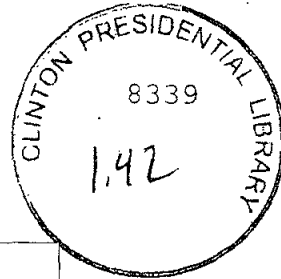


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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON



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. 40
DECLASSIFICATION DATE: October 14, 2015

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom

NOTE-TAKERS: Bonnie Glick, Sean Tarver, Joel Schrader, David Higgins, Jim Smith and Roger Merletti

DATE, TIME: December 11, 1998 -- 1:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m. EDT
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: Hello. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Hi, Bill. (U)

The President: Hey, Tony. How are you? (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Fine. I am at the EU summit in Vienna.
(U)

The President: Is it cold in Vienna? (U)

Prime Minister Blair: It is absolutely freezing. Amazingly cold, but a beautiful city. (U)

The President: I just wanted to check in with you on Iraq and Ireland before I go to the Middle East this weekend. On November 15, we said we would hold off on any strike while we test Saddam's promise to cooperate with UNSCOM. So far, the results have been mixed. There has been a lot of monitoring, which is easy for the Iraqis to accept. But, UNSCOM was blocked at Ba'ath party headquarters this week. (S)

Prime Minister Blair: Yes. (S)

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Classified by: Glyn T. Davies
Reason: 1.5 (a) (d)
Declassify on: 12/14/08

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The President: And they've received only 1 of 10 documents they asked for, and Iraq is making inspections harder than they have to be. I can't tell if they are trying to get some concession on sanctions review, or if they think we can't do anything at this time of year. If Iraq blocks another inspection this weekend and if Butler finds that they are not cooperating as they are required to do under the October 30 Security Council letter -- if he actually says that -- I am inclined to think that we should take the action that we suspended in November. But, if he isn't significantly undercutting UNSCOM's ability to do its job and Butler says that, I think he will simply have slipped the disarmament noose forever. Now, we have a very narrow window to operate with because of Ramadan and my going to Israel this weekend. We will need to talk, and I will have to find you wherever you are. If the inspections are not blocked, then we have to figure out how to handle the comprehensive review issue. Do we delay it or go forward? If we delay it, there will almost certainly be a crisis, and out of respect for their faith, we can't hit them during Ramadan. (S)

Prime Minister Blair:

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The President: We don't have much, I don't think. (S)

Prime Minister Blair: No.

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The President: We think we can get them out in 24 hours. It's a much quicker turn-around. This may be part of what he is miscalculating. He may think he will have more notice than he would. (S)

Prime Minister Blair: Right. What happens if we start to take action and then Ramadan starts, as it were? Ramadan starts next Friday? (S)

The President: If we start on Wednesday, we have enough time. They assure me we do. (S)

Prime Minister Blair: Then, we can go in and get out by Ramadan? (S)

The President: Yes, we have four days. That's plenty of time. We can do it. (S)

Prime Minister Blair: [E.O. 13526, section 1.4(b)(d)]

[] So, Butler is going to try to get more access tomorrow? (S)

The President: He has two more days, and then say whatever he says. (S)

Prime Minister Blair: Right. Do we know what he is going to say? (S)

The President: No, we don't. My gut is that he most likely is going to say that he got some cooperation, but not full. This will make us think really hard on whether we can in good conscience vote for this comprehensive review, and if we don't, he will provoke a crisis over that. It seems to me that it is pretty substantial that he didn't let them go into Ba'ath party headquarters. Anyway, you will have to talk to your folks, and we may have to talk again in a few days when I am in the Mideast. (S)

Prime Minister Blair: Okay. (S)

The President: Anyway, the other thing I wanted to tell you was that I talked to Trimble and Adams on Tuesday. I missed Hume because he had to leave for Oslo. I made it clear privately and publicly in a speech that decommissioning is essential,

[E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)]

What do you think is happening? (S)

Prime Minister Blair:

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The President: I did all I could. If there is anything else I can do, just let me know. (S)

Prime Minister Blair: There may be a time to speak to Adams again, but, for now, it is for us to sort out. (S)

The President: Okay, I agree with that. I just wanted to mention very briefly that I am going to make a real push to resolve the Cyprus issue next year. But, before that, we have to avert this missile problem next month. I hope when you see Clerides on Saturday that you persuade him to stop delivery to Cyprus. It would be terrible. I hope you will do what you can. You really tried to get the EU to soften its stance on Turkey. I don't know if the coming of Schroeder helps at all. Maybe, you can get a little better language in your statement in Vienna.

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

I think this missile deal really bothers me because of the Russian connection, and I see so much in Russia going south on us. Their space scientists haven't received a check in eight months, and they could be making a fortune on missile launches from us.

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If you could make headway, I would appreciate it. (S)

Prime Minister Blair: Okay, Bill. I will speak to Clerides tomorrow.

The President: After the first of the year, after I get all this crap behind me, I would like to talk to you about this. (S)

Prime Minister Blair: I'd like to talk to you about a bunch of things because there is a lot going on here in Europe. (S)

The President: How is Schroeder working out? (S)

Prime Minister Blair:

The President: I had impressions watching his campaigning that they adopted rhetoric similar to ours, but they didn't think it through. You had a program to implement and so did I, and that's a big difference. (S)

Prime Minister Blair:

Actually, I like him very much. (S)

The President: I do, too. The reason I mentioned this is because I had a good talk with him on Turkey.

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Now, there are other problems with Turkey, such as human rights. Anyway, you might nose around Vienna and see if you can send him help. (S)

Prime Minister Blair: Sure, I will try. There may be an opportunity at dinner tonight.

The President:

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Prime Minister Blair:

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The President: As Christians, we are supposed to help whether people appreciate it or not and it's the season for it. See you soon. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Alright, Bill. See you soon. (U)

The President: All the best. Bye. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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