

CONFIDENTIAL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

7541

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

DECLASSIFIED IN PART
PER E.O. 13526

2013-0449-M (7.96)
3/6/2019 KBH

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

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

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister Major

Notetakers: Val Martinez, Doug Mueller,
Katherine O'Loughlin and Wylma
Robinson

DATE, TIME November 14, 1996; 1:49 - 2:01 p.m. EST
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

Prime Minister Major: Hi, Bill. (U)

The President: Hi, John. (U)

Prime Minister Major: Have you gotten any rest? (U)

The President: No, not much, but I'm going away tomorrow to Hawaii. Then to Australia for a state visit, a couple of days of work and then play, so I will get a little rest. (U)

Prime Minister Major: I envy you. I have never been to Australia, but Norma has. It is one of her favorite places. Where are you going? (U)

The President: Sydney, the Great Barrier Reef and I don't know where else. I have been so busy on the transition and Zaire, I haven't paid much attention to it. They'll just tell me where to go! (C)

Prime Minister Major: You will be able to sleepwalk through it, and they will be delighted to see you. I can't believe you will have any problems with the Australians. I hope it will be a great success. (C)

The President: I think it will be. How are you doing? (U)

CONFIDENTIAL

Reason: 1.5(b)

Declassify On: 11/15/06

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CONFIDENTIAL

2

Prime Minister Major: I am doing fine. Our Euroskeptics are still playing the silly fools. Opinion polls are turning up, and the economy is doing well. All looking much better. (C)

The President: It looks like we might get real lucky. I saw George Mitchell last night, and he said there was a chance of a break there. Do you think so? (C)

Prime Minister Major: No. Did he really say that? (C)

The President: He gave it a one-in-five chance. (C)

Prime Minister Major: A one-in-five chance, I would agree with that. There has been a lot of talk about a new cease-fire.

EO 13526 3.3(b)(1), 3.3(b)(6), 3.3(b)(9)

The President: That's good. How do you feel about eastern Zaire? (C)

Prime Minister Major: I am worried about eastern Zaire. We had a meeting yesterday and agreed to send troops there, but there is some uneasiness. I told the cabinet and parliament we are sending troops. The announcement of our readiness to send troops was reasonably well received by parliament. There is no enthusiasm for the task, but an acceptance that hundreds of thousands will die if we don't do something. We wish it was not there, but it is, so we will help. I am absolutely sure no one has any enthusiasm for this. (C)

The President: That's how they feel here. (C)

Prime Minister Major: I worry we have public support that is fragile and what would happen if the operation goes wrong because

CONFIDENTIAL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY

CONFIDENTIAL

3

humanitarian aid cannot be delivered or they keep fighting. I am most concerned about two or three things. I am prepared to go and to mirror in Bukavu what you are going to do in Goma. I am perfectly prepared to do that. What we do want is a clear mandate, clear rules of engagement. [REDACTED] EO 13526 3.3(b)(6), 3.3(b)(9)

The President: We were trying to figure out a way for the French to play without them making a big stink and avoid negative feelings. (C)

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

The President: We were supposed to have the deputy commander and operations officer to help the Canadians. After Tony gets back from New York today, maybe we should reconnoiter to help make it easier for you. (C)

Prime Minister Major: We shall do it. We will swallow hard and do it. This is a very difficult operation, by any measure. It is not just the Goma and Bukavu airports and the refugee camps.

[REDACTED] EO 13526 3.3(b)(1), 3.3(b)(6), 3.3(b)(9)

[REDACTED] The problem we haven't even remotely addressed in eastern Zaire is east of Kivu. First, there are large jungle areas. Beyond that huge tracts. There are unknown hundreds of thousands of people we are not going to remotely touch under any of the plans being discussed. We will most certainly make a contribution, but there will be an awful lot of lives we won't save. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] EO 13526 3.3(b)(6), 3.3(b)(9)

CONFIDENTIAL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY

CONFIDENTIAL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

EO 13526 3.3(b)(6), 3.3(b)(9)

The President: When Tony gets back, I will take it up with him and explore it all. I will stay on top of it for the next few days. (C)

Prime Minister Major: If it's appropriate to talk again, I will be around. (C)

The President: Thank you. (C)

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

The President: We have to get four or five countries. (C)

Prime Minister Major: I don't know what your view of it is, but I don't understand why Germany and Japan are not included. (C)

The President: Me either. (C)

Prime Minister Major: I understand Belgium not wanting to go back to the Congo. (C)

The President: Have Germany and Japan declined? (C)

Prime Minister Major: Japan just avoided giving an answer. Germany said no troops. (C)

The President: I'll see what I can do. (C)

CONFIDENTIAL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

5

CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister Major: It seems to me Germany is a big nation and they have a big role to play. Congratulations again. Hope you enjoy Australia. (C)

The President: Thank you. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

CONFIDENTIAL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY