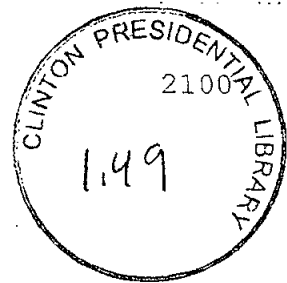


~~SECRET~~

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON



MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with British Prime Minister Blair
(U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister Blair

Notetakers: Jenny McGee, Miles Murphy,
Ralph Sigler and Lawrence Butler

DATE, TIME March 23, 1999, 5:11-5:22 p.m. EST
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

Prime Minister Blair: I'm fine. I'm in Berlin. (U)

The President: I know, Gerhard just told me you were there. Holbrooke is on his way back. Milosevic stiffed him. He wouldn't agree to a cease-fire. He was belligerent and it seems to me he's strongly poised to unleash greater violence in Kosovo.

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

(S)

I want to talk about two things: first, Primakov has postponed his visit to Washington. I think that's the best outcome given the circumstances. Maybe you can call him in the next day or two and tell him you understand why he didn't come to Washington.

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

~~SECRET~~

Reason: 1.5(a,b,d)

Declassify On: 3/23/09

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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)

(S)

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)

The President: Yes, we sat around the room today saying, "Geez, this is really bad. We could lose what we did in Bosnia but we have no option." If we don't, he will just clean them out, kill a bunch of people and do bad things.

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)

(S)

The President: Is Jacques there with you, or is Jospin there?
(C)

Prime Minister Blair: They are both in Berlin, yes. (C)

The President:

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President: Did it go over well in Europe? (C)

Prime Minister Blair: Yes, it went over very well. Our media
said it was very effective.

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

The President: I am completely there and knew you would be too.

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

Prime Minister Blair: Okay, I will speak to him about that.

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

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

[REDACTED]

The President: I couldn't agree more. ~~(C)~~

Prime Minister Blair: [REDACTED]

The President: There have never been any natural boundaries. I couldn't agree more. ~~(C)~~

Prime Minister Blair: We will make strong points and I will speak to D'Alema and Chirac tomorrow. ~~(C)~~

The President: Great, if you want to call me any time of the day or night, call me. I don't expect to sleep much tonight.
(C)

Prime Minister Blair: Tougher than Iraq isn't it? ~~(C)~~

The President: Yeah. They have better air defenses and we have people in the vicinity that are vulnerable. The stakes are high but the potential benefits are enormous. ~~(C)~~

Prime Minister Blair: [REDACTED]

The President: I hope Milosevic can find a way out. He compares it to the Ottoman Empire and how they stopped them in Bosnia, and now he stands up to the Empire of the West. It is crazy. ~~(C)~~

Prime Minister Blair: [REDACTED]

The President: Okay. (U)

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

Prime Minister Blair: All right, Bill. All the best. (U)

The President: Goodbye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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