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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom of May 27, 1995

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister John Major
Notetaker: Nelson Drew, Deuce Martinez, Alexander Vershbow

DATE, TIME: May 27, 1995, 3:50 - 4:09 p.m.
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: John, Hello. (U)

Prime Minister Major: Hi Bill. I thought the conference went quite well. (U)

The President: The Irish conference -- yes. I hope your people were pleased. They can play this up. (U)

Prime Minister Major: I just spoke to Paddy Mayhew, who is in Virginia with his feet up in a bar. (U)

The President: This was the first meeting with representatives of all the political parties. The speech I gave was well-received. Adams complained a little bit. I really hit them hard. (U)

Prime Minister Major: It was an extremely good speech. I thought it all went well, save for the Unionists who were a bit silly in the way they behaved. That often happens, but they recover quickly. (U)

The President: I keep hoping that the Irish-Americans -- who were so excited -- and all the parties will see a huge peace dividend if they push farther and help you. (U)

Prime Minister Major: I think we have a better chance for peace than we ever had if we can persuade them to start decommissioning. Then we'll really be in business. (U)

The President: I agree. (U)

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Prime Minister Major: We have had the cease-fire for over 9 months without incident, and it looks like they may be serious. Every day is like money in the bank. (C)

The President: Is any of this giving you a boost at home? Are your people recognizing what's been done? (C)

Prime Minister Major: Not a bit. For most people here, Ireland is just another island. They don't really care what happens elsewhere in the world. (C)

The President: I know how you feel. Most Americans could care less about foreign policy, about what is happening outside U.S. I guess it's a blessing that people don't believe their security is threatened. (C)

Prime Minister Major: I know how you feel. It is pretty much bread-and-butter politics. I guess that is one of the benefits of the end of the Cold War. (C)

The President: It's also one of the burdens, which brings me to Bosnia. I just got off the phone with President Chirac. He had some good ideas. I suppose you might have spoken with him too. (C)

Prime Minister Major: No. I haven't spoken with Chirac personally, but I talked to Juppe yesterday. (C)

The President: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
EO 13526 1.4b, 1.4d

[REDACTED] Chirac said he spoke with Yeltsin today, and he thinks he's on board too. (C)

[REDACTED]
EO 13526 1.4b, 1.4d

[REDACTED] ne
told me Yeltsin had sent Kozyrev and Gracnev to Belgrade and that they may talk with the Bosnian Serbs. (C)

Prime Minister Major: As I said, I talked with Juppe. This is fairly the same line that Juppe had, and I am amenable to this. (C)

The President: Do you agree? (C)

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Prime Minister Major: Basically. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
EO 13526 1.4b, 1.4d

[REDACTED] we have a meeting here at Downing Street tomorrow with our defense people and the Foreign Secretary, and it is pretty clear what will happen. We need a better follow-up strategy. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
EO 13526 1.4b, 1.4d

The President: Yes, a "pause" is a better word. (C)

Prime Minister Major: We need to take the advice of General Smith. I spoke with him. He was calm and relaxed. (C)

The President: He is very capable, isn't he? (C)

Prime Minister Major: Yes he is. He won't panic. He'll do fine. (C)

The President: I think airstrikes worked well earlier. We can't give up on them. But with UNPROFOR under strength and dispersed, they're sitting ducks. Currently they have no threat of airstrikes and no means to defend themselves. They need to be concentrated and to have the capacity to defend themselves. We need to make a public change to the rules of engagement. We could then have a pause in the airstrikes. (C)

I'm not hung up on the sanctions issue, but I don't want Milosevic to sucker us into lifting sanctions, and then not go all the way. Diplomatic efforts must result in mutual recognition [REDACTED]

EO 13526 1.4b, 1.4d

[REDACTED] Apparently, Yeltsin is prepared to reinforce. (C)

Another thing, we have to do something about the sham the Serbs have made of the weapons collection sites. It has hurt us that we never disabled the weapons. It is painful to watch Serbs come and take weapons out at will and shell civilian targets while our people watch. (C)

Prime Minister Major: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
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The President: I'm also worried that if we concentrate UNPROFOR, the Serbs may see this as a green light to take the eastern enclaves. The Bosnians say they can defend them, but we don't think they can. (C)

Prime Minister Major: They have the numbers, but not the capabilities. (C)

The President: It's the artillery threat, isn't it? (C)

Prime Minister Major:

EO 13526 1.4b, 1.4d

The President: There is a trade-off: if we render UNPROFOR less vulnerable and we tell them that we've changed the rules of engagement, then we would want them to know that they are more vulnerable to airstrikes. (C)

Prime Minister Major:

1.4b, 1.4d

The President: Maybe there's some way we could make more unique use of the Russian troops. Since we were in Russia, have I talked to you since then? Well, I spoke with Yeltsin for about three hours and got better feel for Yeltsin's political situation. He sees both opportunities and danger. It's complicated by the situation in Chechnya. He is in danger domestically so he does not want to look weak. If we can all give him some role in solving the situation. He could be seen as getting a pause in the bombing, and at the same time finding a role for the Russian troops that would be strategically critical to maintaining peace. Maybe we can have the Russians man the heavy weapons sites to stop the Serbs from using the weapons. If we can do this, it will help further the cause. That's just off the top of my head. It's not vetted with any of my staff. But Yeltsin believes he needs to keep the ultranationalists at bay. He's shown his strength over Chechnya, but he is worried about losing the support of friends in the West and support for reform. (C)

Prime Minister Major: I was sitting with Kohl yesterday discussing the hostages and were trying to get Yeltsin on the

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phone. We heard on TV there were three hostages being held and one had been beaten up. I had side bet with Kohl that that one beaten up was Canadian and not the Russian. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
EO 13526 1.4b, 1.4d

The President:if the Russians do their job fairly. (C)

Prime Minister Major: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
EO 13526 1.4b, 1.4d

[REDACTED] Smith

and the others will have to make the judgment. (C)

The President: I think we should think about it. Sandy Berger has just handed me a note, and he says Bosnians may not be too keen about giving a strategic role to the Russians. We should think about how we can play psychologically on the interplay between the Russians and the Bosnian Serbs and how it would affect Yeltsin's political situation. (C)

Prime Minister Major: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

The President: The Bosnians begin to feel good, and they get confident and launch offensives. They forget about the artillery and then go out and get the crap kicked out of them. This is compounded by the fact that the weapons collection sites are a joke. They forget the larger strategic concept. We will continue to urge the Bosnians to exercise restraint. They may have different view of a Russian role if we back it with confidence. I haven't really thought it through. It could hinge on whether Milosevic recognizes Bosnia. (C)

Prime Minister Major: It's worth looking at. I have a point regarding Chirac. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
EO 13526 1.4b, 1.4d

The President: I didn't explore that; Chirac did not raise whole issue. I was pleased he didn't want to withdraw. I think we all understand that if there is no UN there, all hell breaks loose. (C)

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Prime Minister Major: I agree.

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[redacted] We'll have our meeting here, and I'll have Rod Lyne call Tony Lake. Our Ministers will meet on Monday, first just the four, and then with the Russians, and then at NATO. (C)

The President: I'll be here over the weekend if you need to speak with me further. (U)

Prime Minister Major: Good-bye. (U)

The President: Good-bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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