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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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INTERAGENCY SECURITY CLASSIFICATION APPEALS PANEL,
E.O. 13526, SECTION 5.3(b)(3)

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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with British Prime Minister Blair
(U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister Blair

Notetakers: Pat O'Shaughnessy, Bonnie
Glick, Tom Crowell, Jeff Rathke, Lawrence
Butler and Don Bandler

DATE, TIME February 23, 1998, 8:57 - 9:12 a.m. EST
AND PLACE: The Residence

The President: Hello? (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Hi, Bill, how are you doing? How stand
we, then? (U)

The President: Let me tell you what I have been told about the
document. First of all, the good things.

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

I think we
have to study this document and listen carefully to what Kofi
says tomorrow. (U)

It is important that the commission rush a group of qualified
experts -- I think that we have to test the agreement soon. You
know, we have to get whatever the agreement is: show up at one
of these sites and start looking around. I'd like to do it
before I have to move the whole U.S. Navy around again. Now,

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Classified by: Glyn T. Davies

Reason: 1.5(b, d)

Declassify On: 2/28/08

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Baghdad has done this before with weapons of mass destruction.
~~(C)~~

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President:

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

First of all, you need to get this thing and look at it. What I would like is to be in a position in the next two or three hours to talk to Yeltsin and Chirac. ~~(C)~~

I want to compliment Kofi and say we understand they have agreed to free and unfettered access,

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

You guys get this document. He is going to make it widely available in an hour. Let's go through it. ~~(C)~~

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

Prime Minister Blair:

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

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The President:

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President: Exactly, my view is that we may have another twenty-four to thirty-six hours of word wrangling. We just have to see. ~~(c)~~

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President: Well, apparently, he has some leeway over how the UN structures itself for this special team. He has to know that we want this done correctly, we don't want this to be a bunch of political B.S.

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

We very much hope this will work out. That's my approach. ~~(c)~~

Prime Minister Blair: You're going to say something publicly, are you, Bill? ~~(c)~~

The President: I'm not going to say anything for three or four hours -- I may not be able to, but I'm going to try. The trick is to embrace the effort, pocket his commitment, and thank Kofi for getting it, and he has never done this before.

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

I'm not going to say anything for the next three or four hours, until I flesh this out. ~~(c)~~

Prime Minister Blair: I agree with that.

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

The President:

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President: Tony, I don't know the answer to that. We haven't studied the agreement closely, and Kofi isn't here, so we can't call him. ~~(c)~~

Prime Minister Blair: No one has spoken to Kofi? ~~(c)~~

The President: He told me he'd call me from Paris. I don't know if he will or not. I talked to him late last night. You know, he clearly thinks he has a good deal, the question is whether his definition of a good deal is the same as ours. ~~(c)~~

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President: You and I don't want to rain on it, because if we hadn't been tough, we wouldn't have had the damned deal. We can't completely embrace it until we see the details. We don't want to be in the position of buying a pig in a poke and then say, "Holy cow -- we don't know what happened to it." ~~(c)~~

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President: Absolutely. Sandy says we ought to say our message is, "Yes, if." ~~(c)~~

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President:

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President: That's why I just have to leave everyone where they are, because we have to have a test. I have to leave our troops in place. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President: We're having a vigorous agreement here. Any time in the next two hours you want to talk, after you have seen it, let me know. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President: I wish you would. I understand Yeltsin can take my call in one hour. Chirac said he can't take my call for two-and-a-half hours. That's a long time. He called here earlier, while I was still in bed, and said he didn't want them to wake me. I don't think it's evasion, I think it's just the schedule. It may be better not to talk to them right away. You get the document and parse it a little, and see if there are any holes in the road. I'll try to call you before I talk to Yeltsin and Chirac. Otherwise, I'll just talk to Yeltsin. (C)

Prime Minister Blair: The moment I get the document I will look at it carefully. And we can talk later. (C)

The President: Goodbye. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Thanks, bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --