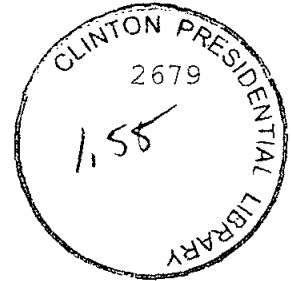


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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON



MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with British Prime Minister Blair (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister Blair

Notetakers: Bonnie Glick, Matthew Sibley, Robert Ford, Robin Rickard, Lawrence Butler and K. C. Brown

DATE, TIME April 10, 1999, 1:31 - 1:50 p.m. EDT
AND PLACE: Residence

The President: Tony? (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Hi Bill. (U)

The President: Are you still in Scotland? (U)

Prime Minister Blair: No, I am back in Chequers now. I am here with Jose Maria Aznar. (U)

The President: Good. He is coming to see me in a couple of days. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: He was telling me to send you his best wishes. (U)

The President: Are they happy in Scotland? (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Yes, a lot happier in Scotland and you will be getting any amount of cashmere that you want. (U)

The President: What I want, is that when I am done here to be made an honorary UK citizen and give me a seat from Scotland next door to a good golf course. The daily papers today are filled with China being pissed off and Russia threatening war.

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Reason: 1.5(a,b,d)

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

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DECLASSIFICATION DATE: October 14, 2015

If you want, you can give me citizenship and make me a Brit.
(U)

Prime Minister Blair: You are one very popular man there. (U)

The President: I hope that it helps in the elections. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: It has helped. Thanks for seeing Donald
Leu as well. What it has done is to emphasize to the people
that sometimes it is useful to be part of something bigger. (C)

The President: Yes, I believe that. We don't have time to talk
about this today, but when you are here -- I want you to think
about something between now and then -- we have to figure out
how to resolve this stupid banana thing. But the real thing is
that the Caribbean is in bad shape economically. I would like
to get a bill through that would treat them like Mexico in
exports. It would help them a lot if the United States, and if
not the entire EU, then the French, Dutch, and British and
everybody that had some presence there could think about setting
up a joint effort for the long-term development strategy. We
all have limited money, but if we coordinate it we could
leverage it. Think about what we could do to help them
diversify their economies. We could try to improve their
economies, increase tourism and personal income, and reduce
their vulnerabilities to the narco-traffickers. Get them to
where they are not completely dependent on bananas. Anyway,
there has never been anything like this in this part of the
world where all the countries with ownership or colonization of
these islands coordinated together. I think that this is a
third way deal, and I bet we could get some other Europeans
interested. I don't know if the French would help. The Dutch
might be interested. Some of the Europeans might be interested.
We might think about doing something like that. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President: That's right. The EU is wrong on the trade
issue but right on the general concern for the Caribbean. The
EU is in the right on the larger economic well being, on the
longer-term interests of the Caribbean. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

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

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

[REDACTED]

The President: In Central America they are all concerned, I was just down there and talked to all these guys. They are sensitive because of the hurricane. What few bananas they have, they want to sell. I told them we will help them get through this, but that we would have to diversify their economies too.

Prime Minister Blair: [REDACTED]

The President: The Central Americans and the Caribbeans sound like a boys school argument. They ought to be thinking about making common cause and not pissing down each others' leg to see who has the biggest bananas. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair: [REDACTED] ~~(S)~~

The President: OK, on Kosovo, just want to check in and reconnoiter where we are. We had greater military impact with the air actions. I think if we could do a couple more weeks I think that we could really have it. The G-8 statement is good. Have you received the report on the G-8 ministers? We are hoping to get a statement here involving the Russians. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair: [REDACTED]

The President: That was good. Madeleine is going to see Ivanov on Tuesday or Wednesday. I also think that Kofi gave a good statement. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair: [REDACTED]

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

The President: He is a little miffed, though maybe that's too strong a word, disappointed maybe or concerned that neither of us have put out a statement on it. I told him that you were in Scotland and that I was preoccupied with the Chinese. I think that we ought to put one out now because he is out in Europe now. There are two things we need to think about. One is whether any economic pressures could be put on Milosevic that don't hurt the Macedonians and the Montenegrins too badly. I have a list of things, maybe cutting down on their money laundering in Cyprus and putting the squeeze on their London accounts. I don't want to cause the Montenegrins any trouble. I will get that list to you today and let you guys look at it

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and respond to it. Any time that I try to get our banks to do something the Treasury Department gets squirrely on me. It is always a fight with those guys. I would like to send you this list and let you evaluate it. (S)

We have to decide whether we want to have a more aggressive diplomatic initiative and if so, how to intensify the military action to enhance the likelihood that diplomatic efforts will succeed, assuming we can achieve all our objectives that Kofi signed off on and bring Russia into it.

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

It may turn out to be a bigger problem for me than you. It assumes that we can achieve our political objectives because Milosevic doesn't want to get the hell bombed out of him and have Apaches on top of his tanks. If you assume -- the one downside is that we are facing a lot of hurdles -- if you assume that all of our stated objectives are achievable if we intensify our bombing campaign without actually toppling Milosevic. Then it seems to me that there will be some kind of diplomatic agreement for an international force that will include Russian participation. They will push Milosevic back when he says who can and cannot be part of it. I think that it will be difficult to have NATO as NATO participate. The problem this creates for us is Somalia. (S)

I don't want to take too much time going over this now but this is a big problem for us. We went through this in Somalia when the UN took over command and control. We had a messy deal during the first part of the Administration. We stayed on in Somalia when the UN took it over and it was a messy deal. I lost some American boys over there and one of them was dragged naked through the streets of Mogadishu. We made some mistakes there in what we did and did not do. We basically had serious command and control problems where the Americans were supposed to do two things -- the same things we'd have to do if it were a non-NATO force in Kosovo -- in Somalia we were supposed to be there doing humanitarian relief and act as a multinational peace force. One of the factional leaders who since has died, killed a bunch of Pakistani peacekeepers -- something like 15-20. We were the only presence there that had the capabilities to figure out who did it and to go and get him. So the UN wanted us and tasked us to go and get him, Aided. The UN tasked us to do that while doing humanitarian relief. They tasked our guys to go into a hotel and get him. Our guys landed on the top of a hotel in the middle of the day -- he got away and then all of a

sudden more than 300 Somalis started shooting at them. It is the sort of thing that if NATO had been doing it, it would have been totally different: there would have been different command and control arrangements, armor and artillery. So there is still a lingering bad taste. I have a lot of support in Congress right now. There is even more than before the Gulf War. More and more in Congress are saying that they are in favor of ground troops if we had to put them in there. And I am telling you this in advance, if you could help me on this because it is your guys' necks, too. If they say NATO can participate, but not as NATO, instead as the UN, we have this awful memory of Somalia. We would also need the serious command and control issues to be worked out. We did not have these problems in Bosnia. It worked like a charm once NATO went in and the Russians came in with us. We only had to make an amendment to the NATO issue. Does that make sense? (S)

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President: This was the lowest point of my presidency. It was a goddamned nightmare. I felt personally responsible for that kid's body being dragged through the streets. So I see this as a practical measure about keeping people alive. We were prepared to take risks. We had all these glitches because of the command and control problems. The Russians are allergic to NATO and Milosevic is allergic to NATO. Keep in mind Tony, I know you know this, if we go in, we can't go in with one foot. If we get a multi-national force we have to go in at least with the commitment to protect the Serbs in Kosovo at a minimum as well as the Kosovar Albanians. There is enormous grass roots support right now for the freedom fighters. This will be a big force protection issue -- command and control will be critical with huge political implications. We may have all kinds of problems where we have both sides pissed at us. They will be politically important as well in any country. (S)

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President:

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

I will send you the list of economic sanctions. We will look like assholes at the garden party if we don't make

sure that everybody understands that NATO means keeping our people alive. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President: It is horrible. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President: We need to talk on a secure line or talk when you get here. There are arguments both for it and arguments against it. We will need to look at in the context of where it is going to be five years from now. We need to keep our crowd together and keep at him and get a diplomatic solution with a mechanism that includes the UN and Russia. I will follow up on this. I am in the country all next week and will get that economic list out to you. Tell Jose Maria I said hello. Did you show him Napoleon's pistol and Charles' sword? ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair: I took him to Rothschild House today to see the most amazing works of art. (U)

The President: I want to get there. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: You must come back. (U)

The President: I will come back to the Scottish golf course. You were the best first-timer that I ever saw play. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Joking apart, thanks for cashmere. Let's keep in touch. (U)

The President: Thank you, find me a safe seat in a golf cart. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Right, good-bye. (U)

The President: Goodbye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --