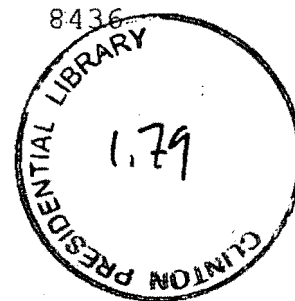


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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON



MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom

NOTE TAKERS: Matt Sibley, Doug Bayley, Robin Rickard, Jenny McGee, David Higgins and Roger Merletti

DATE, TIME December 19, 1998 -- 5:43 p.m. - 5:51 p.m. EST
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: Hello. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Hi Bill. (U)

The President: Hey Tony. I just got my briefing on the bomb damage and am pleased with the way things have gone, and I think the operation should end now. I hope you are pleased with British participation. It was quite important. (C)

Prime Minister Blair: Sure, it has been a job well done. (U)

The President: Yes, I am really proud of them.

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(U)

Prime Minister Blair: I think what is important now is that we really show people, one, that we've significantly damaged his capabilities in a very precise way and in a sense that we have not brought him down. The point is we have reduced significantly the threat he poses to the rest of the world that is a darn sight better than leaving him in breach of his UN obligations and us taking no action against him at all. (C)

The President: Yes, I agree with that. (U)

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Prime Minister Blair: I think it has been an operation with a purpose. The purpose has been achieved. He is back in his box, and we now have to work out a strategy for containment and stability. (C)

The President: I agree with all that. I think we should say we will continue to contain him, restate the redlines for use of force: no threat to his neighbors, no developing WMD, and no movement against the Kurds. I also think we should say we support the extension of the oil-for-food. And, when it comes to UNSCOM and the IAEA, I can tell you we will welcome their return to Iraq, and I intend to say we will work on their return but only after concrete, affirmative, and demonstrable action by Iraq showing that it will provide full cooperation necessary for UNSCOM and the IAEA to do their job. (C)

Prime Minister Blair: I think that is exactly the right thing to say. (U)

The President: The Russians and the Chinese are hot and really angry at me right now -- and the burden is on us to work hard to manage the Council. I think they are a lot madder at me than you. But we will get through it. If we would have given them all the advance notice they wanted, we would have had a very different operation these last three days. (C)

Prime Minister Blair: The truth of the matter is that we have not acted other than what we said we would. We said we would act without further warning, and if we had not, they would think we were not serious at all. (C)

The President: Everything was terrific. We did exactly what we said we would do and I am very pleased. Our people said the work we did with the British was great and the cooperation was great. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: I think it is tremendously important that as much material as possible about the damage is released as soon as possible. We need to build up a picture of what we've achieved in military terms. In a funny way people will be pleased that none of our service people have been killed and relieved it was a short campaign. On the other hand, they will want to know what it is that we actually did in military terms -- the more detailed we can get the better. (C)

The President: I agree with that, and I will support it. And I think our people have shared all the information. I really want

to do that just like you say. I've got the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, and General Shelton here with me now and we will follow up. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Okay Bill. When are you going to go out and say something? It is about quarter to 11 here now. (U)

The President: Yes, go out now and do it. I'm going on in a minute. Just go on now. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: I will do a short statement. (U)

The President: We are going out right now. They say I'm scheduled to go out in five minutes. I have got a three-minute statement, so why don't you just wait and go on out. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Okay, that is great. Our people need to stay in close touch. (U)

The President: Let me ask you . . . I have a three-minute statement. Let me go give it and if you want to answer questions. . . (U)

Prime Minister Blair: I am not going to answer questions. (U)

The President: I am not going to answer any questions either. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Our defense guys thought it would be good if we could release the aftermath of the Ba'ath Party headquarters hit. (C)

The President: I will check with them. I thought they were going to do that. Al Gore is on the phone with them. We will check on it. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: All right. (U)

The President: Good show. Thank you. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Thank you. Good-bye. (U)

The President: Bye-bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --