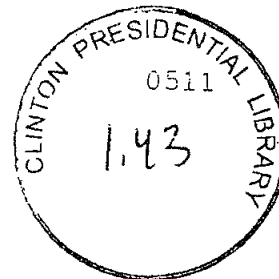


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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON



MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with British Prime Minister Blair
(U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister Tony Blair

Notetakers: James Smith, Roger Merletti,
Frank Jarosinski and Lawrence Butler

DATE, TIME January 21, 1999, 2:26-2:53 p.m. EST
AND PLACE: Oval Office

Prime Minister Blair: Hi, Bill. Kosovo.

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(b)(d)

DECLASSIFIED UNDER AUTHORITY OF THE
INTERAGENCY SECURITY CLASSIFICATION APPEALS PANEL,
E.O. 13526, SECTION 5.3(b)(3)
ISCAP APPEAL NO. 2013-090, document no. 41
DECLASSIFICATION DATE: October 14, 2015

The President: I completely agree with you on that. Obviously,
we have to do something and be prepared to take some action and

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Classified by: Glyn T. Davies

Reason: 1.5(d)

Declassify on: 1/26/09

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be determined not to let him undermine the KVM and work over Walker. I don't want to be slow or indecisive. I will try to get Congress to go along with me and not stop it. (C)

Domestic politics aside, my problem about ground forces is that if we send them in without some type of agreement beforehand -- it doesn't have to be as detailed as Dayton --

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I really think we have to do something, but I know if we do military action without a political plan we will have a problem. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(b)(d)

The President: I agree with that. On the other hand, this is likely to be one of ~~these~~ things where we can't see completely to the end.

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

We have to keep working on it. We are in a much different situation than we were legally and politically in Bosnia because the world has said these people deserve autonomy but not independence. I don't want to get into a pickle, but now that 45 people have been slaughtered and Milosevic is trying to throw the KVM out, we don't have any choice but to do something. (C)

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Prime Minister Blair:

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The President: One thing is to go to them and say, "Look, if you want us to do any more you have to help, too." They probably have as many violations of cease-fires as Milosevic, though his are more egregious. "For a long-term resolution you have to come to the table too, you can't have it both ways, and you never take any responsibility." (C)

Prime Minister Blair: It's important we do that. (C)

The President: They may ignore it but we have to try. (C)

Prime Minister Blair: If we do that in a really concerted way, we may get somewhere. I think it very important we do that,

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(b)(d)

The President: That makes a lot more sense.

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Prime Minister Blair: ~~Yes~~. (U)

The President: It is a very difficult problem and I don't pretend to have all the answers. We have to be careful not to be weak and move decisively with NATO now, knowing it won't solve the problem without a political resolution.

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

I would be in an impossible position. I may not be able to sell it at any time with Congress, but I certainly can't do

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it unless there is an appropriate environment. I think we agree we have to keep working and go full speed ahead with NATO

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Prime Minister Blair: I think that is exactly right.

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(b)(d)

The President: I agree with that. That is good. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

The President: I agree. That is what we need to do. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

The President: I agree with that. (C)

Prime Minister Blair: Okay, Bill, let's keep in touch on that.

The President: Can I do anything? Can I help at all? (U)

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E.O. 13526, section 1.4(b)(d)

Prime Minister Blair:

The President: I'm really worried. Gerry Adams was here not long ago, and I had a firm talk with him. I am really getting kind of frustrated by them not doing anything. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

The President: You just let me know. I am concerned that they have not hit a lick of this. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

The President: Yes, it does. I don't know how.. just bizarre. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

The President: All right. What else? (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

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The President: Let me tell you what we're going on and what the lay of the land is. We tried to negotiate to get a solution to the EU restrictions in '92. I would still like to do it. The problem now for me is, I don't have any flexibility for delaying. Congress was going to impose them by statute, and that was trouble that I headed off. But the only way I could do it was by sending them a letter that said I would do it, and basically there is a little time left. February 1 plus 10 days, then there is probably another week after that before Customs could enforce it. If there is any way you think your guys have flexibility and work out a solution I would like to do it, but one operation here lost nearly a billion dollars since this all happened. The law is pretty clear. I don't want to do anything to cause you problems. In principle, I don't want Congress legislating in the trade area. We had to send a letter that we would do it, and now time has run out. So if there is anything we can do, I will do it. I don't want to cause you any trouble but we're sort of stuck on it. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

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The President: I know it does. I've been fooling with it a long time and also some people who are pushing it have enormous influence in Congress and I know them well. We sort of delayed this for years and if there is any way we can resolve it, it would be a good thing. (C)

Let me ask you another thing. Menem was here and he said he has another year in office,

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He has a great economic policy. We're trying to stave off the financial crisis from reaching Latin America, and Brazil is shaky. He asked if you might be able to do something on it. The thing he mentioned the most was travel. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

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(C)

The President: It's something you might think about. He would like to work out some accommodation. The thing he mentioned three different times was travel restrictions. ~~(C)~~

Prime Minister Blair:

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He was here last week. ~~(C)~~

The President:

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There was a war, which they lost, and he understands that. But there are Argentines with relatives there, or relatives buried there, and if they could get some across, to get access to do things. Whatever happens, if you could look into it, without raising the fundamental questions from the war, it would be positive for you and him. ~~(C)~~

Prime Minister Blair: Okay. I will look at that. Bill, we'll speak soon. ~~(C)~~

The President: Okay. Bye. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --