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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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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

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with British Prime Minister Tony Blair (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister Tony Blair

Notetakers: Sean Rice, Larry Wright, Tom Crowell, James Smith, Lawrence Butler

DATE, TIME: October 9, 1997, 9:18 - 9:40 a.m. EDT
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President: Hi, Tony. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Hi, Bill. How are you? I am in good form; I just got my party conference out of the way. (U)

The President: It went great, didn't it? It got great press here. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Well, I feel like a man who is facing an inevitable collapse, but in good shape, actually. How are you? (U)

The President: I'm doing great, thanks. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: I saw a great picture of you and Hillary taking Chelsea to Stanford. It was marvelous. (U)

The President: Well, it looked better than it felt. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: It looks like she's having a good time. (U)

The President: She's very happy. She called last night and we had a good talk. It's a three-hour difference, so she always calls late, but she knows I'm always up late. She had her first

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chemistry test. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Look, Bill, the reason I called was to mention a couple of things: I went to Moscow early in the week, and also I have some thoughts on Northern Ireland. ~~(S)~~

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The President: Did he give any hint of whether he would run for another term? ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair:

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The President: Yeah. (U)

Prime Minister Blair:

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The President: We will do that. I was very encouraged by my visit with Trimble, he's trying to be a part of this, more upbeat than in the past. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

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The President: Did Yeltsin mention the START II treaty? (S)

Prime Minister Blair:

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The President: How about Iran? (S)

Prime Minister Blair:

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The President: I believe that a lot of things do happen without his knowledge. When they changed their economy, they did not have the intermediate controls in place that a normal economy has. We have a process going with the Vice President, Chernomyrdin, Wisner and Koptev, that I think will work. They say they're cracking down, but he is careful about what he says in public, maybe because he doesn't want to be seen to be

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dancing to our tune. (S)

Prime Minister Blair:

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The President: Oh God, I'm really worried about it. They are so strongly opposed to any of that stuff that I'm quite worried about how they'd react to it.

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Prime Minister Blair:

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The President: Let me ask you one other thing. I appreciate your help in keeping the issue over the French oil company Total from becoming a bigger problem. We need to work the twin tracks of an EU waiver and the Total-Gazprom case. I know that a lot of Europeans don't agree with us, but I'm still concerned about Iran becoming an industrial and military giant, given their philosophy. I'm hoping that the new leadership in time will have enough influence to change things, but there are no indications of this yet. (S)

Prime Minister Blair:

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The President: I'd appreciate anything you can do to help. I don't want to get crossways with the French and EU. (S)

Prime Minister Blair:

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[redacted] (S)

The President: The Iranians -- and I sometimes think the Chinese are this way, too -- think we're so motivated by money that we'll eventually cave in. (S)

Prime Minister Blair:

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The President: It took a long time, but it was the right thing to do. (S)

Prime Minister Blair: Yes. So, we're with you on that entirely. People are very supportive of your efforts to bring people around on the environmental issue. (C)

The President: The problem is, the U.S. Senate won't ratify anything I sign. They're in the Dark Ages on this -- mostly the Republicans, but Democrats, too. They're being told against all evidence that you can't do this without wrecking the economy. We had a big conference here this week with energy experts, people who are making a living implementing changes. But with everything going on in Washington, it didn't break through as I'd hoped. It may have moved things a little. I'm chipping away, trying to do everything I can to get us in decent shape, and the Japanese are trying to get us together. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

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The President: One thing we ought to do is to some way get the developing countries involved in a regime -- where they don't have the same controls as we -- to develop an alternate energy future. There are things they can do now that won't hamper growth, but they can do it now so that when they become developed, they'll already have a different energy structure. The trick is to get them involved without their thinking that we're trying to choke off their growth; we need their growth for our own sake. (C)

Prime Minister Blair: I agree with that totally.

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The President: We need to find some formula to participate. If we gamble and take this on, but by the time you get halfway through the century, we're no better because we've been replaced by China and India, still worse off, nothing has happened to lower the global temperature. Get them to talk to us, find a formula to benefit from, build a different energy structure. The Indians are open, they're doing some big alternative projects, more open than the Chinese. China is giving us grief about criticism of their big Three Gorges hydropower project, which is their biggest greenhouse gas project. Because it will displace a million people and change the ecosystem, all the environmentalists who are fighting global warming are fighting the dam. Biggest dilemma. (C)

Prime Minister Blair: I agree with the same basic point.

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Well, carry

on. (C)

The President: Yes, we will. Thank you for calling. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: I'm looking forward to seeing Hillary when she is here. Everything ok with you? (U)

The President: Great. She is thrilled, looking forward to it, and we are working on a time for you to come here. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: It will be great to see you.

The President: Thanks. Bye. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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