

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister Major of UK

NOTETAKERS: Deuce Martinez, Paul Weber, Mary Ann Peters and Nelson Drew

DATE, TIME August 13, 1995, 9:53 - 10:10 a.m. EDT
AND PLACE: White House Residence

The President: Hello? (U)

Prime Minister Major: Hello, Bill? (U)

The President: Hi John, having a little trouble getting this phone to work. (U)

Prime Minister Major: That's OK. I was just relaxing in the south of France. Just stepped away from poolside as a matter of fact. It is very hot here. (U)

The President: That's great. Glad to hear that you can get some time off. You need and deserve it. (U)

Prime Minister Major: Thank you. I just wanted to talk to you about a couple of things. We're very pleased with Tony Lake's proposals. We have just a few minor points, but in general, I am very supportive. Did you get a good reaction from Bonn and Paris? (C)

The President: I did and from the Italians and the Spaniards as well. As a matter of fact, Tony just finished his meeting with Kozyrev, and it went surprisingly well. (C)

Prime Minister Major: That is extremely good news. Hope it makes some progress. I have two areas of concern: first the prospect for triple recognition and secondly, getting a credible ground force following the withdrawal. However, not so good news on the ground in Bosnia today. I hear Bosnian forces are attacking Donji Vakuf, and there are limited Serbian attacks around Sarajevo. (C)

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The President: Well, Vice President Gore called Tudjman and Izetbegovic yesterday and warned them not to do it. We'll see what happens. (C)

Prime Minister Major: We need to use all the available leverage we have; [REDACTED]

EO 13526 1.4b, 1.4d

The President: Yes. It looks to me that they are trying to work the western end of the country for the moment. (C)

Prime Minister Major: How do you think we should proceed from here? It is excellent that Tony had good talks. (C)

The President: First of all, I have to wait until he gets back and review what everyone said, and then we will go to the parties. Obviously that is the thing to do. (C)

Prime Minister Major: Hope they respond to the stimuli. (C)

The President: The Croatian and Bosnian governments may be getting a little carried away with themselves. They've had some successes but not sure if they see the end gain. On Tuesday, Dick Holbrooke will approach the various parties. We should be able to give you a virtually instantaneous report. (C)

Prime Minister Major: Is he going to all three places? (C)

The President: Yes, he's going, I think; yes, he's going to all three places. (C)

Prime Minister Major: Is Frasure going with him? (C)

The President: Yes. (C)

Prime Minister Major: I hope they get the message and realize the opportunity. (C)

The President: There could be real movement; if they let it go without seeing it through to the end of the game, I don't see it happening. They've got a pretty good deal; they ought to take it. (C)

Prime Minister Major: That's our view. In September we will have to think clearly about the prospects for Winter. Hopefully they take the opportunity. I am very encouraged that the talks with Kozyrev went well. (C)

The President: I was surprised as well. They had some concerns about UNPROFOR's role in the end game. I told them we had to make clear to the Bosnians we wouldn't support that if they didn't support the peace process. (C)

Prime Minister Major: I thought the way Tony presented the idea was very persuasive, with the prizes for each side if it works and the downsides if it doesn't. The problem is we can't seem to agree on what the final map should look like. (C)

The President: We've done what we can, and you know what he said. We're going to wait until he gets back and hear the reactions he got. We will know better after the Holbrooke visits. (C)

Prime Minister Major: If we can help in any way, we'll be happy to. (C)

The President: I'm sure you can. We will call you when I know something. Another thing I would like to talk to you about is a talk I had with General Abacha. We had a good conversation. He took into consideration my comments positively but did not promise not to execute the prisoners. (C)

Prime Minister Major: I had a word with him as well. We spoke for about 25 minutes. [redacted] EO 13526 1.4b, 1.4d

[redacted] I was able to persuade him to attend the Commonwealth Conference in November, and hopefully we'll have 50 other countries that can give him the same message. He listened well. [redacted]

[redacted] EO 13526 1.4b, 1.4d

[redacted] He said he'd like to talk informally about the process of civilian rule. I will get back to him. He and I wish to maintain an informal dialogue. I said I will try to keep in touch. Like you, I have a reasonably positive feeling but no promises. (C)

Prime Minister Major: If he makes good moves we should try and be supportive. You know more than I do about the situation in that country. (C)

Prime Minister Major: [redacted]

[redacted] EO 13526 1.4b, 1.4d

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EO 13526 1.4b, 1.4d

The President: Yes. (C)

Prime Minister Major: I was wondering if I could speak for a moment on Northern Ireland. (C)

The President: Sure. (C)

Prime Minister Major: We're coming up to an important period for Northern Ireland in the next fortnight or three weeks. There are two events: the anniversary of the IRA cease-fire and the summit I will have with John Bruton at the end of the first week of September. A lot is happening on the ground. [REDACTED]

EO 13526 1.4b, 1.4d

[REDACTED] I have discussed a number of things with Bruton. Probably you will discuss them with Bruton when he visits Washington in September. (C)

I believe a joint strategy can put life into the political dialogue. [REDACTED]

EO 13526 1.4b, 1.4d

[REDACTED] and second is to address decommissioning of terrorist weapons, not just IRA's but loyalists weapons as well. (C)

Bruton and I will be in touch about making useful progress. The essence of it is an independent commission to consider the modus operandi of decommissioning. [REDACTED]

EO 13526 1.4b, 1.4d

[REDACTED] I can't move away from decommissioning; it is not practical. [REDACTED]

EO 13526 1.4b, 1.4d

[REDACTED] There is quite a lot resting on this decision. (C)

What we would like is a joint commission to consist of 3 people. An American would chair; two names come to mind, George Mitchell and Tom Foley. We would approach one of them at some stage unless you would prefer we didn't. In addition to George Mitchell, Bruton would appoint one member with my approval, and I

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would appoint one with his approval. We hope combined with other measures we have in mind that we could get solid progress. I would like to have their report in advance of your visit in November. This is broadly the way we are thinking. I wanted to give you a preliminary indication to see if you can live with it. (C)

The President: Actually, it sounds good. I am quite worried about how to start talks and get some progress on decommissioning. I know it is a problem for you, and we may have to have a patina of some party above the fray to handle decommissioning. Obviously we need to make progress on it. (C)

Prime Minister Major:

EO 13526 1.4b, 1.4d

I wanted to give you advance notice. (C)

The President: I appreciate it. I will talk to my people about it. It could be a way to start talks and get progress on decommissioning; you can't do one without another. (C)

Prime Minister Major: We hope to have a unilateral announcement by the British government before the end of the month. We can go ahead with that and political talks if we establish the decommissioning commission. I can bear the political heat if we get progress. The three things hang together. We'll have to defer all if we defer one. (C)

Just one other thing. Before the August 31 anniversary, I would like as many people as possible to make clear the importance of the process. If you have an opportunity to do so, it would be useful. (C)

The President: I will look for an opportunity; that would be a good thing to do. (C)

Prime Minister Major: Sorry to have disturbed your Sunday. (C)

The President: Good to hear your voice. (C)

Prime Minister Major: Please God, we can get out of the devil's brew we're in (in Bosnia). (C)

The President: We'll try to do it. (U)

Prime Minister Major: Good-bye and God bless. (U)

-- End of Conversation --