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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with French President Jacques Chirac
(U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Chirac

Interpreter: Stephanie van Reigersberg
Notetakers: Mike Sheehan, Val Martinez, Pete
Huggins, Katherine O'Loughlin,
Wylma Robinson and Doug Mueller

DATE, TIME November 14, 1996; 10:28-10:37 a.m. EST
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

President Chirac: Hello, Bill? (U)

The President: Hello. (U)

President Chirac: How are you, Bill? (U)

The President: Fine, how are you? (U)

President Chirac: Congratulations again to you and to Hillary.
And I am glad to hear you are going for a few days' holiday. (U)

The President: Well, I am going to try. We are having a meeting
in Manila for the Asian-Pacific Forum, and I am taking a couple
of days off in Hawaii and in Australia, and then I have a state
visit to Australia. I have never been to Australia, and I am
going to Thailand, and I have never been to Thailand. (G)

President Chirac: Thailand is a very nice country. You will see
a very nice place. Bill, very short things to tell you. Do you
mind if I give the phone to the interpreter? (U)

The President: Okay. (U)

President Chirac: I would first like to tell you that I am
overjoyed with the courageous decision you have taken to commit

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to the multinational force to Zaire. And I am extremely happy with the solution you have adopted because if I understood correctly, the U.S. will take charge of security and logistics at Goma airport and the British and French plus probably some African countries will take charge of Bukavu. But I really want to point out the following two things: in the longer term, to ensure stability in the region will absolutely require holding an international conference under the aegis of the UN and the OAU with at the very least representatives of the five concerned countries. The conference must establish a longer-term peace plan. Secondly, I am very concerned regarding possible instability in Zaire, and I would like to point out to you that the only personality capable of avoiding a disaster in Zaire is Mobutu. That is what I wanted to say. (C)

The President: Well, first of all, thank you for calling me and I am very pleased we are going to do things together. I believe our people are working out the details of the operation, so it has a reasonable chance of success. (C)

President Chirac: Yes, that is very important. (C)

The President: Tony Lake is in New York talking to people who are at the UN, and when he gets back, I will talk to him about your plan for an international conference. Obviously, we are going to need a longer-term diplomatic initiative and this is the first time I have heard about an international conference, and I am intrigued by it. I want to talk to Tony about it. (C)

President Chirac: We have the same position, and we have no problem. No problem at all. But the only way to reach an international conference, which is the second necessary step, is to force Rwanda, and I think you are the only one able to force Rwanda directly or through Uganda, but it is a necessity. The danger of a destabilizing Zaire is great. (C)

Second thing, I just finished the conference on Bosnia with the three presidents and everything was perfect; there was no problem. Christopher was here this morning, there were no problems. (C)

Third thing, regarding your letter, do you have a definite position about Boutros-Ghali? (C)

The President: Yes. (C)

President Chirac: Is there no way to discuss it? (C)

The President: Here's what I would like to do. What I would like to do is to have our people discuss it. I would like to not

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have this conversation with you yet. We can talk in a couple of days. Yesterday, Madeleine Albright came to me with an idea as a possible resolution. I just heard about this for the first time. I don't know that we can get agreement on this, but I would like our people to get details to you and your people. I'd like you to chew on it for a couple of days. I'll be away, but I will be reachable. (C)

President Chirac: Well, but everything would be...I will be in Japan, but everything could be done between Tony Lake and Levitte. (C)

The President: You might not agree to it. I just heard about it yesterday, and I don't want to say something wrong. Lake and Levitte can discuss it then you get back to me. (C)

President Chirac: Okay. Yes. I just received a message from Hosni Mubarak because I tried to sell him the solution of two and a half years. He just sent me a message yesterday that this is not possible and with all the African countries being in favor of Boutros-Ghali, he couldn't accept it. I am ready to talk to him again about that, and I suggest that you also talk to him because the Egyptians are a little nervous about that thing, but what I can tell you is I know very well all the people in the UN, in Africa, in Latin America and in Asia. And I can tell you it would be, I think, very bad for the American image to veto if there is another solution available. And second, there is no solution less than half a mandate, two and a half years. Even if an agreement is written giving Boutros Ghali two and a half years to put up the reforms, less wouldn't be accepted. And he has a great, great majority in the UN and honestly, it would be a bad thing for America's image. I know you have home problems, but I tell you the truth. (C)

The President: Well, I do have big home problems, and if I did that, Congress wouldn't appropriate the UN a dollar. And I would be ridiculed for changing my position after the election. It would look as if I had no conviction about it at all. (C)

President Chirac: Difficult option. (C)

The President: I don't want Boutros Boutros-Ghali to be embarrassed about this. I want him to have a graceful exit. We have an idea that might or might not fly. Let's have Tony and Levitte talk, then we can get back in touch. (C)

President Chirac: Okay, that is a good thing. No problem. (C)

The President: Of course. (U)

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President Chirac: Well, I hope you will have a rest. I know it will be very short, but I hope it will be very nice few days' holiday. (U)

The President: It will be good for Hillary and me to get away from the pressure cooker here. (U)

President Chirac: Good. Give her all my love. (U)

The President: I may have to make her Ambassador to France to get you to be nice to me for the next four years. (U)

President Chirac: That would be great. I like her very much. (U)

The President: Okay. Good-bye. (U)

President Chirac: I hope you will have a quiet and agreeable rest. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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