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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with British Prime Minister Major (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister John Major

Notetakers: Daniel Flessas, Kathi Guekel,
Deuce Martinez and Katherine O'Loughlin

DATE, TIME February 9, 1996, 6:13 - 6:23 p.m.
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President: John? (U)

Prime Minister Major: Hi Bill. (U)

The President: I'm really sorry man. (U)

Prime Minister Major: It's bad news, really bad news. Not just the event; it's difficult to see where you put the train back on the tracks. (C)

The President: Well, it's hard to explain. I had no inkling of it. (C)

Prime Minister Major: Nor we. (C)

The President: Adams was here, and Dick Spring was here yesterday. I talked to them, and I didn't see it coming. I feel badly. He was grousing, and I told him that he could say what he wanted to say about what John Major had said, but the fact remains he found a way to at least offer you an alternative; the possible permutations of the election proposal. (C)

Prime Minister Major: [REDACTED] EO 13526 3.3(b)(6), 3.3(b)(9)

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3.3(b)(6), 3.3(b)(9)

The President: Where do we go from here? (C)

Prime Minister Major: At this moment, I'm unsure. I'm very grateful for your statement and the speed with which it was made. I intend to dampen things down. I spoke to Bruton, and I will speak with him tomorrow and Sunday. I think we just have to see what the ramifications are. 3.3(b)(6), 3.3(b)(9)

In any event, I think we are going to see how to keep the show on the road. First, we must make sure that the British and Irish governments lock arms, and I think Bruton and I will be able to do that. Then we can assess things. Trimble is on his way to you, I think. (C)

The President: Yes he is, but he may think it will be a wasted trip now. I hope he still comes. (C)

Prime Minister Major: I hope he still comes to you. 3.3(b)(6), 3.3(b)(9)

I hope Trimble still goes to see you and you have a good talk with him, and I can get a good readout from you or Tony. (C)

The President: We'll do that. Tony is talking to Holmes. I just wanted to say I was sorry; if there is anything I can do. We need to send a message to the Irish 3.3(b)(6), 3.3(b)(9) (C)

Prime Minister Major: And directly to Adams. Did you see Adam's statement? (C)

The President: Yes, [3.3(b)(6), 3.3(b)(9)] That's not a very diplomatic statement! (C)

Prime Minister Major: That's a good way to describe it. (C)

The President: He was here and seemed ill at ease. It's not like I had a premonition about this, but I had the feeling he didn't know what to do. He didn't agree with elections, but I told him you clearly wanted a peace agreement. (C)

Prime Minister Major: [3.3(b)(6), 3.3(b)(9)]

The President: Well it seems to me that it's not rational for them to assume you don't want to do this or you wouldn't have taken all the heat you already have on it. (C)

Prime Minister Major: I'm grateful for what you have done, and let's keep in touch. (C)

The President: If you can think of anything else, let me know. I'll rack my brain. (C)

Prime Minister Major: OK, God bless. If we think of anything, we'll be in touch. (C)

The President: Thank you John. (U)

-- End of Conversation --