

~~SECRET~~

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON



MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with British Prime Minister Blair
(U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister Blair

Notetakers: Jenny McGee, Joel Schrader,
Miles Murphy, Sean Tarver, Roger Merletti,
James Smith and Lawrence Butler

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: May 27, 1999, 10:10 - 10:22 a.m. EDT

Prime Minister Blair: Hi, Bill. How are you? (U)

The President: I am fine. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: So. What's happening? (U)

The President: How's the indictment going down over there? (X)

Prime Minister Blair:

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(b)(d)

The President: I agree with that. (X)

Prime Minister Blair:

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(b)(d)

So, anyway, I sent you a note setting out my thoughts. I don't know whether it's reached you yet, I just finished it this morning, but I think the situation is, we are doing a lot of damage, but I think

DECLASSIFIED UNDER AUTHORITY OF THE
INTERAGENCY SECURITY CLASSIFICATION APPEALS PANEL,
E.O. 13526, SECTION 5.3(b)(3)
ISCAP APPEAL NO. 2013-090, document no. 60
DECLASSIFICATION DATE: October 14, 2015

~~SECRET~~

Reason: 1.5(a,b,d)

Declassify On: 6/01/09

CLINTON LIBRARY PHOTOCOPY

we're right to be stepping up the pressure. We've got to be. ~~(S)~~

The President: This planning process has got to proceed, because we only have a few days before deciding what else to do but I think 45,000 troops for KFOR is quite good. The more people we have deployed in the area, the more quickly we can move. I agree entirely with you; we obviously can't afford to lose and have to keep doing everything necessary to make him think that we're ready to intervene and no matter what we can't afford to lose. But the combination of the impact of last week's strikes and the fact that the NAC has voted to let NATO increase the number of targets that will be hit and the nature of them and the buildup will give us maximum pressure. I agree with you, I don't care what happens to him, whether he stays there or goes someplace as you've said, like Belarus, it's all right with me if we get our objectives met. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair: Yes.

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(b)(d)

The President: I agree with that. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair: Because you save lives by doing that. I think we are in just about the right frame and it probably hasn't reached you yet, but I have set out in a note what I think you can do if we have to go a step further -- how you would explain that and how you would take people with you. You can set it in a bigger vision for the Balkans and how it's good for people.

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(b)(d)

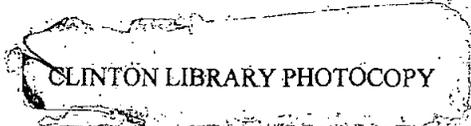
The President: That may be. I bet they wouldn't do that.

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

Prime Minister Blair: I think he would. ~~(S)~~

The President: He has been very tough on this so far. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair: Yes, he has and I think they will come along with us. The problem is, until you see a real plan,



E.O. 13526, section 1.4(b)(d)

you're a bit in the dark on this.

So, I think if we get a clear military consensus, I think people would go with that.

~~(S)~~

The President: The military consensus is 175,000 to 200,000 troops, at least that's what our people say, so we could probably do it with less. But one thing we've found out is the more we send in, the fewer will die. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair: Absolutely. ~~(S)~~

The President: So the more unattractive we make it, the safer it is for everyone. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair:

The President: That is a big problem. They're reeling around.

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

I think we need to let this thing percolate for a day or two and see what the reaction in Serbia is. There's some chance it will be helpful, and there is a chance that it will be harmful; I would be surprised if it had no impact. So I think we'll see something fairly soon. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair:

The President: I agree with that. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair:



E.O. 13526, section 1.4(b)(d)

The President: Yes, I agree with that. Hillary and I are taking a couple of days off, and I am mulling that over right now. My gut feeling is that I have to give something sooner rather than later. Unless it cracks in two or three days, it's better to say something very strong, that we have no intention of losing this. Now the good news about the indictment, Tony, is that it makes it less forgivable for us to lose it. No one can say, "Oh well, they're just nationalists." I think it is interesting that apparently the whole indictment is premised on Kosovo and shows a systematic government policy. I thought in the beginning that if she (Louise Arbour) did do this, some might be based on his role in the Bosnia slaughters. But apparently it's all based on Kosovo. It's quite interesting. And apparently -- I haven't seen it, but apparently it says that it's more than chain of command, it's specific personal things he ordered, not that he was just the head of the apparatus. This will be quite helpful in making that case. I agree with you

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

but this is making it impossible for everyone to walk away and making him see people are not going to walk away. (S)

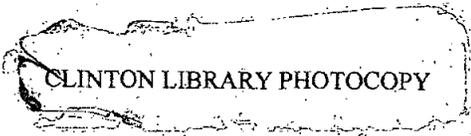
Prime Minister Blair: I think that is right. As I say, you haven't got this yet -- (S)

The President: I just got it. I just read it. Just this second. (S)

Prime Minister Blair:

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(b)(d)

The President: Good. Well, I will be back in a few days and get back with you on that, and we'll keep our fingers crossed. I think the NAC did the right thing by approving a new range of targets. (S)



Prime Minister Blair: Yes, I think it has been a good few days.

(S)

The President: Alright, I will talk to you soon. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Alright, Bill, all the best. (U)

-- End of Conversation --