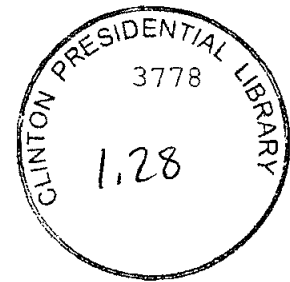


~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON



MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with British Prime Minister Tony Blair ~~(C)~~

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister Blair

Notetakers: David Higgins, Sean Rice,
George Chastain, Joel Schrader and
Lawrence Butler

DATE, TIME May 23, 1998, 1:36 - 1:46 p.m. EDT
AND PLACE: Camp David, Maryland

The President: Tony? (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Hi Bill. (U)

The President: Well, congratulations. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Yes, thank goodness. (U)

The President: You got 71 percent. Do you know what the Protestant vote was yet? (U)

Prime Minister Blair: I think it was 55 percent. (U)

The President: Do you think it was as high as that? I just talked to Trimble and he was still moaning about the vote. He sounded upbeat but he said he lost in his constituency. ~~(C)~~

Prime Minister Blair: Overall, the most accurate poll was 55 percent. Yes, it was about five percent of the nationalist vote that went no as well, so that brought figures down a bit. ~~(C)~~

The President: I just did the math and it seems the vote is 53 percent of the nationalists and 49 percent for the Unionists. Is that about right? ~~(C)~~

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Classified by: Glyn T. Davies

Reason: 1.5(b, d)

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E.O. 13526, SECTION 5.3(b)(3)
ISCAP APPEAL NO. 2013-090, document no. 27
DECLASSIFICATION DATE: October 14, 2015

Prime Minister Blair: Roughly, possibly a little higher on the Unionist side but they reckoned that probably about five or six percent of the non-Unionist voted "No" so that brought the figure down. Of the 28 or 29 percent, that will probably bring it down to about 24 percent or 23 percent. The Unionists voted "No" 23 percent, see what I mean? It probably means just the majority of the Unionists went with the resolution. ~~(c)~~

The President: That is great though. God, it's great. I'm so happy. You must be ecstatic. You turned all those undecided voters -- almost 100 percent. ~~(c)~~

Prime Minister Blair: Again, a million thanks for what you did. It began with the interview on Sunday. From then on it began to turn. We were at one point considerably behind, although we were looking at under 60 percent. Jeffery Donaldson, who is a reasonable part of the no vote, is on TV now saying he wants to work with Trimble now. ~~(c)~~

The President: I don't think Paisley can maintain the level of support. You are going to have a significant share of those people from the 25-30 percent who think the thing ought to be given a chance to go, and that will give you three out of four, or four out of five of the Unionist voters who want to see peace. ~~(c)~~

The process will play out -- but we ought to get Gerry and his crowd to do a thing or two to get this off on a good footing. He's going to be here on Thursday for reasons unrelated to me to make some speeches. But he always seems to pop into the White House. If you want to have your guys tell us in the next three or four days what you want me to say I would appreciate it. ~~(c)~~

Prime Minister Blair: Are you going to see him yourself? ~~(c)~~

The President: I don't know. I was just calling to congratulate a few of the guys and he told me about it. I have to check my schedule on whether I see him or not but we can always have the message delivered. ~~(c)~~

Prime Minister Blair:

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

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The President: He ought to chunk in some weapons pretty soon, shouldn't he? ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President: Yes, let me ask you something else. We had a group touring the United States and I met with them for 10-15 minutes. I am embarrassed that I can't remember their name -- I think maybe it was Waves. It was a group who had relatives killed. I think it would help if the IRA indicated where the remains are -- without exposing them. Would that help? Is there some way to do that without exposing them to criminal liability? ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair: Sure. (U)

The President: If by Wednesday somebody can call Sandy or Steinberg to let me know what kind of presentation I can make to them if they tell where remains are and that they would not be subject to criminal prosecution. That's a human touch that might have a big psychological impact -- differentiate them from the IRA. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President: I will get right on that. ~~(S)~~

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Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President: I'll hammer it hard. I thought if I can advance a specific agenda -- I will work on getting a Sinn Fein person to work on decommissioning. You just let me know if I can say to him, "I want you to tell where those remains are and whoever tells won't be subject to criminal liability." ~~(C)~~

Prime Minister Blair: Okay, I will get someone to come back to your guys in the next few days. ~~(C)~~

The President: Have a great celebration. (U)

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President: I offered him a helluva deal to see if he will do it. I scraped together every penny, every pop gun I could in 72 hours. I still think there is a chance he won't do it. ~~(C)~~

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

The President: Goodbye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --