

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: Amy Swarm and Sean Tarver

DATE, TIME: May 27, 2000, 12:27-12:44 p.m. EDT
AND PLACE: The Residence

Prime Minister Blair: Hi, Bill. (U)

The President: Hey. Congratulations! What a good day. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Yes, it was good, but tight. (U)

The President: Trimble was right. He had to go back to all those crazies in his party. [Redacted] E.O. 13526, section 1.4(d)

Prime Minister Blair: [Redacted]

The President: Yes. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: [Redacted]

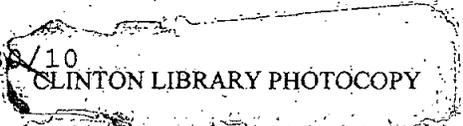
The President: Yes. I talked to Adams this morning. He is a little bit peeved about Trimble talking about house-training him, but, I said, "Oh hell, it's part of the deal to get the government back up." I told him, "Look Gerry, I will support you. You've got to get the Patten thing, but you also have to do those CBMs." (U)

Prime Minister Blair: Yes. [Redacted]

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

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

The President: I think that is exactly what the republicans are thinking, so you have go to talk to them. There is no question-- they will completely, once they move forward with their CBM, cut the ground from under the "no" unionists. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair: I think that is right.

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

The President: How's fatherhood coming? (U)

Prime Minister Blair: It's different. (U)

The President: You're not coming to Berlin? Are you still going to be on family leave. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: It's difficult. I really wanted to come, but it is difficult to leave Cherie home alone on weekends without anyone. (U)

The President: I think that is the right thing. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: It should be a good do and then you go on to Russia? (U)

The President: Yes. What I am trying to do. I guess you saw the sort of crazy speech Bush gave last week. ~~(S)~~

Prime Minister Blair: Yes, I did. ~~(S)~~

The President: [gap] He didn't promise to unilaterally reduce below START III levels. He just promised to cut them below START

II levels. Hell, I've already done that. This is just crazy. I am terrified these guys will get in and say Reagan was right about Star Wars. And then you'll get the Chinese building a thousand weapons, after all the work I did passing China Permanent Normal Trade Relations. (e)

Prime Minister Blair: Congratulations, that was brilliant. (e)

The President: It was a great thing, but too hard. The only problem we have in this country is that our business community always kills legislation. Anyway, I am just so afraid that all the benefits will be squandered if Bush wins the elections. I still think we have a 50 percent or better chance to win. (e)

Prime Minister Blair: Quite close, isn't it? (e)

The President: It shouldn't be. White married Protestants don't think they should be voting for Democrats, partly because of the gun issue that Al and I are taking on. All the specifics people agree with. [gap] it is crazy. You can take a poll about loopholes. Sixty-five percent to 30 percent say yes, but even in New York where it is more liberal than the rest of the country, if Hillary were endorsed by this group that did the Million Mom March, it's like 40 to 40 percent. A lot of the country likes it when we are in, but they have a hard time admitting it. My job approval was like 65 percent. Bush is really smart. The campaign against McCain was the most vicious in modern memory. He has these right wing foot soldiers do his dirty work, so he can be nice. I think Al had not the best couple of months, but now he is in good form and doing well. And we have the record and the people. I think he'll do fine in debates, but I still think he has a better than 50 percent chance of winning this thing. If he doesn't, then you will have to do a lot of heavy lifting. I think Al is sort of where I am on this stuff. Of course, if Bush wins, whatever I do with Putin, they can reverse. If we just came out and said we are not going to do this now and we are not going to do it until we have technology everybody buys into and believes in, but we have to do research -- if I did that, all I would do is make Al vulnerable. There is an article by Hugo somebody in one of your papers, saying he thought we were nuts. (e)

Prime Minister Blair: Hugo Young? (e)

The President: Did you see the piece? (e)

Prime Minister Blair: No, but I had it summarized for me.

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

The President: It would be a good thing if national missile defense worked on a broader basis. If it gives people the impression that it would work, people would believe that we could use the thing and they would be less likely to attack. But you've got to figure out if you deploy and if you got beyond the second phase and it could stop 50 or 60 warheads, what position would that put the Chinese in. I don't think a lot of people say let's go full tilt on this thing. The goal ought to be to get rid of these damn offensive weapons and direct our energies toward that. In the meantime, we must not do anything in the interim to increase the chances these weapons would be used. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

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

The President: The main thing is, the United States should take a position that we have got to do this in the context of our larger objectives. I am working with Al in an effort to preserve the arms control regime. If we could do it, it would be good. The problem I have with the Republican approach is they would deploy this big Star Wars in the sky system and an adversary can get under it if they want. (C)

Prime Minister Blair:

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

(C)

The President: One thing Republicans say is that nobody believes we can have bad intentions, but we are the only people who have ever dropped one of these weapons. My objective is to try and leave office with the thing in the best possible state in terms of a decent outcome. I am trying to do this deal with Putin to foreclose the possibility of going to any bigger system which would undermine arms control. It might not work. We might not be able to do it. But I still think we are going to win this thing. We might not. It might be close. I always believed Al is going to win. I am going to try to make it difficult for Bush to go off half-cocked on this Star Wars deal. (C)

Prime Minister Blair: Yes. Any chance of seeing you? (C)

The President: I hope so. I would still like to come over there. Now that we have the Northern Ireland government back up, maybe I can go by Ireland again. (C)

Prime Minister Blair: I think it would be good. I have some ideas on this stuff. It would be nice to sit down and talk in detail. It would also be nice to see you in Ireland. (C)

The President: I didn't want to go until it makes sense all around in terms of the peace process and your schedule. ~~(e)~~

Prime Minister Blair: Why don't we see what dates could be arranged. ~~(e)~~

The President: I want to see your baby. I am quite good with babies, you know. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: He is a great guy. So good. A little star, really. And Cherie is doing great. We are going off to mass now on Saturday night, to try to avoid the media. If it is not too much of a hassle, to meet quite soon would be good and we could use Ireland as the reason and have a proper talk at the same time. Thanks for all your help again. When do you leave?
~~(C)~~

The President: I depart the United States on Monday. I have an EU thing in Portugal, then on to Russia, and then a brief stop in the Ukraine. I go to Portugal, Berlin, Russia, Ukraine, and then home. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: So you leave next week? (U)

The President: Yes. All right, tell Cherie hello. It is a great day for you. The way you keep everybody talking is amazing to me. ~~(e)~~

Prime Minister Blair: Occasionally it is amazing to me, too. One day at a time. ~~(e)~~

The President: All right man. (U)

Prime Minister Blair: All the best. (U)

-- End of Conversation --