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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: Doug Bayley, George Chastain,
Frank Jarosinski, Miles Murphy, Don Cheramie
and Lawrence Butler

DATE, TIME: June 3, 1999, 6:42 - 6:57 p.m. EDT
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: Hi, Tony. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Let's hope it sticks. (U)

The President: Yes, I hope it will. I think you and I gave the best answer. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Here (Cologne) it's like trying to stamp down a bush fire. (U)

The President: There are a lot of unanswered questions. Maybe 72 hours from now we can celebrate, but we will all look stupid if it turns into a red herring by Milosevic. My response today was "welcome, but cautious." ~~48~~

Prime Minister Blair: As I said tonight, of course, the fact that we got an agreement was great news, but it has to be done, it has to be implemented and some tricky questions have to be answered in the right way.

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

The President: I agree. I turned up the heat at my Air Force Academy speech. ~~49~~

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Reason: 1.5(a,b,d)

Declassify On: 6/7/09

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INTERAGENCY SECURITY CLASSIFICATION APPEALS PANEL,
E.O. 13526, SECTION 5.3(b)(3)
ISCAP APPEAL NO. 2013-090, document no. 61
DECLASSIFICATION DATE: October 14, 2015

Prime Minister Blair: Absolutely, I think its critical what you've been doing.

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

The President: We have a new problem, but we should be careful on this line. Sometime in the next 72 hours I need to talk to you about the planning process. Do you think over the next 72 hours we can talk about this? Do you think we could talk secure over the weekend? ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair: Sure. (U)

The President: Just tell them they can dance around a Maypole - - you'll hold it up for them while they dance. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair: E.O. 13526, section 1.4(b)(d) We should only rejoice when the refugees go home. ~~(S)~~

The President: He's been a champ. Chernomyrdin has been good too and for the Russians this is good too. They have come out well. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair: Yes, I think it is a good thing for Russia. They came out extremely well. ~~(S)~~

The President: It makes them look like a world leader. They don't want to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. This should help them with their economic stabilization.

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

He is getting a lot of criticism at home. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair: I mostly agree with that. Absolutely right, people tonight are talking far more positively about them and asking what we can do to help the Russians in economic terms. It really changes the atmosphere there, doesn't it? ~~(S)~~

The President: Yes, it certainly does. The other thing that they and the Serbs should think about is that this saves us a hell of a lot of money that can be used on development, the money we would save from putting in a ground force. Also, the main thing we need to do is look like we remain determined. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair: Absolutely right. I think, as well, that the stronger message is our support for a democratic Serbia.

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

I think that is helpful the more it is emphasized. So there we are, Bill. (C)

The President: Lets try to talk over the weekend about planning. I need to get your thoughts. We need to talk about it and get planning. (C)

Prime Minister Blair: Yes, several of us made public statements tonight. I've done it too tonight with the CNN people. Without you and America, this show wouldn't have happened at all. (C)

The President: The main thing we all need is to stay strong. We need to share the responsibility for the credit as well as the blame, and we can all dance if we get it done. I did call Schroeder and make the same argument. (C)

Prime Minister Blair: I was having a bit of trouble with it, but I think that we are right on it. (C)

The President: I don't want Milosevic to think that we are so hooked on this deal. (C)

Prime Minister Blair: About the success -- I am absolutely delighted, but only when it is complete.

The President: I have made a bunch of deals with this guy over the years. The Dayton Accords is the only one he kept and he kept that because we had bodies on the ground. (C)

Prime Minister Blair: We shouldn't forget and people shouldn't forget what this guy has done.

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

The President: We've got 12,000 troops there now so we can start moving but then we need a lot of logistics in the move, assuming the agreement works. (C)

Prime Minister Blair: The important thing is to get the NATO military people to start immediate planning to get some verifiers going out. (C)

The President: Apparently, they are meeting on Saturday. He wanted to wait until Sunday probably to find out how much wiggle factor, wiggle room he had. They pushed for Sunday and we pushed him back to Saturday. (C)

Prime Minister Blair: There is no reason they can't meet tomorrow from NATO's point of view. (C)

The President: Saturday is the earliest day we can get Wes to meet them. (C)

Prime Minister Blair: This is the quickest we could get the Serbs to meet. (C)

The President: Yes. (C)

Prime Minister Blair: I don't like that very much. (C)

The President: We may know Sunday or Monday where we are. Maybe you and I could talk on Sunday. I need to talk to you about the other option. There is good news and bad news. (C)

Prime Minister Blair: Okay, Bill. (U)

The President: Okay. Keep your fingers crossed. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Right. (U)

-- End of Conversation --