

~~SECRET~~

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON



MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with British Prime Minister Blair
(U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister Blair

Notetakers: Matt Sibley, Robert Ford,
George Chastain, Sean Tarver, Jim Smith,
Roger Merletti and Lawrence Butler

DATE, TIME June 10, 1999, 9:09 - 9:27 a.m. EDT
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: Hey, I just called to say thanks, it's been a good run. Life's greatest curse is the answer to our prayers; now we have to figure out how to get all those people back in, without getting blown up by all those landmines. I had Elie Wiesel here -- do you know him? (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Yes. (U)

The President: He's a Holocaust survivor, and an advisor. I sent him to some of the camps, and he said, "boy, there is so much anger there. Every Kosovar believes he knows the Serb who ousted him." (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Yes, it's going to be tough, isn't it? I tell you what, it could be a lot worse. (U)

The President: Well, it's quite wonderful. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: At least now it will be a problem of construction instead of destruction. (U)

The President: We've just got to hold everybody together and keep working on it. (U)

~~SECRET~~

Reason: 1.5(a,b,d)

Declassify on: 6/11/09

CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY

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. 64
DECLASSIFICATION DATE: October 14, 2015

~~SECRET~~

2

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

Prime Minister Blair:

[redacted] [[line drops, and
is reestablished.] (S)

The President: Hey, Tony, I'm sorry. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: No, no, it's our fault. I'll have the person who dropped the line executed. (U)

The President: [Laughs] We're trying to think through the obvious questions, about how fast we can get people back in and clear out the landmines, and we need to flush out Macedonia first. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

The President: Yeah, we have to keep working on that. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

The President: I am, too. There are not a lot of places he can go, given his indictment by the war crimes tribunal. Maybe Russia or Belarus would take him, or maybe he'd get a Pinochet deal and leave him in Serbia. (S)

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President: Yeah, we can't do that. We need to look at basic humanitarian conditions, and make sure the lights are on by winter,

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

~~SECRET~~

CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY

SECRET

3

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

Prime Minister Blair:

The President: We have to do that, too. Frankly, I don't know what else I can do. I've been reading about it all through this, because my daughter just happens to be doing a paper on Adams. I don't know what the real deal is between him and the IRA. It's hard to put pressure on him when you don't know what's going on. It's just bizarre.

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

We've got to keep working on it, and I'll do whatever you want me to do. (S)

Let me say this: we sent out our top people to NATO for Kosovo, we need to do the same thing with getting the refugees back and setting up a government. Whatever the formal structure, we have to put our best people in to set up the mechanics and make this thing work. There are literally thousands of detail questions that we have to answer. (S)

Prime Minister Blair:

The President:

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(b)

The major concern I have about the person on top is I want someone with confidence and energy to do this thing. I want someone to go there and stay. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

The President: The commander of the overall military is going to be British, isn't he? I think he's good. I haven't met him, but I've seen him on TV. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

SECRET

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

CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY

The President: Anyway, this won't require our obsession like the battle, but it will require our attention for the next 10 days. (S)

Prime Minister Blair: Right, well, Bill, you'll be over for the Cologne meeting? (S)

The President: Yeah, when we come to Cologne, we should have major questions to answer as a body. We need to boost Yeltsin and his pro-reform forces. I wish we could resuscitate Chernomyrdin, and I realize this may be more water than we can carry. (S)

I'd like to have him and Ahtisaari there to receive our thanks. We may want to think about this. They did a hell of a job for us. I think we also ought to think about some other things at Cologne. We need to have good positions coming out of Cologne for debt relief, and because of compound interest and falling incomes, I think it will be a big deal there. We also need to do more on the AIDS issue. According to our people, one percent of the people in the world have AIDS. (S)

Prime Minister Blair: In Africa the numbers are staggering, and in a country like South Africa it's just massive. (S)

The President: And you've got 60 million people more or less, and 35 million in Africa, and the number is going to double in the next four years. (S)

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President: Yeah, let's see where they are with the World Bank. Russia collapsed politically and economically after 1995. It also deteriorated with Yeltsin's health problems even though he was reelected in 1996. (S)

[Line drops and is reestablished.]

The President: Hi, Tony. You need to go to the press now. Solana is on TV. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Right, I'm sorry about that. Okay, yes. Let's speak before Cologne. (U)

The President: Yeah we need to talk. (U)

~~SECRET~~

5

Prime Minister Blair: Right, let's talk again before Cologne.
(U)

The President: Okay. Goodbye. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Goodbye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

~~SECRET~~

CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY