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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with French President Jacques Chirac

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Jacques Chirac

Interpreter: Carol Wolter
Notetaker: Bonnie Glick, George Chastain,
Frank Jarosinski, Sean Tarver, James Smith,
Joel Schrader

DATE, TIME: October 8, 1998, 12:46p.m.-1:05 p.m.
AND PLACE: Oval Office

President Chirac: Hello. (U)

The President: Hello Jacques. (U)

President Chirac: Oh Bill, how are you? (U)

The President: Fine. It's a pleasure to hear you. (U)

President Chirac: It's a great pleasure to hear from you. (U)

The President: Thank you. It's good to hear your voice. We said we would check in today on the Kosovo situation, so I thought we should talk for a moment. (U)

President Chirac: Hello? Could you repeat---- (U)

The President: We agreed to talk a few days ago about Kosovo.
(2)

President Chirac: Bill, I hear you. (U)

The President: Kofi Annan's report makes it clear Milosevic is still defying the international community. Dick Holbrooke has held three difficult meetings with Milosevic in the past few days. Milosevic is still being evasive and is still refusing to comply. He claimed there were no roadblocks even though

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Holbrooke encountered several of them himself. His comments about the security forces have been equally misleading. So I think we are still in a difficult position. I think it is very important now that we achieve a consensus on a NATO decision to authorize the use of force, and that we do it by Saturday. I believe we are all moving in the same direction. I know you were working on ways to get Russia on board and that you have spoken with Yeltsin several times. I think the real problem is that we have gotten a clear signal from Moscow that they will not support another UN resolution. So, I don't think it makes any sense to pursue this any longer -- a veto would only encourage Milosevic and make it harder for the allies to support. I hope we can also get a strong statement from today's Contact Group meeting, and I know you are pushing for it. I am also unsure how Russia will be there, but the main point is that we should agree, I think, that NATO will proceed to authorize action regardless of what the Russian position is. I think if we do that we may not have to use it. If Milosevic thinks force will be used, at least we may not have to use it. (U)

President Chirac: Bill, I agree with this approach--- (U)

The President: Just a moment, I can't hear the interpreter.
(U)

President Chirac: I was saying I agreed with that approach. The Russians are aligned on Primakov's position and they are not going to move. So obviously we have to do it without them. But we have to do it in as courteous a fashion as possible, because we do not want to have the Russia-NATO pact explode. So now, the Contact Group is meeting in London and our Foreign Ministers will report back to us. If it becomes clear that there is no other solution to get Milosevic to move then we will have to act. And so we will support that position. But as I said during our last conversation, a military strike will not have any results. It will encourage the Serbian people to close ranks around Milosevic. And it is going to give hopes to the UCK, the Kosovar military who are going to start misbehaving again. So if there is a military intervention, at the same time there must be a political diplomatic initiative. And that is why I propose to convene in Paris or elsewhere a meeting of the Contact Group plus Rugova and Milosevic immediately after the action. And I would like to ask for your support for this initiative because we must really seize this opportunity. If not, we will lock ourselves into a situation where there is an escalation of the military situation with Milosevic. So with that reservation I agree. But I am afraid there will be a

problem with the Italians, who I met two days ago, and with the Germans. (U)

The President: First, I thank you for your thoughts. I agree military action will not solve the problem alone, it will only make it clear to Milosevic that his actions will not be tolerated. I agree also though that if we make this decision on Saturday at the NAC committee meeting to authorize force we still have a chance to avoid the use of it. I have warned the UCK not to take advantage of any NATO action if they expect us to continue to work for peace. Now on the other issues you mentioned, I think there is some merit to having a meeting after military action. I am certainly not opposed to that because we will have to get everyone together on a diplomatic solution. Perhaps we can have Madeleine and Vedrine agree to discuss that. As for the Germans and Italians, Schroeder will be here tomorrow, and I will talk to Kohl on the phone today and I will do my best with them. I don't know exactly what to do about the Italians -- if you have any ideas I would be glad to hear them. I have already spoken to Prodi once on this and will be glad to speak to him again. (✓)

President Chirac: I think that would be useful. He's coming out of his domestic political crisis. The budget was the reason for that crisis, but he did not hide from me the fact that he felt he could probably overcome the budget crisis but he could not, in addition, agree to carry out a raid on Kosovo. It might be a good idea to call him or perhaps have Madeleine put pressure on Foreign Minister Dini. (✓)

The President: Okay. I will see what I can do. (U)

President Chirac: Okay, Bill. (U)

The President: Let me also say I had a very interesting talk here with your Finance Minister and the head of your central bank. (✓)

President Chirac: Yes. They were also very satisfied with the conversation. I also wanted to congratulate you for your remarkable speech before the IMF. We fully share your opinion and we support your initiative. (✓)

The President: Thank you very much. I will be in touch on that. We see some evidence in America and elsewhere that credit lines are tightening up. I am afraid it will happen in Europe and Japan and particularly in Germany where the banks are exposed to

Russian loans. We might have to be more aggressive in coming weeks. Things are moving very quickly and the Japanese situation is still very bad. (C)

President Chirac: I fully agree with that and I agree with your line of thought. It is true that our Japanese friends have a weak government and are politically weak and not much is happening. (C)

The President: Thank you Jacques. I will be back in touch. (C)

President Chirac: Thank you very much, Bill. And give my regards to Hillary. (U)

The President: Thank you friend, I will. Goodbye. (U)

President Chirac: Goodbye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --