

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with President Chirac of France (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Jacques Chirac, President of France

Interpreter: Marcel Bouquet
Notetakers: Daniel Flessas, Elaine Florio,
Sean Rice and Mary Ann Peters

DATE, TIME July 28, 1996, 12:09 - 12:27 p.m.
AND PLACE: Air Force One

The President: Hello Jacques, how are you? (U)

President Chirac: Hello, Bill. I am fine, thanks. Are you having a good flight? Can you hear me?
(U)

The President: Yes, I hear you well. (U)

President Chirac: First of all I would like to tell you how sorry we are about the problem in Atlanta. I have the impression everything is going as well as possible now. (U)

The President: Yes, I think so, as well as possible. (U)

President Chirac: I want to tell you we have had very good cooperation so far about the plane with TWA. The French families were moved by your visit. (U)

The President: Thank you very much. I was glad to see them and glad your Ambassador went with me. I believe it made things a bit better. (U)

President Chirac: First, I want to share with you my concern about the resurgence of terrorist attacks. I am not talking about what happened in Atlanta. But my fear is that growing tension in the Middle East will result in new terrorist attacks in the United States, Europe, and the Middle East. We shall be meeting in Paris, that is what we decided in the G-7 meeting. I

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Reason: 1.5(b)

Declassify On: 7/29/06

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 13526, Sec. 3.5(b)

White House Guidelines, September 11, 2006

By VL NARA, Date 6/3/2019

2015-0775-34 (1.14)

think Janet Reno will be representing you with Peter Tarnoff. I think the seven countries will have to make a substantial effort to develop a more effective strategy against terrorism. (C)

The President: I fully agree with that. We are seeing more and more people and radical groups at home trying to carry out terrorist attacks. That has nothing to do with the Middle East. We are dealing with that but we cannot deal with the far more sophisticated networks of international terrorist attacks without international cooperation. I am still trying to find out what happened in Saudi Arabia. It is possible that elements of more than one country are involved. I still don't know what happened with the TWA flight but it is very possible that it was a terrorist attack. We should find out in the next few days. Nevertheless, we have to work together and do what is necessary to combat the resurgence of terrorism. I am glad you are hosting the meeting in Paris. You and I need to take the lead and I will be with you all the way. (C)

President Chirac: Well, what I am most worried about is the Middle East situation. (C)

The President: Me too. (C)

President Chirac: I had a long conversation with Netanyahu on the phone and met with Mubarak as well. Netanyahu has changed somewhat, a little, but not nearly far enough to get back on track as far as the peace process is concerned. If there is a major attack in Israel, the Israeli response will be extremely strong and could set off an escalation which will leave no one unscathed. I think we have to try to rebuild links between Netanyahu and the Arabs. My talks with Mubarak went as well as could be expected. There should be a concerted action. Firstly, of course, from the Americans, but also involving the French, given our relationship with the Arabs. Also with Mubarak, who has substantial influence as seen in the Cairo Summit. It is vital and urgent that we put together a coordinated strategy so as to rebuild links between Jews and Arabs. (C)

The President: I agree with everything you said, including your analysis. I met with Netanyahu and am seeing Mubarak Tuesday here. I will pursue this with Mubarak here and I may well be talking to Netanyahu as well. We need to find a formula that will permit Netanyahu, under the constraints he faces after the campaign, to pursue the peace process in a way that keeps the lid on and prevents a huge resurgence of terrorism. (C)

President Chirac: I should also like to discuss Burundi now that Major Buyoya has taken power. Now in purely legal terms this was not very appropriate. Ambassador Albright has taken a very

strong negative position but happily Tony Lake seems to have toned it down and taken a more moderate position. Buyoya is our one chance to avoid a massacre. He is a man of moderation and above all wants to avoid killing. He enjoys the respect of the Army and of moderate Tutsis and Hutus. He is our best chance. Obviously we cannot applaud the coup but I think Major Buyoya, and only he, can calm things down. I think that the world's attitude and in particular the UN must be more moderate so as not to make the situation worse. (C)

I would like to add this, and let me be perfectly blunt in this matter. The campaign by the American diplomatic service in the UN against Boutros Boutros Ghali has had a disastrous effect on Africa altogether. Mandela has told me this. In all of my meetings with Africans, in particularly when talking about a compromise, it is clear from all of them that American diplomacy has been too tough and harsh. I would like a means of providing everyone with satisfaction. I don't want to add to the war against Buyoya. I can tell you that all Africans are concerned that even if it was a putsch, a coup d'etat, it was the only way to prevent the worst from happening. (C)

The President: I basically agree with you. Our first obligation is to stop the slaughter. I called in my people and told them to check with our allies and moderate our tone. We can't applaud the coup but somebody has to stop the slaughter. We ought to give this a chance to stop the meaningless killings and restore calm in the country. As you can see by Tony Lake's remarks, we moved in that direction, which I think is very important. (C)

President Chirac: In any case I want to make it quite clear that you have our full support in this rather tricky period, this difficult moment, we are going through against terrorism. It is something we have suffered from as well. With respect to the Middle East issue, I don't want you to think that in the Middle East we are trying to interfere with matters that would really be an American responsibility. That is not at all our desire. What I want is to provide you with a framework, with resources, the few resources we do have, to move in a direction we both want, that is a peace process that can guarantee the security of Israel and the others. (C)

The President: Jacques, I agree with that. It is important that we just continue to talk and work together. The meeting in Paris is very timely. I think the U.S. will be more vulnerable to terrorism, especially in the run-up to the election. Also there are people trying to kill the peace process. It is good that there will be a meeting in Paris. I will give you a report after I talk to Mubarak. We should check back in a week or so. (C)

I am terribly sorry about the loss of French victims of the TWA crash. We have recovered 28 bodies and 25 have been returned to their families. (C)

Again, we should talk again in the next few days after my meeting with Mubarak and after the meeting in Paris. (C)

President Chirac: Just one last thing. Gregory Peck has had a minor operation in Paris and I met with him. He was extremely pleased to receive your telegram. I want to thank you on behalf of him. Pamela Harriman is taking very good care of him and his family, and my thanks go to you from Greg and Veronique. (U)

The President: Good. Send my regards. Please say hello to your wife. Also, if you see those wonderful people we met in that restaurant, tell them life hasn't been the same. (U)

President Chirac: Thank you. Send my best to Hillary. (U)

The President: Thank you. (U)

-- End of Conversation --