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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON



MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telecon with British Prime Minister Tony Blair

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister Blair

Notetaker: George Chastian, Michael Manning, Liz Rogers, Roger Merletti, James Smith, Larry Butler

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: April 16, 1999, 2:11 p.m. - 2:21 p.m.
Roseville, Michigan

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Prime Minister Blair: Hi. This is a secure line, is it not?
(U)

The President: No, it's really garbled. I'll call back if you want. Let's do what we can on the non-secure line and if you want to get into details, I can call you back secure. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Yes, that will be fine. Where are you?
(U)

The President: I'm in Detroit, on my way to a meeting with Albanian-Americans, and then I'm going to Boston, and then home tonight. I was in San Francisco last night/yesterday, meeting with newspaper editors. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Good for you. (U)

The President: I'm trying to rally support here. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: It's tough, is it? (U)

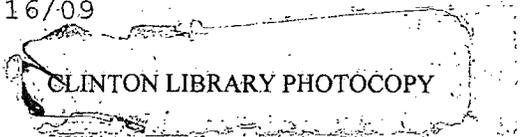
The President: It's coming around. Americans are concerned but they're basically supporting what we are doing. That's what I believe. Nobody is going to treat this like a Sunday walk in the park until it's over. Yesterday was another good example of your insistence on a communication strategy.

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Reason: 1.5(d)

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It was a terrible thing, but in the Gulf War, we had soldiers killed by friendly fire where the Americans and British were. So even in a relatively small conflict, these kinds of things happen. We can't lose the forest for the trees. (e)

Prime Minister Blair: Absolutely right.

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The President: That's what I said yesterday. I was very strong with the newspaper editors -- you know I completely agree with you. We're on the same page. We'll get the briefing sorted out there. (e)

Prime Minister Blair: I'll tell you what I have done. I have done a note, which is longish, which sets out all my thoughts, concerns, suggestions on this, on everything we are doing. If it's okay with you, I will fax it over to you on a secure fax. (e)

The President: Good. Are we going to get together on Thursday? (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Yes, I think. (U)

The President: Do you want to spend the night at the White House? Or at Blair House, if you want. I won't get in until 1 a.m., and you may want to be in bed by then, but it's your option. You can sleep in the same bed Churchill did. (e)

Prime Minister Blair: I hope it's appropriate. (U)

The President: As long as you don't parade around naked before the bath. You're too young and too trim. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: I'm getting older in this bloody job. Bill, that is great, and then we can meet Thursday morning. I will get this information over to you

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I'm going there Tuesday to talk

to people, and to SACEUR as well, to get a real fix on what is happening before the summit. (S)

The President: That's a very good idea. When you come here, I'd like to develop a strategy on how to work with the others, including some of the smaller countries. I think a little effort on the side could get us a strong voice in making those folks feel included. Between the two of us, I think we can touch most people. ...all of that.../

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I probably need to call him. (S)

Prime Minister Blair:

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The President:

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Prime Minister Blair:

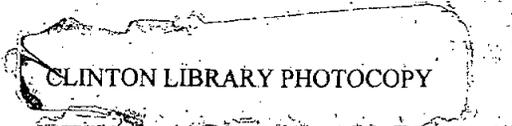
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The President: That is what I think. In Detroit, we had 40,000 Albanians and a whole bunch of Serbs. The Albanians were outside demonstrating, and I said we have no fight with the Serbian people; they were our allies in World War II and most don't have a clue what Milosevic has done in their name in Kosovo. I said that was the proper way to express disagreement, not by killing. We have to be upbeat and resolute. It is important to be determined, but not too damned grim, either. We have to keep spirits up. We're in this world where people expect instantaneous results. We need to act like this started the day before yesterday and not twenty years ago. (S)

Prime Minister Blair: I think that is right.

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The President: If you want me to do any more, like talking to Solana or Wes Clark, let me know. I thought it would be less abrasive to everybody if I didn't lead the charge, and it seems to have worked out well, but I'll be happy to follow up. (S)



Prime Minister Blair: Let me check with Solana. [REDACTED]

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The President: I'm sure that's right. There's no reason to believe these people are trained to deal with this situation.

~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair: That's totally right. This is a situation they haven't dealt with before. ~~(S)~~

The President: We will plan on being together on Thursday. You decide whether Blair House is more convenient. It probably will be for your retinue, but you can stay here and put another aide upstairs if you want. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair: That is really kind, Bill. I will get this note to you on secure fax, and probably we should have a word over the weekend on the secure phone. ~~(S)~~

The President: Alright, we'll do that. I understand we made a little progress on those operational changes you and I wanted and I am a little encouraged by that. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair: Yes, I think if we really work we can unblock any obstacles there. We still know where the difficult points are. ~~(S)~~

The President: We're finally getting some indication they're feeling it and there's a lot of internal debate within the high councils. That is important and we need to bear down. I will get your fax, and we will talk over the weekend. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair: Best of luck in Detroit. (U)

The President: I'll see you next week. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Goodbye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --