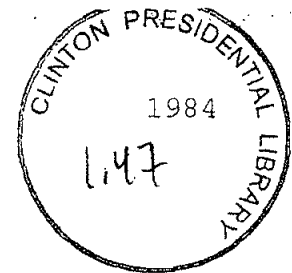


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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with British Prime Minister Blair
(U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister Blair

Notetakers: Tom Crowell, George Chastain,
Robert Ford, Matt Sibley, Lawrence Butler
and Miriam Sapiro

DATE, TIME March 14, 1999, 1:55-2:12 p.m. EST
AND PLACE: The Residence

Prime Minister Blair: Hi, Bill. (U)

The President: Hi, Tony. I had a really good trip down to Central America. I am a bit tired. It was a good trip. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Did you just get back? (U)

The President: I got back a couple of days ago and then had to turn around and go to Arkansas. But it was a good trip. The thing I found interesting was that despite all the horrible problems they have had with the hurricane and the legacy of all of the civil wars, those places are very well governed, with enormous potential. They're all very poor, except for Costa Rica, but they're very well governed. The biggest problem is in the aftermath of all the civil wars a lot of guns were left there, something that you know about. There are also a lot of criminal gangs in the rural areas that make them less than safe so it is hard to get tourism going there. In El Salvador there were former rebels and soldiers in suits listening to my speech. It was quite nice. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: I thought we could have a quick word on Northern Ireland before they all get there. (U)

The President: I agree. (U)

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Reason: 1.5(d)

Declassify On: 3/19/09

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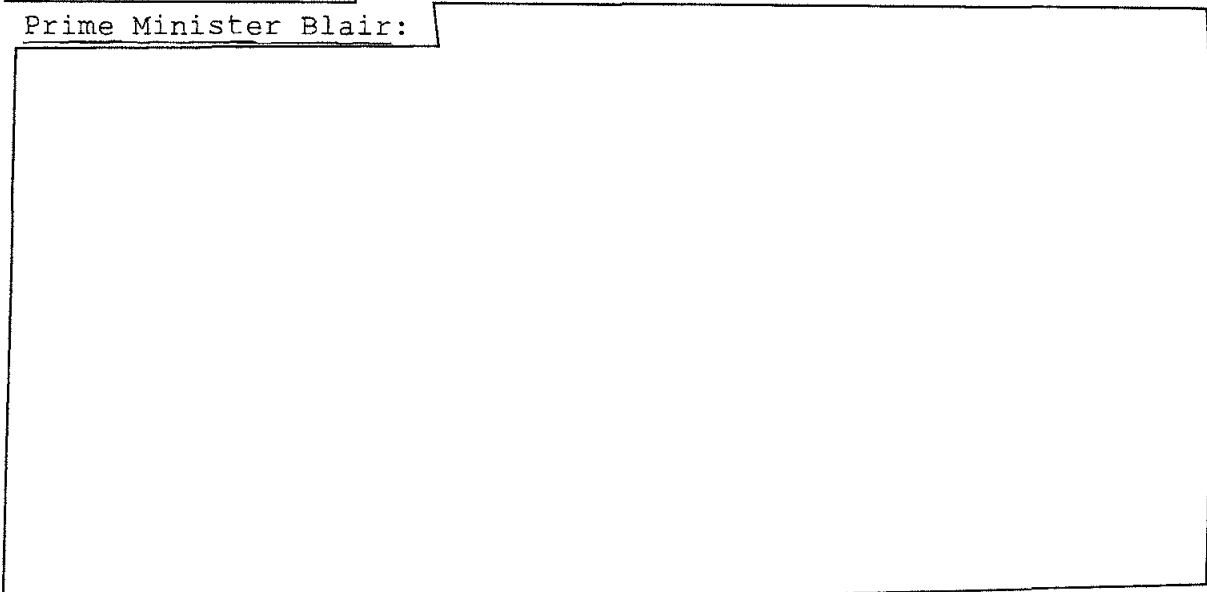
DECLASSIFIED UNDER AUTHORITY OF THE
INTERAGENCY SECURITY CLASSIFICATION APPEALS PANEL,
E.O. 13526, SECTION 5.3(b)(3)
ISCAP APPEAL NO. 2013-090, document no. 45
DECLASSIFICATION DATE: October 14, 2015

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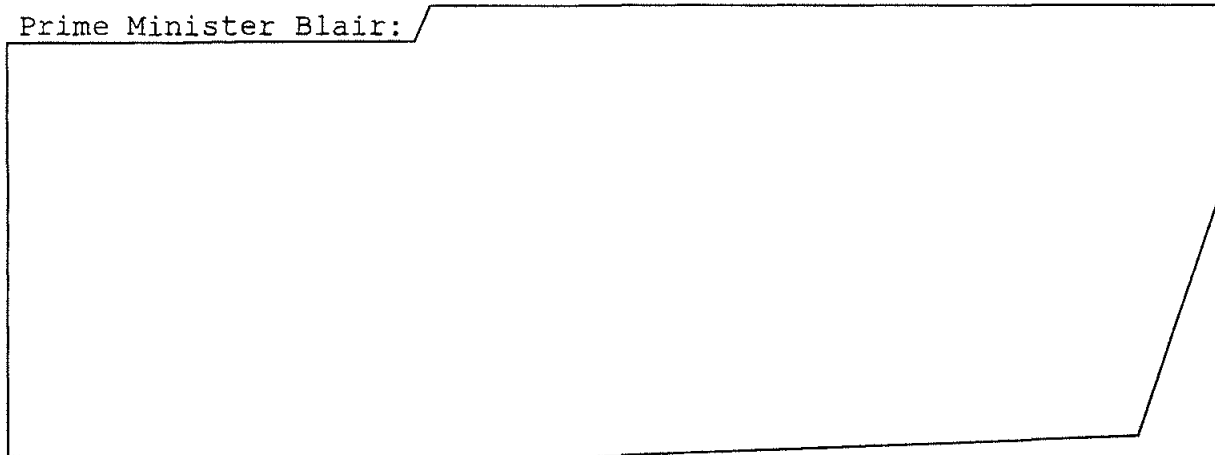
E.O. 13526, section 1.4(b)(d)

Prime Minister Blair:



The President: First, I completely agree with that. George Mitchell believes that there can't be very much time between what Trimble does and the movement on decommissioning. They need to give some sort of private assurances that they can pocket. If they can't give it to Bertie or DeChastelain, to you or someone. I am beginning to get a little concerned. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:



The President: I agree. I will do whatever I can to help get this done. We will just have to see, but I am quite hopeful. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:



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

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

The President: That's fine. I don't mind. I am determined not to let this get away. We need this badly, and I would like to resolve this in the first half of this year, if we can. This will give us the momentum while all the other things are going on. I will do whatever you want me to. I will do whatever it takes. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President: Yes, I told D'Alema you can do whatever you should. We have never had a problem with the EU having a different position than the United States. Even going back before my presidency, we were sponsors of the resolution leading to the Oslo accords. We have to say those issues will have to be resolved in the last phase.

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President: Exactly. That is my position as a matter of principle.

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

Prime Minister Blair: Yes. (C)

The President: Okay, thanks. I think you are right where you need to be. If you think it helps, do it. If not, then don't do it. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President:

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

(C)

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

Prime Minister Blair:

(C)

The President: That is my conclusion. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

The President: When is the G-7 meeting in Germany? (C)

Prime Minister Blair: In the middle of June.

The President: You are going to do something here with the DLC, aren't you? (C)

Prime Minister Blair: Yes, in April. (C)

The President: Our guys are worried about it raining on NATO's parade. We got huge press coverage here yesterday. They went to Harry Truman's home to sign the documents for the NATO event with Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President: Let me have a look at my schedule. In the first half of the year it would be extremely difficult to make a separate trip, but if I am in Germany, maybe I can add a day onto my trip. Where does he want me to do it, in Florence? (C)

Prime Minister Blair: I think so. (C)

The President: That would be a real burden, would it not? Someone has to shoulder the responsibility. (C)

Prime Minister Blair: Have you been there before? (C)

The President: Yes, Hillary and I spent a wonderful week there. As a matter of fact, it was ten years ago this week. (C)

Prime Minister Blair: I love it. It is one of my favorite cities in the world. I will think about it and get back to you. (C)

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The President: Good. I think that we are in sync on the other two matters. I won a big vote in Congress on Kosovo. I think it's interesting because when the Republicans pushed for it, they didn't think I would win it. Our guys worked very hard on it and won a big vote with explicit authorization to deploy, consistent with the conditions I've stated. I feel good about it. But I don't think there is any way that Milosevic will take this deal. But we believe the Kosovars will take it, and then we will be right back on the griddle, you and I.

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President: If the Kosovars say yes, and they have been difficult, we may even get Milosevic to the point where he will say yes -- if we stay tough and if we are prepared to use force. But if not, he will jerk us around. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President: Yeah, I will do that. Do you want me to buy a cashmere sweater from him with duties? (C)

Prime Minister Blair: You don't have to do that or give him bananas. (C)

The President: I wish we could get this resolved before your elections, you know. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President: We got a really rough column that said this is not what the new world order was meant to be. Kosovo goes to hell, and we have a war over this. (C)

Prime Minister Blair: Do shake hands with him. (C)

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The President: I thought I could have my whole wardrobe of Scottish cashmere brought down to him. The Irish wouldn't like it. Hell, I think even the Irish sweaters I have are Scottish. Okay, I will see you. ~~let~~

Prime Minister Blair: Okay, all the best to you. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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