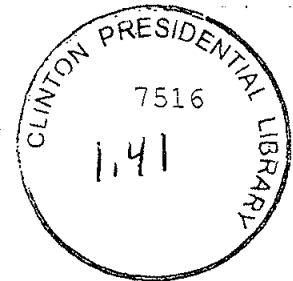


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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON



MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with British Prime Minister Blair
(U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister Tony Blair

Notetakers: Tom Crowell, Frank Jarosinski,
George Chastain, Jenny McGee and Lawrence
Butler

DATE, TIME November 3, 1998, 3:29 - 3:37 p.m. EST
AND PLACE: Oval Office

Prime Minister Blair: Hi, Bill, how are you? (U)

The President: Fine, how are you doing? It's election day, so I am just sitting around. Essentially, the elections are going well. These are good times, but the Republicans are in the majority and have more money than we do. Not since 1922 has the president's party gained seats, but we are doing well and the exit polls look good. They have outspent us, but we essentially have a good message going. (U)

I understand that you have been briefed on Bill Cohen's message on Iraq. I really appreciate all that you have said publicly, but I still think that we have to take decisive action this time to respond to Saddam's challenge. It is clear to me that Saddam really wants to force the Council to lift sanctions without giving up his weapons of mass destruction and missile program. The Vice President talked to Crown Prince Abdallah today in Saudi Arabia, and he promised the support that we need. Bill is discussing the details with him tonight in Riyadh. (U)

We are working on a resolution for the Council, and I hope that it can be finished in a couple of days. But it seems to me that we need to be in a position to act soon, rather than drag it out. We need to be in touch with Chirac. I still have questions about what they would say about the use of force. The

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French have been great in their public comments -- they have been tough on Iraq -- but anything that you can do to keep Chirac on board. I will call him tomorrow. ~~(C)~~

Prime Minister Blair: Maybe I should call him. ~~(C)~~

The President: I think you should. ~~(C)~~

Prime Minister Blair: I actually made my comments in a press conference with Schroeder yesterday.

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I will talk to Chirac in the next day to see where we stand. ~~(C)~~

The President: As far as the Russians are concerned, they seem pretty angry, too. ~~(C)~~

Prime Minister Blair:

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The President: I agree with you. Kofi seems to be keeping his distance since Saddam shafted him. What do you think about sooner rather than later? ~~(C)~~

Prime Minister Blair:

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The President: I agree with that. (C)

Prime Minister Blair: How soon were you thinking of, Bill? (C)

The President: I don't know. I was thinking of over the next several days. It will take time to set things up and to develop a case against him. I've got to know who is dancing with us and who is not. I just wanted to check your temperature on it and ask you to call Chirac. On the details, we need to be in very close touch and work together. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

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The President: Keep your fingers crossed for us tonight. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: All right. All the very best to you, Bill. (U)

The President: Thanks. Goodbye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --