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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telecon with British Prime Minister John Major (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister John Major

Notetaker: Mary Ann Peters, Sue Bremner,
Katherine O'Loughlin, Matt Miller

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: August 7, 1995, 3:03 - 3:10 p.m.
Oval Office

The President: Hello. (U)

Prime Minister Major: Hello Bill. How are you? (U)

The President: I'm fine. I wanted to talk to you for a minute about Bosnia. We urged the Croats before they launched an assault on the Krajina to seek a political solution right up to the last minute and to limit military action to relieving pressure on Bihac. But Tudjman clearly had already made up his mind. I guess it's not surprising after the Krajina Serb refusal to negotiate for the past four years and their intervention in Bihac. Anyway, according to our intelligence, Serbia has shown no sign of intervening. But 100,000 new refugees and a new Serb thirst for revenge make it essential we act quickly to stabilize the situation. I think this may be a significant moment to launch a new diplomatic effort. On the other hand, if we don't press for a settlement in the next few weeks, the situation is likely to unravel, making UNPROFOR withdrawal unavoidable. I think the last several days have changed the landscape. I propose Tony Lake make a trip to Europe later this week to meet with his counterparts in London, Bonn and Paris and to work on a common strategy. (C)

Prime Minister Major: I'd be very happy with that. (C)

The President: These talks can also address how we bring the Russians along and who would do what in Sarajevo, Zagreb and Belgrade, as well as with the Bosnian Serbs on the new diplomatic initiative. We have some ideas on ultimatum resolution of the conflict. Let's try to keep these talks confidential. (C)

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Prime Minister Major: I'm entirely happy with that. I'm sure you're right; the landscape has changed over the last several days. We have nothing to lose by it. (C)

The President: We have a couple of ideas that will maybe work. (C)

Prime Minister Major: When is Tony likely to come? (C)

The President: No later than Thursday and then maybe we will have a Contact Group meeting. (C)

Prime Minister Major: Ministerial or official level? (C)

The President: The meeting can work out the details. I think we can expand later to include the Canadians and Italians. We need to bring the Russians in. We need to agree on a common course. (C)

Prime Minister Major: I'm entirely happy with that. We'll accommodate him whenever he comes. (C)

The President: I sent you a letter over the weekend about the lack of agreement between the UN and military commanders about the "zone of action" around Gorazde and other safe areas, as well as other details of implementing NATO decisions. We can't afford to have stories about the UN not doing anything. (C)

Prime Minister Major: I haven't seen the letter, but I know it's there. It's being examined by my military advisors. I'm in southern France right now, not in London. (C)

The President: Good for you. I know you have been following the situation in Nigeria and the harsh sentences imposed on the 40 alleged coup-plotters there including former head of state General Obasanjo. I have written to Abacha, but have not received a response. I'm considering calling him. I wonder if you would consider calling him as well. (C)

Prime Minister Major: I'll happily do that. I have two other suggestions. One, it is possible, not certain, possible that the Commonwealth Secretary General, a Nigerian himself, may have some influence and could speak to Abacha. Secondly, there is one man who might have some influence and that's his neighbor [redacted] of Ghana. [redacted] EO 13526 1.4b, 1.4d

[redacted] he came to see me recently and we spent the entire 50 minutes talking about Nigeria. (C)

The President: He is an impressive man. He was recently here. (C)

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Prime Minister Major: Yes, he is. I think it would be worthwhile. When will you call? (C)

The President: Not before Wednesday. (C)

Prime Minister Major: I'll happily do that. I'll call as well. (C)

The President: Thank you. (U)

Prime Minister Major: OK. (U)

The President: We'll touch base later. Have a good vacation. (U)

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