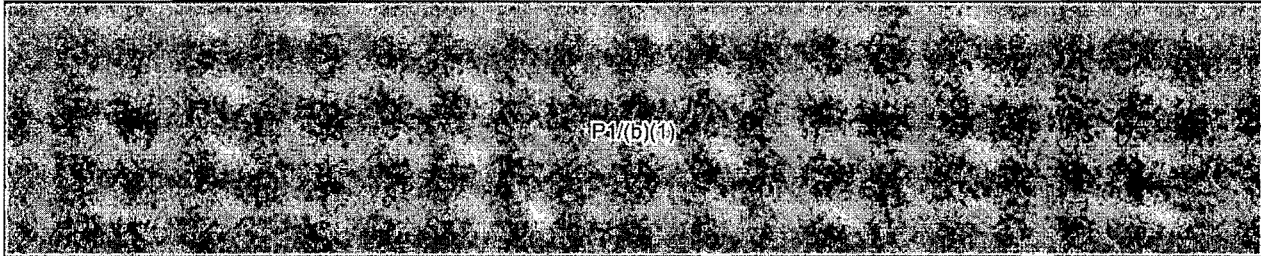


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their integrated communications and air defense systems. So we haven't, and obviously if we do, we'll tell you as soon as we can. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Netanyahu: Good. You know you have our support. We're keeping a low-profile, saying that we're not a part of this conflict, but we reserve the right to self-defense if they try to involve us. We prefer to stay out, but you enjoy our full support. ~~(S)~~



~~P1(b)(1)~~ Butler is being compared to me, and me to Butler. ~~(S)~~

The President: They're equating you and Butler? ~~(C)~~

Prime Minister Netanyahu: Yes, I'm Butler now. ~~(C)~~

The President: I like Butler. ~~(C)~~

Prime Minister Netanyahu: You have your friends who are always your friends and will stand by the United States. Always. I don't make a big issue now of our support in consideration of your needs, but let me know if I can help and I will be happy to do it. ~~(C)~~

The President: I will. We'll watch over the next day or two. I'll call back if I need to, and if you need to, call me. ~~(C)~~

Prime Minister Netanyahu: What do you think - let me not ask you that. We'll follow it as we go, and if there's anything you want to pass through special channels -- ~~(C)~~

The President: I'll do it. (U)

Prime Minister Netanyahu: Things here are pretty calm and we wish you the best. (U)

The President: Thank you so much. (U)

Prime Minister Netanyahu: Did you ever have a chance to follow up on our conversation? ~~(C)~~

The President: I did, and I did what I could. ~~(C)~~

Prime Minister Netanyahu: Okay. (U)

The President: I did what I could. I followed up and I did what I could. I'll have another conversation in a day or two.

~~(C)~~
Prime Minister Netanyahu: That's it. Thank you, Bill. (U)

The President: Goodbye. (U)

Prime Minister Netanyahu: Goodbye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --