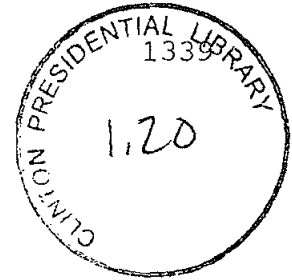


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THE WHITE HOUSE

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. 20
DECLASSIFICATION DATE: October 14, 2015

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with British Prime Minister Blair
(U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister Blair

Notetakers: James Smith, Pat O'Shaughnessy,
Tom Crowell, Bonnie Glick, Jeff Rathke,
Nancy McEldowney, Rexon Ryu

DATE, TIME February 23, 1998, 12:28-12:42 p.m. EST
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

Prime Minister Blair: Hi, Bill. (U)

The President: Tony, how are you? (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Fine, I'm fine.

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The President: Hold on. Here's one, go on. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President:

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

Prime Minister Blair:

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

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Classified by: Glyn T. Davies

Reason: 1.5(b,d)

Declassify On: 2/26/08

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

The President: Who's the commissioner? (c)

Prime Minister Blair:

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The President: I couldn't agree more. We believe he'll appoint a guy with technical expertise, who will have credibility with Butler, but it certainly needs to be. (c)

Prime Minister Blair:

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The President: I couldn't agree more. You've identified the same things I'm worried about. Sandy suggested a phrase which is quite good; our position on this should be to clarify and test. We need to clarify, then test.

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

Prime Minister Blair: Yes, I agree with that entirely. (c)

The President: One thing that we thought of doing, is to get Butler back in the ballgame, because we don't want him out; Kofi is supposed to consult with Butler and the head of the IAEA, and presumably that will keep him from undermining the integrity.

[REDACTED] E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

[REDACTED] Butler doesn't think he can get a team in there until the 1st, that's almost a week. What is today, the 23rd, so that's six days from now. He doesn't think he can get a good team in there, but I think that having someone say, "we're UNSCOM and we want to check the Ministry of Defense" would be a good way to check in a hurry. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

[REDACTED] E.O. 13526, section 1.4(b)(d)

The President: I understand. We need to ask all these questions, but no matter how good his answers, we need an early test. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

[REDACTED] E.O. 13526, section 1.4(b)(d)

The President: It will take me a few weeks to withdraw troops from the Gulf, so we will sit tight. I think we need to test, as you said, test under 4 but also 5, because there are sensitive sites that aren't presidential sites. Also, it will take longer under Para 4 to get started.

[REDACTED] E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

Prime Minister Blair: I think that is right.

[REDACTED] E.O. 13526, section 1.4(b)(d)

[REDACTED] Has anyone spoken to Kofi? (C)

The President: I spoke to him last night at 8:30 my time, which was 4:30 his time. He was a little groggy, but he wanted to demonstrate to us that the agreement would fully meet the P-5 instructions he took to Baghdad. I said that's great, but at that time I hadn't seen the agreement. He promised to call me when he got to Paris. I don't know if he's in Paris, but I

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understood that he did not want to talk in enormous detail over Iraqi phones. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair: No, quite smart. ~~(S)~~

The President: Now, let me tell you some good news, potentially. I spoke with Yeltsin, and went over my concerns,

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

Prime Minister Blair: That's pretty good. ~~(S)~~

The President: That's pretty damn good. ~~(S)~~

The President: My relationship with Yeltsin is such that all his hard-liners believe I could talk to Yeltsin and get him to sell the oil wells for three dollars and a half, but that's not true. He's just more far-sighted and progressive than they are. Half the time they go to work on him, and I have no doubt that they'll make some effort to undermine this. He was quick and unambiguous, and one thing about Yeltsin, he doesn't like for people to take advantage of him. If Saddam Hussein doesn't do it, Yeltsin would take it as a personal insult to him. I think he wants to do right, so if he can stay hitched,

I really believe that's the best guarantor we have that he'll observe the agreement. If you talk to Yeltsin, I would appreciate it if you would reinforce this. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair: ~~(S)~~

The President: You should say you've talked to me and you agree with me,

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

Prime Minister Blair: Absolutely right. Did you say you've spoken to Chirac, Bill? ~~(S)~~

The President: I'll talk to him after I talk to you. And if I get anything, I may talk to you after I talk to him. ~~(S)~~

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Prime Minister Blair:

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(C)

The President: That's it, you got it. ~~let~~

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

The President: Thanks. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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