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E.O. 13526, SECTION 5.3(b)(3)

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1820



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Prime Minister Blair of the
United Kingdom (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Prime Minister Blair

Notetakers: Don Gentile, Joel Ehrendreich,
Deana Sutliff, Frank Jarosinski, Dick Norland

DATE, TIME March 14, 2000, 1:05-1:29 p.m. EST
AND PLACE: The Residence

The President: Hello. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Hi, Bill. (U)

The President: Can we talk about Kosovo a little bit? ~~let~~

Prime Minister Blair: Yes, sure. ~~let~~

The President: Let me give you my thoughts. We've got violence
everyday, KFOR attrition, UN operations too slow, and we're
coming up on spring which is a most dangerous time. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Basically, you and I gave it a lot of high-
level attention during the air campaign. Now, you're worried
about elections, I'm worried about elections and the Middle East.
Somehow, we have got to get this operation on a sounder footing
before Milosevic challenges us. ~~let~~

I think three things have to be done. We have the biggest stake
in this because we believed in it. You'll be around after I'm
gone and this will come back and bite you in the behind. First
of all, we've got to make sure KFOR has enough forces to counter
the threat and then we've got to make sure the UN gets funding to
do the job and then get enough police there to take pressure off
KFOR. KFOR is getting weaker when it should be getting stronger.
We have to look at our pledged force levels and have a smooth
transition when the new KFOR commander takes over. If not, I
think Milosevic, who seems to be getting stronger in Serbia, will
take it as a sign of weakness and then we'll be back in conflict.

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Classified by: Robert A. Bradtke
Reason: 1.5(d)
Declassify on: 3/16/10

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[Redacted]

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The second thing is that we have to redouble our efforts with the Kosovar Albanians. We sent the two best people with connections there this week to deliver that message. Then, we've got to send more police. We're sending more police this month, from 490 to 550. (S)

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Prime Minister Blair: [Redacted]

The President: That's good. Let's talk about UNMIK. They are crippled by the funding shortage. I'm trying to do what we can to increase our contributions to improve the infrastructure, and I hope you can give some sort of concrete pledge as well. If you and I won't do it, nobody will. We can give up to \$500 million if other people kick in some money. I've got Republicans in the Senate trying to pass some bill saying that we can't give more money until the Europeans do. We need some help. We have given out 100 percent of the money we promised to give but I think the EU has only given 40 percent of what was committed. (S)

Prime Minister Blair: [Redacted]

The President: At some point down the road, we'll have to deal with this Kosovo status deal, but we have to get your people and mine together and get a set of common talking points. [Redacted]

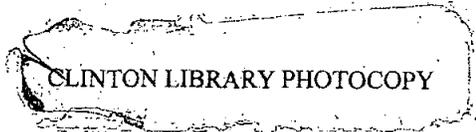
E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

We need to call Chirac and others to kind of muscle this up a bit. Are you okay with that? (S)

Prime Minister Blair: Yes. [Redacted]

The President: And a lot more money. (S)

Prime Minister Blair: Yes. [Redacted]



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[Redacted]

The President: Let me ask you.

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I think the trick is and the problem is that authority is too dispersed. Is there any way we can get Kofi to somehow empower them? The problem is that Kouchner works for the UN, KFOR is a UN force, and we're here not wanting to get in the way, but not wanting to screw up.

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

Prime Minister Blair:

[Redacted]

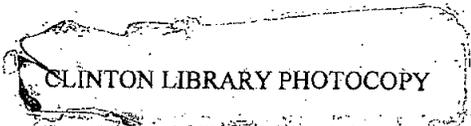
The President: I think the other. You know, my sense is the Stability Pact, because you're putting up the money, would be no problem there. What is Kouchner's relationship with the French? If they tell him what to do, will he do it? (C)

Prime Minister Blair: I think so, yes.

[Redacted]

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The President: I agree with that. We will work on it from our side and can talk about it. I just think this is so important. I think this is part of the calls you'll make next week in Lisbon. We need to have our people gaming out what we will or won't do if Milosevic sends people into the northern part of Kosovo allegedly to protect the Serbs. What are we going to do if there is a real battle in southern Serbia and what are we going to do about Montenegro if he invades them? (S)



Prime Minister Blair: Absolutely. Okay. I agree. ~~(S)~~

The President: Every one of them is a tough problem. No one wants to do anything, including us. On the other hand, if we have an aggressive response in these other three areas early, we not only minimize these problems but also minimize him doing anything out of line in Montenegro. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair: I agree. I believe that the window of opportunity is starting to close. ~~(S)~~

The President: I really like this idea.

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

The President: Did you have a good trip to Russia? The press on it was very good. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair:

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The President: E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d) (S)

Prime Minister Blair: I don't know. ~~(S)~~

The President: E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

Prime Minister Blair: Absolutely.

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The President: What does he think about Chechnya? ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair:

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The President: It's a really rough situation over there and in a lot of Central Asian countries bordering there. It was so typically Russian ham-handed. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair:

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The President: We had a good joint statement on the Genome project -- thank you for that. Go see the Queen. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Okay, Bill. All the best. See you soon:
(U)

-- End of Conversation --