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DECLASSIFIED UNDER AUTHORITY OF THE  
INTERAGENCY SECURITY CLASSIFICATION APPEALS PANEL,  
E.O. 13526, SECTION 5.3(b)(3)

ISCAP APPEAL NO. 2016-034, document no. 1  
DECLASSIFICATION DATE: September 6, 2019

PREC: IMMEDIATE  
CLASS: ~~SECRET~~  
LINE1: OAASZYUW RUEHCAA4561 2020226-SSSS--RHEHAAX.  
LINE2: ZNY SSSSS ZZH  
LINE3: O 210226Z JUL 95 ZFF6  
LINE4: FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
OSRI: RUEHC  
DTG: 210226Z JUL 95  
ORIG: SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO: AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 0000  
INFO: ////  
SUBJ: SECRETARY'S CONVERSATION WITH FRENCH FM DE  
CHARETTE



TEXT:  
~~SECRET~~ STATE 174561

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MERCURY EYES ONLY FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM EXEC SEC

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR  
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, BK, FR  
SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S CONVERSATION WITH FRENCH FM DE  
CHARETTE

1. ~~SECRET~~ - ENTIRE TEXT. NODIS MERCURY
2. THIS CABLE CONTAINS A DRAFT MEMORANDUM OF THE SECRETARY'S TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH FM DE CHARETTE ON JULY 19, 1995. THE SECRETARY INITIATED THE CALL. I ASK THAT YOU NOT PERMIT COPIES TO BE MADE OF THIS MESSAGE, AND THAT YOU DO NOT DISTRIBUTE IT OUTSIDE OF THE MISSION'S EXECUTIVE OFFICE. DEPARTMENT RECIPIENTS SHOULD NOT DISTRIBUTE OUTSIDE THE BUREAU'S FRONT OFFICE.
3. BEGIN TEXT:  
MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION  
DATE: WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 1995  
TIME: 1935 EDT  
PARTICIPANTS: THE SECRETARY AND FM DE CHARETTE  
  
SUBJECT: DE CHARETTE WORRIES ABOUT LACK OF  
CONSENSUS AT JULY 21 LONDON MEETING ON  
BOSNIA

THE SECRETARY ASKED IF FM DE CHARETTE INTENDS TO BE AT THE LONDON MEETING. DE CHARETTE, WHO IS ACCOMPANYING CHIRAC IN MORRECCO, SAID HE WOULD NOT ARRIVE IN LONDON BEFORE MIDNIGHT, JULY 20. THE SECRETARY THEN ASKED IF

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DE CHARETTE WOULD BE ABLE TO TAKE A CONFERENCE CALL FROM BOTH THE SECRETARY AND FM RIFKIND DURING THE AFTERNOON OF JULY 20. DE CHARETTE RESPONDED THAT HE WOULD WELCOME SUCH A CALL.

DE CHARETTE THEN SAID HE WISHED TO MAKE SEVERAL CONCERNS KNOWN TO THE SECRETARY PRIOR TO THE LATTER'S DEPARTURE FOR THE AIRPORT. HE IS WORRIED ABOUT THE UPCOMING LONDON MEETING AND FEARS THE U.S., U.K. AND FRANCE MAY NOT COME TO A UNIFIED DECISION, A DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD CONSTITUTE A SIGNIFICANT FAILURE OF THE WEST. INTERNATIONAL REPERCUSSIONS FROM SUCH A FAILURE TO AGREE WOULD BE GRAVE. THE FRENCH POSITION HAD BEEN MADE VERY CLEAR DURING THE JULY 19 TELCON BETWEEN PRESIDENTS CLINTON AND CHIRAC. TW REITERATE, IT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO DRAW A LINE AT GORAZDE AND UNPROFOR TROOPS THERE MUST BE REINFORCED.

DE CHARETTE REFERRED TO THE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS THE GOF HAS MADE TO REINFORCE GORAZDE AND SAID FRANCE COULD NOT JOIN IN ANY AGREEMENTS AT THE LONDON MEETING WHICH DID NOT FOLLOW ALONG THOSE LINES. THE U.S. AIR STRIKE OPTION WOULD BE LIMITING AND WOULD NOT DETER THE SERBS FROM GOING INTO GORAZNE. A STRONG MESSAGE MUST BE SENT TO THE SERBS AND CONCRETE MILITARY ACTION IS THE WAY TO SEND SUCH A MESSAGE. DE CHARETTE THEN ASKED FOR THE SECRETARY'S READOUT OF THE CLINTON-CHIRAC CALL.

THE SECRETARY CHARACTERIZED THE PRESIDENTIAL CALL AS POSITIVE. HE WAS ENCOURAGED BY THE MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING THAT THERE MUST BE CHANGES IN THE WEST'S POLICY. NOTING FRENCH AND U.S. AGREEMENT THAT A LINE MUST BE DRAWN AT GORAZDE, THE SECRETARY ALSO UNDERScored COMMON U.S., U.K. AND FRENCH GROUND ON THE NEED FOR A VIGOROUS AIR CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE SERBS SHOULD THEY ATTACK GORAZDE. THE SECRETARY WELCOMED THE CONVERGENCE OF IDEAS AMONG THE THREE COUNTRIES ON HOLDING THE LINE AT GORAZDE AND DETERRING THE SERBS WITH THREATS OF A VIGOROUS AIR CAMPAIGN.

THE SECRETARY SAID U.S. MILITARY LEADERS HAVE STUDIED THE FRENCH PROPOSAL TO REINFORCE THE ENCLAVE WITH 1000 FRENCH TROOPS AND HAVE CONCLUDED IT IS AN UNWISE MOVE. HE STRESSED THIS IS A MILITARY VIEW, AND NOT A POLITICAL ONE. HE REITERATED HIS BELIEF THAT WARNING THE SERBIAN LEADERSHIP PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY AS TO WHAT AIRSTRIKES COULD DO TO ANY SERBIAN INCURSION FORCE INTO GORAZDE WILL DETER SUCH AN ATTACK BETTER THAN REINFORCEMENT. REINFORCEMENT OF GORAZDE WITH MORE TROOPS IS A SYMBOLIC GESTURE THAT WOULD SURELY HAVE GRAVE CONSEQUENCES.

THE SECRETARY TOLD DE CHARETTE THE WORLD IS LOOKING TO THE PLAYERS AT THE LONDON MEETING TO ACHIEVE A COMMON POSITION. HE ASKED DE CHARETTE TO CONSIDER THE AIR CAMPAIGN OPTION AND SAID HE WOULD DISCUSS OTHER OPTIONS WITH FM RIFKIND IN THE MORNING.

DE CHARETTE THANKED THE SECRETARY FOR HIS VIEWS BUT

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REPEATED HIS CONCERNS ABOUT THE MEETING'S PROSPECTS. THE GOF DOES NOT SEE ANY POSSIBILITY OF GIVING ITS ASSENT TO A DECISION IN LONDON WHICH DOES NOT INCLUDE SOME COMPONENT OF GROUND REINFORCEMENT IN GORAZDE. OF COURSE HE AND OTHER FRENCH OFFICIALS WILL CONTINUE TO EXPLORE OPTIONS AND MAINTAIN CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION OPEN; HOWEVER, IT IS HIS OPINION THE CHANCES OF REACHING AN AGREEMENT IN LONDON ARE WORSENING.

DE CHARETTE ALSO CONTRADICTED THE SECRETARY'S EARLIER DECLARATION THAT THERE APPEARED TO BE COMMON GROUND AMONG THE U.S., U.K. AND FRANCE ON THE ISSUE OF AIR STRIKES. HE SAID FRANCE HAS NOT AGREED TO AN AIR OPTION AND COULD NOT BE PARTY TO ANY SCENARIO IN WHICH AN AIR CAMPAIGN CONSTITUTES THE WEST'S ONLY RESPONSE TO SERB AGGRESSION IN GOPAZDE. HE REITERATED THAT GROUND REINFORCEMENT WAS THE ONLY PRACTICAL MILITARY MOVE WHICH COULD EFFECTIVELY DETER THE SERBS.

THE SECRETARY SAID IT WOULD BE MOST UNFORTUNATE SHOULD THE MEETING NOT PRODUCE AN AGREEMENT. HE URGED DE CHARETTE TO COMMUNICATE TO HIS POLITICAL AND MILITARY COLLEAGUES THE NEED FOR A SUCCESS IN LONDON. THE SECRETARY STRESSED GORAZDE IS A MILITARY PROBLEM; REINFORCEMENT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN MILITARY, NOT POLITICAL TERMS.

THE CALL ENDED AT 1927 EDT WITH BOTH PARTIES AGREEING TO SPEAK THURSDAY, JULY 20 IN A CONFERENCE CALL INCLUDING THE BRITISH FOREIGN MINISTER.

4. END TEXT  
TALBOTT  
BT  
#4561

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SECT: SECTION: 01 OF 01

SSN: 4561

TOR: 950721002106 M1774424

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PRT: BASS BERGER DOHSE FUERTH HARMON LAKE SENS SIT SODERBERG  
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DECLASSIFIED UNDER AUTHORITY OF THE  
INTERAGENCY SECURITY CLASSIFICATION APPEALS PANEL,  
E.O. 13526, SECTION 5.3(b)(3)

ISCAP APPEAL NO. 2016-034, document no. 2  
DECLASSIFICATION DATE: September 6, 2019

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON



MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Bilateral Meeting with President Jacques Chirac of France

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
Warren Christopher, Secretary of State  
Anthony Lake, Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs  
Pamela Harriman, Ambassador to France  
Alexander Vershbow, Senior Director for  
European Affairs, NSC Staff, Notetaker

France  
Jacques Chirac, President  
Herve De Charette, Foreign Minister  
Jacques Andreani, Ambassador to the U.S.  
Jean-David Levitte, Diplomatic Adviser

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: June 14, 1995, 2:45 p.m. - 3:37 p.m.  
Oval Office

President Chirac: Thank you for receiving me. I would like to ask one question. We received information a few hours ago about a massing of Bosnian government troops in Sarajevo. We are worried by that. (C)

The President: You should be worried. Let me tell you what we know. I wanted to raise this in our discussions on Bosnia. The Bosnian government has been improving the strength of its forces. They believe they are quite strong now and are interested in launching an offensive to open the road to Sarajevo. Secretary Christopher has cautioned Prime Minister Silajdzic very strongly about the possible adverse consequences. We have told them that they could lose, that they could put the peacekeepers in more danger, that this could lead to more shelling, of Sarajevo, that it could endanger the continued existence of UNPROFOR. We don't know if this message had any impact on Silajdzic or others in his government. They are getting a lot of encouragement here from the new Republicans in Congress who are pushing for a unilateral

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lifting of the arms embargo. They know I intend to veto that and that they cannot override my veto -- at least in the Senate. But we are very concerned about the offensive. We don't know if it will go forward, but we are trying to discourage it, particularly as it could occur during the G-7 Summit. (C)

President Chirac: The situation is very dangerous. If they launch the offensive, the Serbs will counterattack all over the country and the Serbs will win. There are a lots of problems for UNPROFOR and for the United States if the Bosnians are defeated. If what the Senators are saying is true, many here will ask for U.S. help to prevent the defeat of the Bosnians. This will be very dangerous. You should use all your power to avoid such an initiative. I understand you can't order the Bosnians what to do, but you should do as much as possible. (C)

The President: We will do whatever we can. They honestly believe that they can defeat the Serbs and that they can force a lifting of the arms embargo. They believe that if they can get heavy weapons and get trained on them, they could use them before the Bosnian Serbs are able to overwhelm them with their artillery. Our military believes that this is absolutely wrong and we have told them so repeatedly. But right now they are lifted by the fact that they have improved their capability over the past months. (C)

President Chirac: This means that they have been getting arms and that the embargo isn't working. (C)

The President: They are also emboldened by all the talk in Congress about unilateral lift. But we have told them repeatedly that they can't win and that I will veto unilateral lift. We have told them that we support the UN mission and that we are determined to work in partnership with our allies -- especially the UK and France -- to strengthen UNPROFOR. Maybe they believe that they can open the road without any other consequences. Maybe they think that this will speed the day of lifting the arms embargo. But we are doing what we can to discourage this. (C)

President Chirac: They may launch the offensive during the G-7 Summit. (C)

The President: We think they may do this in order to focus the attention of the world on Bosnia, and to put the heat on all of us during the G-7. Of course, it would be good to get the road opened. But if they launch the offensive, the Serbs will not be seen by the Russians and others as in the wrong when they react. (C)

Secretary Christopher: Our latest intelligence is that the Bosnians are not quite ready to launch the offensive and may wait until the 20th or 21st, but they could go earlier than this. I told Silajdzic that if they do, they will be on their own. We will not come to their rescue if they start something and then get a black eye. (C)

The President: If this information is right and they aren't going to be ready during the G-7, it will give us more time to work on them. (C)

President Chirac: We have the same information as you. I was informed that a few hours ago the concentration of forces was getting bigger and bigger as we speak. (C)

The President: I suggest we put the issue of the Bosnian offensive to the side and come back to it later. I would like to talk about the status of the Rapid Reaction Force. I will do all I can to deal with the offensive, but every day more and more members of Congress want to force the unilateral lifting of the arms embargo. You may have had an impact in your discussion with the Senators and Congressmen over lunch. I understand you told them what I have been saying for months. (C)

President Chirac: I doubt I had much effect. (C)

The President: You are there on the ground and have a first-hand appreciation of the situation. (C)

President Chirac: I can only say, before leaving the subject of the offensive, that in the current circumstances it would be good to have the UN Security Council Resolution on the Rapid Reaction Force enacted tomorrow. They are ready in New York. John Major asked me to say that everything is completely ready. The Russians will support it. We just need the "yes" vote of the United States. We should do this before the G-7. It will be a major signal, even though I know you have problems with the Congress. (C)

The President: The main issue with the Congress is the fact that, under the proposal, we would be obliged to fund 30 percent of the Rapid Reaction Force, and Congress would have to appropriate the funds. This new Congress is the most isolationist Congress since the 1930s. Last night I sent them another budget with a clear plan to balance the budget over 10 years. It would provide for cuts in overall spending -- except for defense, retirement and healthcare for the elderly -- by 20% across the board in real dollars (or 40% without inflation). It would hold on to all of our foreign affairs investments and increase spending on education. You must see this issue in that

context. I would vote like this [snapping his fingers] if I didn't have to get the money. If we voted tomorrow, it could undermine our ability to keep the word of the United States on funding of the Rapid Reaction Force, and it could cause more trouble. That is the only issue. ~~(C)~~

The head of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Ben Gilman -- a pretty good guy, not a reactionary -- has written to me on this. A lot of people in the Senate are good on foreign affairs and they want to see us maintain our commitments. But we haven't figured out a strategy that would enable us to vote tomorrow in favor of the Rapid Reaction Force. There has been some change in the mission of the force since the original discussion at the Paris meeting. If I could figure out a way not to make things worse with the Congress, I would vote tomorrow. Our request for a delay is so that we can fully brief the Congress on why we support the Force and why the U.S. should finance part of it. Ambassador Harriman knows well that every Senator believes he or she should be President. If we voted for the Rapid Reaction Force without telling them, they would almost certainly deny me the funds. ~~(C)~~

If you said to me that it would be worth risking the funds, then I would consider voting tomorrow. But if you can give me two days to allow the Congress to beat up on the Secretary and the National Security Adviser, to tell us how terrible Bosnia is, and to make speeches, it would increase the chances that I could fund the force. ~~(C)~~

But again, if in your judgment, you need the vote tomorrow because something bad could happen, and you are ready to increase the risk that I can't pay, then tell me. You have stuck your neck out time and time again. I support the Rapid Reaction Force and want to do the right thing. If we have an agreement, I want to help. But if we go to a vote tomorrow, it would reduce the chances substantially that I can persuade Congress to fund it. ~~(C)~~

President Chirac: There are two problems, political and financial. Politically, everyone including the Russians is ready to vote for the resolution. The situation in Bosnia being what it is, I think we should approve the resolution tomorrow -- that is, before the G-7 Summit. On the financial problem, maybe you cannot get the funds from the Congress to pay the U.S. share. We will see. ~~(C)~~

The President: Ours is a pretty big share -- 31 percent. If we do it, I would like to do it right. ~~(C)~~

President Chirac: But we are in such a situation that I will take the risk. (C)

The President: So you would choose the political benefit now, even with an increased financial risk? (C)

President Chirac: Yes, I'll take the financial risk, although I know you will do your utmost to get funding. (C)

Secretary Christopher: I think that if we go ahead without consulting the Congress, we risk incurring great outrage on the Hill. I received the most angry letter I have ever received from Gilman. He was outraged that we would go ahead with the resolution without consulting Congress. It will be difficult to get support in the best of circumstances. You helped a lot with your explanation of the Rapid Reaction Force at today's lunch with the Congressional leaders. But if, on top of the normal difficulties we face, we added the discourtesy of failing to consult, it would almost guarantee the failure to secure funding, coupled with the risk of a negative Congressional resolution. (C)

The President: Chris, what consultations are planned on the Hill? (C)

Secretary Christopher: We will talk to all the committee chairmen, the leadership, and the chairmen of the Appropriation and Foreign Affairs Committees. (C)

The President: Is there any chance that we could consult on an emergency basis, building on the discussion at the lunch today? (C)

Secretary Christopher: I would like to assess that recommendation. President Chirac made some progress at lunch with Lugar, Nunn, McCain and others -- many of the key Senators were there. We should see how they feel in the wake of that discussion. I know that President Chirac said that he and John Major don't understand the need for delay. But there has been great confusion engendered by two factors. First, we originally thought that the Rapid Reaction Force would involve national forces; this was our understanding at the Paris Defense Ministers' meeting. Second, there were statements by the UN last weekend -- especially by Akashi -- which drove our Congress up the wall. Those statements spoke of not doing anything without the consent of the Bosnian Serbs. Your conversation with the Congressmen helped clarify that and I understand you will be seeing Dole and Gingrich this afternoon. These two issues have added to our financial problems, so we need to consult carefully and let it settle in. (C)

President Chirac: Dole asked to meet me this afternoon and I will see what I can do. (C)

The President: Very good. From the day I took office, Dole has been encouraging the Bosnian government to ignore what I want to do and pushing for an independent strategy to lift the arms embargo. When you see him, you should tell him your position on the arms embargo. On the issue of the Rapid Reaction Force, you should tell Dole that whatever he may think about the arms embargo and UNPROFOR, we need the Rapid Reaction Force and we should never be in a position where our forces can be taken hostage... (C)

President Chirac: ...or humiliated. (C)

The President: I am going to say that I support President Chirac's efforts and back the Rapid Reaction Force, and that I believe we should pay a partial share of the cost because, as long as our Allies are there, we have to protect our people. We need to separate the Rapid Reaction Force in Dole's mind from his desire to lift the arms embargo. If we play on the national honor issue, on the importance of not having our people captured, we have a chance of persuading him. Gingrich has been generally more supportive of our foreign policy. He is not an isolationist, but he is looking for ways to please his party on certain foreign policy issues. So I would make the same arguments to Gingrich. He will be very moved by the argument regarding protecting the pride of French and British forces... (C)

President Chirac: ...and that of other UNPROFOR contributors... (C)

The President: ...and the integrity of the UN presence, as well as the safety of the troops. This will resonate with them. After your meeting, we will take soundings. When you return to dinner tonight, you can report on your talks and we can assess where we are. Okay? (C)

President Chirac: Okay. (U)

The President: I understand what you are saying about how good it would be to have a vote before the G-7 Summit. (C)

President Chirac: It will be very useful vis-a-vis the Serbs. It will put big pressure on Milosevic. I told him that these people are terrorists -- they took hostages and attacked unarmed people. I said that time is running against them. I told Milosevic that we French weren't anti-Serb, but are becoming

anti-Serb. I think I made a big impression on him. When we decided on the Rapid Reaction Force, I called Milosevic and told him that it wasn't designed to attack anyone, but to protect UNPROFOR. I told him that he must tell the Bosnian Serbs that if they humiliate us as they have done by taking hostages, we are going to react. I explained that this would be bad for him. I said that we had been previously in favor of suspending the sanctions, but now I was less and less in favor of that. This also made a big impression on Milosevic. Mr. Frasure had almost succeeded in getting recognition of Bosnia. This could have been a very important step toward peace but he didn't get there. If the Serbs get the impression that the Americans are dragging their feet on the Rapid Reaction Force, we will only encourage them. We will be sending contradictory signals. (C)

I am under a lot of pressure (as is John Major) to adopt the resolution. We have persuaded Yeltsin to agree. If the U.S. slows the pace at the UN, it will give Yeltsin and Milosevic more oxygen. I understand your problems with the Congress. We could vote tomorrow and then Congress wouldn't fund it. That would be too bad. I understand the argument of Secretary Christopher about the discourtesy and the political consequences of not consulting. Only you can judge the importance of this. If I say to Dole and Gingrich as I did at lunch that their behavior is helping the Serbs and not the Bosnians, maybe this will help. (C)

The President: Yes, say that to Dole. I will call both of them and we can see where we are tonight. Maybe we can do it. If you tell them that if the U.S. isn't able to vote tomorrow for the Rapid Reaction Force (which involves no U.S. ground forces), it will play into the hands of the Serbs, that could help. (C)

Secretary Christopher: They will be very impressed by that argument. (C)

President Chirac: Plus it is true. I have called Milosevic every two days. We have succeeded in getting the release of the hostages because of the pressure all of us put on Milosevic. We should not leave them any escape route. Of course, if the Bosnians attack, that will introduce a new element into the problem. God knows what it will lead to. (C)

The President: We will work on this today. (C)

President Chirac: I know we have little time left and President Santer is waiting around the corner, but I wanted to talk about U.S. disengagement from aid to the developing countries. We are very worried about this. We are talking about countries who need assistance and whose population is increasing fast. If we don't

create the means of keeping their population in their own countries, we will have a real problem. Today the European Union, which has roughly the same GNP as the United States, is making three times the effort in foreign assistance. Our impression is that you are moving backwards based on the present behavior of the Republicans. We find this very worrying and will raise this at Halifax. (C)

There is a question of replenishing the funds for the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA). We should support the resuscitation of the IDA. They do a beautiful job, unlike the United Nations. It would not be moral or acceptable in humanitarian terms to allow people to die of hunger. It would also be politically very dangerous. There too, I know you have problems with the Congress. (C)

The President: I've been trying for months to send a clear message that if the current legislation passes the House, I will veto it. This legislation is very restrictive on foreign assistance. I sent up a budget that would fulfill our obligations to the international financial institutions in full. The new budget, while making larger cuts, will still maintain our commitments. I want you to know that when we come to the end of the process -- in August or September -- I will be very firm in holding on to these programs. In the U.S. there is now no political constituency for foreign aid, but I agree that it is morally and politically the right thing to do. I will be firm and I think it is a battle that I will win. You should hammer anyone you see on Capitol Hill on this. Congress is very short-sighted. The American people want to balance the budget and cut foreign assistance because they believe we spend 15 percent on foreign aid. The reality is that we only spend one-tenth of that amount. (C)

President Chirac: I understand it's 1.5 percent. (C)

The President: It's about one percent of our budget. If you ask the people what we should be spending they say about three percent of the budget. People don't know the facts, and Congress shouldn't be giving in to isolationism. I am determined to fight and believe I will win. You should say exactly what you told me to Congressional leaders. They know it is true. Dole and Gingrich know the importance of this issue. (C)

President Chirac: The cuts would be very bad for the U.S. image in the world. (C)

The President: Dole wants to be President. How does he expect to restore the cuts if he becomes President? But I believe I

will win, although it is good for you to help press on this issue.

President Chirac: There are some other subjects we could discuss. Perhaps we can discuss European security architecture in the meeting with Santer. (C)

Secretary Christopher: There is a danger that Bosnia will hijack the Halifax Summit. The way for us to avoid this is to stay very close together and not allow the press to pull us apart. One of the keys is saying that we have agreed that UNPROFOR should stay and that it would be tragic if UNPROFOR were to leave. We should say that the Rapid Reaction Force is the best insurance that UNPROFOR will stay. (C)

President Chirac: That is absolutely true and it is best to speak the truth. (U)

Secretary Christopher: That's right. We have to keep our stories straight. We also can say that we are continuing to seek a political solution with the new assistance of Carl Bildt. The three points are: UNPROFOR remains, we are strengthening UNPROFOR with the Rapid Reaction Force, and we are seeking a political solution. If we can maintain this consensus, we can keep the Summit from becoming a Bosnian Summit. (C)

President Chirac: I agree completely. If we are humiliated and there is no Rapid Reaction Force, we shall leave. And if we leave, you will have to help us. (C)

The President: Yes, but we do want to help if it becomes necessary. (C)

President Chirac: The Serbs will attack the Bosnians immediately and then they will seek our help. (C)

The President: I support what Secretary Christopher just said. When you won the election, I was very pleased because I believe that you would bring energy and greater unity to the European position. I have done what I could here to move our system to the point that we would be clearly committed if there had to be withdrawal, or if UN forces were isolated and needed our help short of withdrawal. My decisions caused a big stir. I had to make clear we are not offering a taxi service, but that we are morally obligated to help if conditions require assisting our allies. (C)

It is not possible for us to send ground forces, but I can't tell you how important it is that we try to maintain a united front -- not only publicly, but in what our advisers say to the media.

The press is full of stories in which Europeans are saying that the Americans are weak and divided. I am trying to get money for the Rapid Reaction Force and to do what I can so that you will have greater confidence. This task will be harder if there are stories coming out of other governments criticizing our position. Our press is out of step with our people on this issue. They are offended by the fact that there is a horrible problem in the heart of Europe and it is not being solved. Never mind that Northern Ireland took 25 years to solve, and the Middle East was deadlocked for five decades. The press believes that we could just snap our fingers and the Bosnian problem would go away. The press is looking all the time to divide us from our allies. So we need to stay together both officially and on background. (C)

President Chirac: I agree. We never asked the U.S. to come in on the ground except if we were forced to leave. We have decided to send the Rapid Reaction Force precisely in order that we do not have leave. The vulnerable position in which we found ourselves posed a choice: either to leave or to do something to permit us to stay. We chose option two. In speaking to one of the Senators at lunch, he asked whether this force was to permit UNPROFOR to withdraw. I said no, it was precisely the opposite, and he had a complete misunderstanding of our policy. We are sending the Rapid Reaction Force to ensure that we are respected. It is perfectly clear we are not asking the U.S. to come in on the ground. We are asking two things: that we hold off on airstrikes without prior consultation, because airstrikes are not an end in themselves (they must be part of our strategy, but we must have close consultation before carrying them out). Second, we are asking that the UNSC resolution be voted as soon as possible, and we will work on this this afternoon. The aim of the resolution is to put a stranglehold on Milosevic and not give him any more breathing room. I will tell this to Dole and Gingrich. (C)

The President: What are our objectives for our next meeting with Santer? (C)

President Chirac: This is the Euro-American summit. We can have a nice chat. (C)

The President: We want to help with Turkey and the Customs Union. (C)

President Chirac: I am very favorable toward the Turks. I think the Customs Union is under control. This is one reason why the Greeks don't like me. (C)

-- End of Conversation --

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5422

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON



MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany  
(U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
Chancellor Helmut Kohl  
Notetakers: Alexander Vershbow and Anthony Gardner

DATE, TIME July 13, 1995, 6:15-6:35 p.m.  
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: Hello? (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Hello, Bill? (U)

The President: Yes, Helmut. I'd like to talk to you about Bosnia. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Yes. I can well imagine your concern. The situation is catastrophic. (U)

The President: We need to decide what we are going to do about UNPROFOR. Jacques Chirac just called me with a radical proposal: either we retake Srebrenica by military action with U.S., French, UK and German ground troops, or we withdraw immediately because otherwise we can't defend the honor of the UN. I told him that this wasn't a good idea. Even if we retook Srebrenica, what would we do to defend it? We couldn't be sure that the Muslims would be any more ready to defend it than before. We agreed to talk to our Chiefs of Staff and that they would follow up. General Shalikashvili spoke to Admiral Lanxade. The French military agrees that retaking Srebrenica would be a big risk for little gain. They are focusing on reinforcing Gorazde with 1,000 French peacekeepers and reopening the Mount Igman road to Sarajevo with the Rapid Reaction Force. We think that is more realistic. I know you spoke to him earlier today. What do you think? Does Chirac earnestly want to pull out UNPROFOR if we don't agree? (C)

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Let me just say one thing before turning to you: here in the U.S., the Congress is saying that the fall of Srebrenica proves that UNPROFOR is no good and that we should lift the embargo unilaterally. I'm still opposing that. I think I can defeat it, but I may have to veto it. I wanted to talk to you about the situation and get your opinion. ~~(C)~~

Chancellor Kohl: Thank you, Bill. I was not able to talk to Chirac himself, but spoke to Juppe. I spoke with Chirac yesterday and the day before. In my opinion, he is, correctly, extremely upset by the whole situation. However, I think we need to clarify a few things before we go any further. First, Chirac's proposal would require UN Security Council approval. ~~(C)~~

The President: Absolutely. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: I might add that the blessing of the UN is unlikely. Second, and most important, we are talking primarily about Dutch soldiers. The Dutch Government is adamantly opposed to any military action that would put their soldiers at risk. They are there and are all hostages. Any decision to take military action would clearly countervene the decision of the Dutch Government, which would be impossible for us to do. But regardless of that fact, the UN Security Council would probably withhold approval. ~~(C)~~

The third problem which we should explore in greater detail is preventing the other "safe areas" from being taken. This is one of Chirac's other ideas. We need to find out if we can rally Major's support since that is where he has his soldiers. Troops from smaller countries are also on the ground; we shouldn't overlook that. ~~(C)~~

The real problem at the core of the situation is that the Serbs and their leadership have been reduced to outsiders. They have great difficulty seeing any future for themselves. They are being blamed by the outside world. They have developed a "bunker mentality," in other words: "After me, chaos and the hell with it." I would favor one more discussion between the Chiefs of Staff with British participation. As you know, we don't have troops on the ground and don't plan to. What do you think? ~~(C)~~

The President: I think you have made some good points. I agree that the Chiefs of Staff need to talk again. We can't do something stupid. Defending Gorazde and opening the Mount Igman road is a better course. It is still better to keep UNPROFOR there than to withdraw it. ~~(C)~~

Chancellor Kohl: I agree completely: UNPROFOR should stay. On the other hand, we need to recognize that the situation is inextricable, even impossible. How can we avoid the fact that UNPROFOR troops may be taken hostage? The situation is catastrophic in the eyes of world opinion. The Serbs, these gangsters, have been taking the whole world for a ride. In that respect, Chirac is correct. ~~(C)~~

What are we going to do about the Dutch? The vote taken by their government is of utmost importance. Unfortunately, a dispute has already arisen with regard to the following occurrence: either the French Foreign Minister or Defense Minister has publicly accused the troops in Srebrenica of cowardice. The Dutch thought this referred to them. ~~(C)~~

The President: Perhaps he meant the Bosnians? ~~(C)~~

Chancellor Kohl: Whatever the case, the Dutch took it personally. ~~(C)~~

The President: That's not good. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: No, it's not. The whole situation is catastrophic. The pictures we see of refugees are terrible. Bill, this is what I would suggest we do. I would be available for further talks Friday, Saturday or Sunday between 2000 and 2400 our time, that is 1400 and 1800 Washington time. I'll be at home in Ludwigshafen, so your side should provide an interpreter. (U)

The President: We need to stay together on this. I will call you on Friday, Saturday or Sunday. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: You can count on my entire support. You can talk very frankly with me. I know what the U.S. Congress might plan. The last thing I want is for you to be maneuvered into a dead end. ~~(C)~~

The President: I understand and agree. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: My best to your wife. (U)

The President: And to yours. Good-bye. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Good-bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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DECLASSIFIED UNDER AUTHORITY OF THE  
INTERAGENCY SECURITY CLASSIFICATION APPEALS PANEL,  
E.O. 13526, SECTION 5.3(b)(3)

ISCAP APPEAL NO. 2016-034, document no. 4  
DECLASSIFICATION DATE: September 6, 2019

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON



MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with French President Jacques Chirac

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
President Jacques Chirac  
Notetaker: Alexander Vershbow and Anthony Gardner

DATE, TIME: July 13, 1995, 3:22-3:58 p.m.  
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: Hello, Jacques? (U)

President Chirac: Hello, Bill. How are you? I will speak in French. I'm very worried about Bosnia and there are things we want you to know. (*Switching to French*) First of all, my congratulations on the strong statement you issued that if we cannot restore the UN mission, then the days of UNPROFOR are numbered and that that causes you concern. Our analysis is the same. The fall of Srebrenica, the probable fall of Zepa tomorrow and the real threat to Gorazde represent a major failure of the UN, NATO and all the democracies. You see what we are seeing on TV, how the Serbs are separating men from women, sending women to be raped and killing men who are old enough to bear arms. In my opinion, we can no longer just stand by and watch this. It is no longer a problem for the UN and NATO, but a problem for all civilized nations opposed to fascism. Therefore we must restore the situation to the way it was guaranteed by the UN. That means restoring the situation in the eastern enclaves. (C)

Therefore, firm and limited military action is called for. France is ready to put all of its forces behind the mission. I don't yet know what the British want to do. They are directly concerned since they are in Gorazde, next door to Srebrenica. I wonder whether or not their intention is to pick up and leave Gorazde just as the Dutch left Srebrenica. I don't want France to be an accomplice to such a situation. Either we agree to carry out a joint military intervention to protect the three enclaves -- to recapture Srebrenica and guarantee the integrity of Gorazde and Zepa, which account for 100,000 Muslims (today 20,000 to 40,000 Muslims are fleeing Srebrenica), and we use military intervention to impose the will of the UN, which can

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only come from the U.S., France, the UK and Germany -- and France is prepared to throw all of its forces into the effort to restore the situation in Srebrenica -- or we do nothing. But if the option is to do nothing, then that is exactly the situation we were in in 1939, and France will withdraw -- of course, by agreement with our British friends and the rest of UNPROFOR. So the issue is whether the U.S. is prepared to cooperate in combating ethnic cleansing, or do we sit back and let these people fight each other, and we go home. We cannot allow ourselves to be accomplices! (C)

The President: Let me first say that we appreciate the strong stance you have taken and your determination to do something. Obviously, we have been thinking about this a lot. I will take up your specific proposals with my military commanders, but I wanted to speak with you first. I would like you to think about a few things. Gorazde is much more important than Zepa and Srebrenica in terms of its size and psychological impact. The Bosnian Government has 9,000 troops in Gorazde, who are apparently willing to fight. In Srebrenica there were about 3,000 Bosnian troops, but as you know, they left under pressure of shelling. They left without putting up a fight, although I think they could have done so. The British have 300 troops in Gorazde, so I think they will be more inclined to take a stand there. We all know that if something happens to Gorazde, the Bosnian Serb army will feel they have a free hand to move on to Sarajevo. Our military advisers say there are significant hazards in attempting to land a force with helicopters in Srebrenica and that UNPROFOR might be better off securing Gorazde first and then move back eastward due to the inherent difficulty of defending the area there. (C)

The other issue I would like to raise with you -- which we discussed in Halifax and here during your visit, and which has become more pressing -- is the necessity of knowing what the rules of engagement are going to be if you take the initiative in Srebrenica, Zepa or Gorazde. You cannot be in a position to fight in Zepa and then ask for NATO support without clear rules of engagement. If there is going to be fighting, it has to be different than in the past. Before we provide air power, we have to know that it would be used and that we could inflict real pain on the Serbs in other areas. Before UNPROFOR gets into a military campaign, we must have a clear sense of what the next move is and what the acceptable military options are under UNPROFOR and NATO. Now that you have told me what you want to do, I will talk to our military advisers, but they are very skeptical about bringing in forces with helicopters, especially if the Bosnians won't fight. I think we should first secure Gorazde and then Sarajevo. I will have conversations with them and get back in touch with you. (C)

I would like to make two more points. First, I think your stated intentions to reopen Mount Igman road is very important -- a critical point. Second, we need General Shalikashvili to speak with Admiral Lanxade or have Secretary Christopher speak with your foreign minister to talk in detail about what you have in mind for the enclaves. We need to consider whether the Muslims will return to the enclaves, how we will protect them if they come back and whether it would be under the old UN rules of engagement. Will the Bosnian Serb Army just end their advances? Therefore, I believe we should focus on Gorazde and press for ministerial and military talks. You have given me many things to think about. I would like to have a follow up between the generals and foreign ministers on the details. (C)

President Chirac: Bill, I understand what you said, but permit me to express my own feelings. Gorazde is not more important than Srebrenica or Zepa. It is not a problem of geography, but one of principle. There were "safe areas" guaranteed by the international community. The Serbs have taken the first "safe area" and are about to take the second. In front of the world's TV cameras, they are separating men from women and have started a program of ethnic cleansing. Tomorrow they will be doing the same thing in Gorazde, and the British will not defend themselves more than the Dutch did. The truth is that democracies are good at making speeches but bad at getting others to respect them. (C)

From this point on, we need to take the necessary steps to safeguard international law that is supposed to protect humanitarian principles and that means that the main democracies must go on the ground to defend law and order. I am not asking for air support for French troops. I am asking for French, German, British and American troops on the ground to defend the values on which democracies are based. If the four of us decide not to defend such values, there is no point in staying on the ground to be open to ridicule. The British will evacuate Gorazde without fighting. The Muslims will not fight in Gorazde and everything then will be concentrated on Sarajevo. I don't want to leave the situation like this. If we are not prepared to defend democracy, we should leave and let them fight it out. That means withdrawing UNPROFOR and implementing OPLAN 40104. We cannot day after day be smacked in the face while ethnic cleansing is going on. (C)

The President: We cannot defend democratic values in the abstract. My military advisers tell me the Muslims could have made a hell of a fight in Srebrenica and raised the price of the Serbs' occupation, but they wouldn't do it. We can't fight just because the UN says they are "safe areas." We can't send the Muslims back and commit ourselves to stay forever if they won't

defend themselves. That's the problem with the strategy you suggest. Yesterday we saw the effects of the imbalance in arms. Have you had any second thoughts about lifting the arms embargo? (C)

President Chirac: Lifting the arms embargo would mean the immediate withdrawal of UNPROFOR, which is one of the options. I think that's a bad option since it would mean defeat for the Muslims. They will call on the U.S. to defend them on the ground if the embargo is lifted. If I were an American, I would be terrified about lift. You would face two choices: either to go in on the ground to save the Muslims, which would mean 150,000 or 200,000 troops, or allow the Serbs to annihilate the Muslims. That would create a real moral issue for you. But it's for you to judge. (C)

We cannot allow this situation to develop before our eyes. It is a blatant form of ethnic cleansing. We can't allow principles of democracy and humanitarianism to be flouted without doing anything. Either we intervene on the ground as police would do in a civilized society, or we say we're scared of doing that, in which case we should withdraw, lift the arms embargo and let them fight it out. At that point, the problem for the U.S. will be to decide what to do when the Bosnians ask you to rescue them. (C)

The President: If we intervene to regain the enclaves on their behalf and they won't fight, how do we keep them open? UNPROFOR's mission would be completely changed and you would have entered into combat on the side of the Bosnian Government when they don't fight for themselves. I agree the Serbs have made a mockery of the UN. They took Srebrenica and got it for free. We didn't even bomb them. We should raise the price, and even hit Pale. I have argued that we should allow NATO to take tougher action but that was not to be. If we enter the war to defend the Bosnians, they have to be ready to defend themselves. That's what worries me. (C)

President Chirac: When does the Congress vote on lifting the embargo? (C)

The President: Next week. I'm trying to defeat it. I agree with you: I am vehemently opposed to unilateral lift. If they pass it, I will veto it, and they would be obliged to override my veto. (C)

President Chirac: Can Congress override the veto? (C)

The President: Yes, with a two-thirds vote, but I don't think they'll have two thirds. I'm not worried about it. I would like

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to confer with my military advisers and get back in touch on this matter. (C)

President Chirac: OK, I quite agree. I will ask Admiral Lanxade to contact General Shalikashvili as soon as possible. Thank you very much. (C)

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

-- End of Conversation --

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INTERAGENCY SECURITY CLASSIFICATION APPEALS PANEL,  
E.O. 13526, SECTION 5.3(b)(3)

ISCAP APPEAL NO. 2016-034, document no. 5  
DECLASSIFICATION DATE: September 6, 2019

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON



MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with French President Chirac (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
President Chirac  
Interpreter: Carol Wolter  
Notetakers: Alexander Vershbow, Nelson Drew,  
Katherine O'Loughlin

DATE, TIME July 19, 1995  
AND PLACE: 8:20 - 9:00 a.m.

President Chirac: Hello Bill. (U)

The President: Hello Jacques. How are you? (U)

President Chirac: Fine and you? Do you mind if we use an interpreter. It will be easier. (U)

The President: That will be fine. I would like to talk about where we are here on the Bosnia question. I agree with you that the status quo is clearly no longer tolerable. You have done tremendous service in rallying support in Europe for stronger action. I agree with you that we need to draw the line at Gorazde. The issue is how, finding the best way to do this militarily. (C)

Our military advisors here feel strongly the best thing is to be able to bring air power to bear in a decisive manner and not in a timid way as has been done lately. We propose issuing a clear warning to Bosnian Serbs that any attack on Gorazde or Sarajevo will be met by a sustained air campaign that will actually cripple their military capability. Now if we do this we must all be prepared to follow through, without wavering. Of course, we should begin now, or soon, to reduce the exposure of UN personnel to keep them from being taken hostage. (C)

Our planners believe the first targets would have to be a full range of Bosnian Serb air defense capabilities: SAMs, anti-aircraft artillery, radar and command centers. They also believe once air defenses are neutralized, we would be able to mount a

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major air campaign against any Bosnian Serb forces attacking Gorazde or Sarajevo or any military targets elsewhere. But to do this and make it work we would have to have some changes. The dual key could not be maintained in its present form. Of course local ground commanders could retain a voice in close air support and close-proximity airstrikes directly affecting their troops. But there could be no UN political veto over individual missions. Also current restrictions regarding strict proportionality would also have to be removed. We would have to have the ability to strike strategic targets throughout Bosnia, and that would be a big deterrent to them doing anything to UN forces. Now, I have talked to John Major yet, but Warren Christopher met with Rifkind last night urging the British to get on board with this. In order to get there, we will also need to get other Allies and Boutros Ghali on board. (C)

In addition to supporting an effective Bosnian defense of Gorazde, it is important to open secure land access routes to Sarajevo. I believe this should be the most pressing mission for the RRF. (C)

With regard to the suggestion you made last week regarding deploying 1,000 of your troops to Gorazde -- I would like to talk to you about that for a few minutes. Our military people believe that since the primary threat to Gorazde is from artillery shells, adding 1,000 troops might increase deterrence but it would not materially change the military balance, and might create an increased problem of resupply and reinforcement. They also say that if we were to do it, we have to take pre-emptive action against air defenses. Otherwise French troops and our helicopters will be sitting ducks and the likelihood that we will lose helicopters with your troops on board is quite strong. (C)

I agree with you that we cannot abandon Gorazde, but we must make certain we have what are the most effective means we can take to defend it. I know in sending another 1,000 troops -- especially French troops -- it may have a psychological effect on the Serbs. But in sending in troops our military people believe (and I agree with them) that there would be considerable risks and that it wouldn't change the military balance in Gorazde. At any rate, I think it's imperative that you and I work together between now and Friday. We have to make sure we have a common approach that together we can sell to John Major. I'm sure Kohl will support us if we are in this together. We can't let this go on. It will mean disaster for Bosnia and the West if it happens. (C)

Let me make one more point, and then I'd like to listen to you. In the two years I have labored with this problem, since before you became President, the only thing that has made things better has been a clear and credible threat that the UN will let NATO

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take strong air action. It has always bought us time for the political process. It got the peace process back on track, allowed the creation of the safe areas, the end of the shelling of Sarajevo, the weapons collection points, etc. It has worked. But when the UN has moved away from a position of strength, the Serbs have taken advantage. I believe this will work if we stay together behind it. (C)

President Chirac: Bill, I understand your position very well, but it would be difficult to implement. If there were no troops on the ground it would be the right approach; but we do have troops there and airstrikes may be too dangerous. The Serbs are very tough people. The minute we attack, and we're not sure if the strikes will be effective, they will retaliate by taking soldiers hostage or attacking with the massive artillery they have. The plan proposed by the U.S. military presupposes the withdrawal of UNPROFOR but we have UN troops everywhere there. If we want to adopt it, we have to regroup or extract our forces. It will be a long and difficult procedure and this presupposes that the U.S. is in a war situation with Serbia. It will be difficult to implement and I believe John Major will never accept this. (C)

If you want to do something to the Serbs using airstrikes, first we have to withdraw the blue helmets...It could be a good solution, but time is necessary to implement the solution. This would mean the loss of Gorazde and probably Sarajevo. This is the reason we made a compromise solution that in any case would maintain the rights of the UN in Gorazde and, in other words, guarantee the safety of 60,000 Muslims in Gorazde. In order to do this, we think 1,000 men would be enough. I don't mean blue helmets, but real soldiers with real equipment. I realize the problem is transporting them to Gorazde, and there only U.S. intervention makes the transport possible, using air power to open a corridor to ensure the safety of the helicopters. If we adopt airstrikes as the objective, it's a solution but not an immediate solution. I think Gorazde will have fallen by then. This is our position -- the least bad solution would be to defend Gorazde. (C)

The President: Let me comment on the points you have made. First, with any solution, greater action carries a risk of greater danger. If we put 1,000 French troops in Gorazde as part of a real defense of the city, that would also go beyond the UN mandate and past what the British said they would do. It also would increase the risk of hostage taking throughout the country. If French troops were killed in the actual defense of Gorazde, I believe we would have to take retaliatory action. I do not agree with you if we carry out the plan for air power, we have to withdraw UN troops. But we would have to concentrate them in

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Gorazde, Sarajevo and Central Bosnia in places the Government controls. (C)

President Chirac: Bill, the minute our troops start to move, the Serbs will understand the maneuver and grab people. (C)

The President: I understand the practical problems. You said that if we issue the threat, it amounts to the U.S. being willing to go to war with Serbia. If you go back to when we got the agreement to establish the safe areas and put all Serb heavy artillery in collection areas, this happened only because two things occurred at the same time: we threatened strong air action through NATO, and the Russians told the Serbs that they had to do this and get back to the negotiations. They thought that the air action would be disproportionate, not selectively calibrated to take out one or two guns or a single tank here or there. (C)

Let me say another thing with regard to your proposal. It seems to me that if we work with you and deploy your forces and the Serbs shoot down one helicopter, or if we redeploy forces and one of your soldiers is killed, even by distant shelling, that we would have to take the most effective retaliatory action, which is from the air. We may have to do some in advance to create a security corridor for the helicopters. We will have to carry out our option one way or another. Before you became President, our UN and NATO allies agreed on two previous occasions that an air threat is the only way to save the UN mission without involving NATO troops on the ground in combat. (C)

Let me say two other things and then I will listen. I want to reemphasize that this will not mean war on the Serbs if they don't attack. There will be no air action if Gorazde is not hit and Sarajevo is not shelled. We simply will be reestablishing the weapons exclusion zones that have eroded. I have also been handed a note that the British are prepared to keep their 300 troops in Gorazde under this proposal and not withdraw. (C)

Jacques, I have to give a speech today, but after that I will be working on this for the next 48 hours. Perhaps you would like to talk to your military people some more. You have done a tremendous job putting unity into the Allied effort, but we want something that works. We don't want to collapse the UN mission. Those in Congress who say otherwise are wrong. Based on my experience over the past two years, this will work. It is our best chance, particularly if coupled with a new diplomatic initiative along the lines you have already discussed with me. (C)

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President Chirac: O.K. Well, I don't mind talking to the experts Bill, but with troops scattered throughout territory, airstrikes are extraordinarily dangerous for those who are there. The difference between one year ago is that the Serbs have recovered all their artillery and are prepared to fight. They have the feeling they can win. I am convinced that they have the full support of Milosevic and the Belgrade Serbs. ~~(C)~~

I have one question. Will Congress succeed in lifting the arms embargo? ~~(C)~~

The President: They likely will vote to lift it in some form. I will veto it and believe I can sustain the veto if, and only if, all of us are working on an alternate program with some chance of success. Otherwise I'm afraid that if they voted today, they would override the veto. They believe the UN has failed and the embargo denies the Bosnian Government the ability to defend themselves. ~~(C)~~

Let me ask two questions. First, several months ago when the safe areas were worked out for the first time, the Serbs had artillery and they gave it up; and I still believe Milosevic would like some relief from sanctions. If we put 1,000 French troops in Gorazde and the Serbs attack the city what will the French do? Will they shoot back? ~~(C)~~

President Chirac: Of course, naturally. These won't be "blue helmets." Real soldiers will be sent. ~~(C)~~

The President: All right, but if that happens, then you can argue that that is as much a change in the UN mission as dropping bombs. Mladic is a smart man. If you repel him, he'll take action elsewhere. He will take Ukrainians or Canadians hostage. If we fly you in there and they take action, shoot down a helicopter, we both have to take action. So please think it through. Either our option or yours, or the two of them in combination, will increase the risk they will take UN peacekeepers hostage. But we have to protect Gorazde. The question is the best way to do it. Either course runs the risk of hostages. We have never in the past had to take extreme action when they really thought we would follow through, and not just hit one or two tanks. We got Gorazde, Srebrenica, the safe areas. Somehow, we have to recreate those conditions. We only have a few months ago get a peace agreement. We can't keep doing this for another three or four more years. We have to create the environment in which we can push for a diplomatic solution. ~~(C)~~

President Chirac: Yes, I understand. But I am pretty sure that all of the people on the ground will ask to regroup before airstrikes and this will take time. Gorazde will be taken in 10

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days, and after that Sarajevo. We need time for this strategy. Let's ask our Chiefs of Staff. ~~(C)~~

The President: I understand. I really want to work on this with you. Here's the question: Ask your staff if there is a greater likelihood of hostage taking if air power is used as opposed to the chance hostages will be taken if the French fight back and kill a lot of Serbs. Our expectation is that Mladic is very smart and will go elsewhere. He works the country as one big piece. If they shoot down a helicopter and kill Frenchmen, we have to strike hard. Talk to your people. I think we can sell our proposal to the Brits. They don't want to pull out. ~~(C)~~

President Chirac: There are also others beyond us -- Canadians and Ukrainians. ~~(C)~~

The President: I know. There's a lot of work to do. We have to discuss it with Canada. We have a close relationship with the Ukrainians. We also need to work with Russia. I think I can convince Yeltsin to go along. ~~(C)~~

President Chirac: I don't think Yeltsin is ready to do anything because of his domestic political situation. ~~(C)~~

The President: We don't want to do anything that would imperil him. But last time, Yeltsin went to Milosevic saying you can't do this to yourself or me, and you need to stop the attacks. He was helpful because he didn't want us to use force to protect these areas. We need to explore whether he is in the position to do anything. ~~(C)~~

President Chirac: Let's get back in touch within 48 hours. ~~(C)~~

The President: Maybe we should talk in 24 hours. We cannot afford to go to the London meeting and have it be a disaster. ~~(C)~~

President Chirac: I agree completely, but we must get in touch with the others. ~~(C)~~

The President: I have talked to Chretien and Kohl, but not yet to the Ukrainians, Dutch or Yeltsin. You and I need to agree on a strategy, work together, and sell it to Major and the others. We must get close on an agreement. ~~(C)~~

President Chirac: Okay, thank you very much. (U)

The President: Good-bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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INTERAGENCY SECURITY CLASSIFICATION APPEALS PANEL,  
E.O. 13526, SECTION 5.3(b)(3)

ISCAP APPEAL NO. 2016-034, document no. 6  
DECLASSIFICATION DATE: September 6, 2019

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON



MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with British Prime Minister Major (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
Prime Minister John Major  
Notetakers: Mary Ann Peters, Katherine  
O'Loughlin, Kenneth Baldwin, Alejandro  
Martinez and Andrew Kerr

DATE, TIME July 19, 1995, 9:15 - 9:50 a.m.  
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: Hello? (U)

Prime Minister Major: Hello. (U)

The President: Hello. Hey John, how are you? I just had a long  
talk with Chirac. (U)

Prime Minister Major: What kind of mood is he in today. (U)

The President: He was in a pretty tough mood today. You know,  
based on Secretary Christopher's conversation with Foreign  
Secretary Rifkind, exactly where we are going. I need to tell  
you of my conversation with Chirac. Let me start by saying I am  
convinced that the only way I can sustain the position we have  
taken is to work, support and cooperate with UNPROFOR and our  
allies to take some new action to save Gorazde. I think I can  
then sustain a veto of unilateral lift. (C)

Prime Minister Major: When is the vote? (U)

The President: The first vote could be tomorrow in the Senate.  
Then there's the vote in the House, then the reconciliation.  
They start rolling me tomorrow. (U)

Prime Minister Major: What is the veto-proof majority? (U)

The President: It is 67 Senate members and 290 some-odd House  
members. Here's the issue: whatever they pass will pass with a  
veto-proof majority, but some will fall off if they believe I  
have an alternative with any chance of working. The arguments

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are that it would Americanize the conflict. It would undermine support for other UN embargoes, on Iran, Iraq and Libya, which they like. We are being killed in the press. All the papers, not just in Washington and New York, but even the local paper in my hometown of Little Rock are saying "Why won't the Americans help us defend ourselves." The whole U.S. press is spinning like that. It appears that the UN cannot defend the Muslims and will not let them defend themselves. We have to do more so I can prevail here and also to try to reestablish the vigor we had in the spring of last year, when we established the safe areas and got the heavy weapons out and achieved diplomatic progress in the peace talks. (C)

Our plan here is to come up with a concentrated UN force and a disproportionate air threat. Proportional response does not work. Chirac is still pushing the idea of flying in 1,000 troops to join your guys. You are worried about retaliation against UK and other troops. I asked him during our conversation, if French troops go in and Serbs attack, would the French plan on shooting back? He said "yes, these will be real soldiers, not blue helmets." Mladic is a smart man, he will retaliate and take hostages if he can. If one U.S. helicopter is shot down, he agrees that we would have to retaliate. So, if that is the end game, why not get the same benefit by establishing the deterrent now? I asked him to work through it. Our common partnership, UN, NATO and the strength of the West, depend on us not showing up Friday without a common position among the UK, France and the U.S. I think Chretien will go along, and I can get the Ukraine to support us. Yeltsin will not like it, but he is not in any position to do anything else. We need to tell him to go back to their position in February 1994. (C)

Prime Minister Major: Did you get a clear view - I'd like to respond to your other points later - of why Chirac is so enthusiastic about flying 1,000 troops into encircled positions just as they did in Dien Bien Phu? If I know my history right, that did not have very happy results. (C)

The President: Exactly. I like Chirac because he is strong and smart and wants to do the right thing, but he is very French; he wants to make the grand gesture. He clearly hopes for psychological impact. (C)

Prime Minister Major: That's the trouble, he is prepared to drive into their guns, which is brave, but where do you go when they fire? (C)

The President: It doesn't help the UK troops to have 1,000 French soldiers without artillery come in on helicopters. (C)

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Prime Minister Major: The reverse! (U)

The President: If we do take aggressive action, we could tip the balance against you. We have to hope the 9,000 Bosnians stay and fight. (C)

Prime Minister Major: On the issue of the 1,000 troops, I don't rule it out entirely, depending on what other decisions we take. Let's turn to Gorazde, where we have 300 Welsh fusiliers and 9,000 government troops who will probably fight, but lose. They may not fight at all like in Srebrenica. But if you fly in 1,000 troops, it is a hazardous operation in itself; they do not add to your ability to defend Gorazde; and there is no way to get in heavy weapons, no landing strip for them; you'd have to fight your way through tunnels, mountains and 100 miles of Serb-held territory. So what you have is another 1,000 lightly armed troops on the ground who are now potential hostages. Chirac says they will be real soldiers. All of them are, but these are fighting soldiers. These soldiers are not UN peacekeepers and under the UN mandate. The minute they fight, they are more likely to be hostages, as will everyone associated with the UN. UNPROFOR would have to hunker down everywhere. We would probably get by with this under international law, but the knock-on impact would be the same. If Gorazde falls, you have another 1,000 hostages and the humiliation of NATO troops unable to make a difference. It will draw NATO closer to all out war. To point out the consequences is not wimpish, and the French Foreign Legion charging in is not necessarily wise. (C)

The wider issue is there is not a shred of doubt that we cannot stay where we are. Ideally, the objective is to deter the Serbs from taking Gorazde. Chirac is gambling that it will send a signal and the Serbs will stop; this is the same rationale the French used to argue for safe areas, but it hasn't worked in Srebrenica or Zepa. Our objectives are to deter the Serb seizure of Gorazde and keep Sarajevo going and to enable the UN to carry out its mission more effectively. The UN will be unable to remain in Bosnia without an effective policy. We need a cohesive U.S./British/French plan and to get others on board. On Gorazde, we need some flexibility; we don't want anyone digging into rigid public positions like last week. (C)

The President: I agree. Militarily, this proposal is not sound; it only makes sense for its psychological value or if you're looking for a pretext, if they shoot down a helicopter, to kick the crap out of them. (C)

Prime Minister Major: It's a gamble if it means making UNPROFOR's situation worse; but at the end of the day, it's Chirac's choice. It's a gamble anyway. Where we are coming from

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together is that something has to be done; it is not practical politics to do nothing. Something must be done and it will involve the threat of air power. If it has a chance of being effective, Mladic must believe we mean it. In the past, he has only been slapped on the wrist. We need to give him two messages -- one in public and one in private. The one in private must be very specific on the size and scale of the response so he knows we mean it. The Serbs have to see physical movement of assets, so they see we're not bluffing. If we make the threat, we must be prepared to carry it out in spades. If we do this, several things may follow: hostages may be taken -- civilian and military personnel who are exposed must be hunkered down before Friday. We are dealing with a madman who has a Dutch battalion in his hands. We can't rule out the thought of Mladic's slaughter of the Dutch. (C)

Here's a marginal point that I'm not quite sure of the answer to. If we use Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses or air attacks, arguably that means the end of the UNPROFOR mission. It may be a decision to be taken immediately, or not. But if it is and we must leave, that would involve the NATO plan including U.S. troops. So we're in the process of setting in motion a chain of events leading to committing 50,000 NATO troops in Bosnia to bring out UNPROFOR. I'm happy to consider this as long as we understand the consequences: the impact of an air attack, possible hostages and the need to take UNPROFOR out if necessary. Once they're out, we have to guard against a wider Balkan war. You have assets in Macedonia. We would need to consider putting assets elsewhere to prevent a trans-Balkan war from breaking out if there is trouble in Kosovo or elsewhere. (C)

Regarding the air threat, the threat to Mladic has to be credible. It is debatable, depending on the nature of the situation, whether to go straight to full air attack or if it should be gradual retaliation. We must ensure that UN personnel are in relatively safe places at the time we issue the threat. That's what I think. I hope you, Chirac and I can agree today or tomorrow in time to come up with a position for Friday. (C)

The President: You've thought it through well. Two things need to be done. I do not know the exact position of all the UNPROFOR troops and associated civilians. And I do not know how long it will take them to get into positions that are relatively immune. Secondly, I agree with your analysis that if we had to launch a major air campaign, it might be the end of the UNPROFOR mission. We have to calculate what that means. Can we get multilateral lift? Do we do a NATO lift if Russian blocks multilateral lift in the UN? Does a new international force come in or, do we take all international forces out? Also, depending on the results of the bombing, we must consider the situation under which it could

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bring about a cease-fire or meaningful movement in the peace process. If we are successful, UNPROFOR can stay without fear of hostages being taken; they can continue with humanitarian relief, resume air drops and open the Mt. Igman route. Time is running out on us. If bombing secures our position, we would still have only a few months to juice up the peace effort and reach an agreement. We need to see what we could do to change the dynamics of the process and hasten an agreement. I believe it's possible it would work like it did in 1994 when the safe areas were established. Those decisions bought us a few months. This assumes that you and others want to stay. (C)

Prime Minister Major: Yes, we want to stay. (C)

The President: We still need a fast timeline for this effort or the Serbs will quickly bite us in the rear. (C)

Prime Minister Major: We also have to consider how they will react. They may react savagely or they may be smart. They may not attack but just leave Gorazde bottled up and attack Sarajevo. (C)

The President: Yes. Then we would have to pull out all the stops. If Sarajevo falls, it will be a disaster for all of us. (C)

Prime Minister Major: I think the French will ask if we are ready to add troops in Sarajevo. In principle, we would. We would replace someone else's battalion, because there is not billeting for another unit. We would replace less effective troops with more effective troops. We need cohesion. We need to look at land routes, both summer and winter. For example, in Sarajevo, Mt. Igman is not a winter route without a great deal of policing. We can't forget the back door -- Tudjman. There is a danger of Croatia going after Knin and the Krajina and provoking the Bosnian Serbs and providing them further incentive for war in Central and Eastern Bosnia. I raised this with Kohl. The question is: if we do that, then what about the Muslims? My 300 boys are surrounded by government troops who might not let them out. They could endanger them in two ways: they might inhibit their removal or put them at risk by attacking out from UNPROFOR positions and drawing a Serb response. We have to lean hard on Izetbegovic and make sure if we go down that route, the Muslims don't screw it up. (C)

The President: They're very artful at that. (C)

Prime Minister Major: The Bosnian Foreign Minister is in the U.S. making life difficult for you, stirring things up so the U.S. will come to the rescue. (C)

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The President: They never ask UNPROFOR to leave. They want it all -- the embargo lifted and UNPROFOR there to boot. (C)

Prime Minister Major: I doubt anyone has been keener to keep the UN there than me. If it turns out to be an air offensive, there will be no credible work for the UN, and it will be pointless and risky to leave troops when they could more effectively be stationed in Macedonia or elsewhere. Will the Congress accept contributing U.S. troops to get the UN out? (C)

The President: Yes. Even Dole has acknowledged that we have a moral duty to ensure the safe withdrawal of our allies. (C)

Prime Minister Major: If we go this route, I am prepared to do something dramatic in Gorazde. I don't want to rule out lifting our boys out. (C)

The President: You and I think along the same lines. This may lead to the collapse of UNPROFOR, but it is better to go out with a bang than with a whimper; otherwise we go out with our tail between our legs. (C)

Prime Minister Major: I'm not sure whether the Mladic message should be graduated or the big bang response. I need to run it by my Defense Minister, Chief of Staff and soldiers on the ground. Supposing we go down this route, we have to do something political in tandem. Will you entertain inviting the Pale Serbs to a conference at the foreign minister or head of state level, which could discuss land swaps and political settlement? We may be going down the military route one-legged. (C)

The President: I've had no discussion of the details of this, but if we make a bold military thrust, we should accompany it with a bold diplomatic initiative. We need to find out where Bildt is, whether there is any progress in his talks. Regarding the message to Mladic, I will talk to my people who understand his psychology and his way of operating. (C)

Prime Minister Major: The big question is what happens on the ground. If we issue the ultimatum, if the Serbs take us up and we proceed, the UN comes out. The government troops will begin to be armed but that takes time, and the Serbs will make a great deal of advance initially. There will be lots of genocide and ethnic cleansing. With the UN out, there will be no credible international reason to intervene unless we enter on the side of the government, which would be a de facto declaration of war on Serbia and Milosevic. Yet, could we sit on the bench, say we had done our best and watch on BBC and CNN the slaughter? Or would we be prepared to declare war on the Serbs? (C)

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The President: There is a third option that would have to be done by NATO since Russia would veto a UN resolution. We could consider the use of NATO air power to stabilize the situation on the ground pending the development of some kind of equilibrium in artillery. (C)

Prime Minister Major: I have thought of that, establishing some equilibrium with air power. I'm not sure how to justify it legally, although it is possible militarily. And it raises a big problem especially for the U.S. - the Russian response. They have been dragged through the UN. I don't know how Kozyrev and Yeltsin could defend NATO involvement to their parliament when the UN isn't there. (C)

The President: That is a difficult thing. The effort would have to be carefully circumscribed. The point to make to the Russians would be that they supported the Contact Group plan and the Serbs said no, ignored Russian wishes and screwed them. (C)

Prime Minister Major: The danger would be that Yeltsin would not survive that. Neither would some of the concordats you have reached with them. That might be what is at the end of the yellow brick road. (C)

The President: Yes, we know all of that. But the position we are in is untenable. (C)

Prime Minister Major: I agree. We have tended to look down the road too many times over the past 3-4 years and have crossed our fingers like Dickens' Mr. Micawber, hoping something good would come of it. But like Micawber's benefactor, nothing turned up. Still, we have done what we thought was right. (C)

The President: We bought a year with UNPROFOR in which no one was killed and peace might have been achieved. It wasn't, but it might have been. (C)

Prime Minister Major: We have saved lives. Peace was achieved in central Bosnia. We have nothing to reproach ourselves about. I just want to do the right thing. We may go down this path, the end of which could lead in the direction I have been laying out. (C)

The President: We will work through all the short-term questions -- where the troops are and how long it will take to get them into safer positions; what to say to Mladic -- and the longer-term issues you have been talking about. I suggest we get back in touch in 24 hours. You, I and Chirac need to be together at this meeting on Friday. (C)

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Prime Minister Major: Absolutely. I'm committed to that. I will speak to the French today. ~~(C)~~

The President: Your analysis of the military wrongheadedness of their proposal is the same as ours, including the potential for failure. I'm not sure it would do any good but it wouldn't make it much worse. And, if they shoot down one helicopter, the bombing starts. I don't want to rule it out. We can't afford to rule out some version of the French proposal. I have to go give an important speech. I'll be available to talk with you after that. Thank you, John. ~~(C)~~

Prime Minister Major: We all have to give a little. I will talk to you tomorrow or later today. ~~(C)~~

-- End of Conversation --

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DECLASSIFICATION DATE: September 6, 2019

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON



MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Presidential Telephone Call with French President Jacques Chirac, July 20, 1995

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
French President Jacques Chirac

Notetakers: Kenneth Baldwin, Katherine O'Loughlin, Kyle Bakke, Matt Miller, Alexander Vershbow

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: July 20, 1995, 3:15 p.m. - 4:13 p.m. EDT  
Oval Office

The President: Hello? (U)

President Chirac: Hello Bill, I'm in Morocco now. (U)

The President: Yes, hello. How is the King? (U)

President Chirac: I heard you wanted me to call. I am with His Majesty and will give him your best. (U)

The President: Tell him that I am using the golf clubs he gave me. But I still want to come and play on his course. He has got a night golf course. I understand our military planners are coming closer together on an agreement. I understand you propose to open a road between Sarajevo and Gorazde. ~~(C)~~

President Chirac: Yes, but nothing is certain yet. ~~(C)~~

The President: I got my last report, about 30 minutes ago, that our people and yours are closer together and we now have to persuade the British. If we can, we will have one proposal going into the meeting. (C)

President Chirac: And the Dutch? ~~(C)~~

The President: Yes, of course. ~~(C)~~

President Chirac: First let me tell you Bill, I am still against airstrikes, but I will not oppose them. What is essential is to draw a red line around Goradze and then make sure it is respected in order to enforce it. You propose airstrikes whereas I propose sending troops on the ground simply because I think airstrikes will lead to a very strong reaction on the Serbs' part against the Muslims in other areas, and against the blue helmets. So I think it is a very dangerous solution and that is why I prefer my solution. But if everyone else agrees with your solution and they all agree to reject my solution, then obviously I won't oppose it because I don't want to take the responsibility of having tomorrow's conference fail. But I could be wrong. I hope I am wrong, but I am convinced the Serbs are in the situation now where they will react in a very strong and brutal way to the airstrikes. (C)

You know, I've been asking for a month now for Bildt to contact Karadzic. There has not been any contact and I think that has been a major strategic error. You can't say that it wasn't possible to go talk to Karadzic since it was possible to talk to Milosevic. (C)

If we agree on the red line and are to be sure it won't be crossed, I prefer my solution, as I said, but I won't oppose the American solution. I am not certain the others will accept it -- first the British, and then the Dutch, and perhaps the others. (C)

The President: First, I think that if we decide to draw a line around Gorazde, we might be able to do both what you suggest and what I suggest. If we issue an ultimatum, we might not have to do it -- that is what happened in 1994. We might be able to open a ground corridor from Gorazde to Sarajevo and then warn the Serbs that we will protect both, and if they attack Gorazde or interfere with the corridor, then there would be airstrikes. Let me say, we received some good intelligence last night that the Serbs believe the UN will not do anything and they are thinking of taking not just Gorazde, but Sarajevo as well. (C)

President Chirac: Absolutely. (C)

The President: They also told the source of this intelligence that they did not want to pay the price of heavy airstrikes. So what I think we should look at doing is to open the ground corridor with the warning of heavy airstrikes, and with the understanding that this time we will do it. They will be large, not proportional, strikes so that whatever they do to our people, they will suffer more. (C)

President Chirac: Yes. I want to repeat, I won't prevent an agreement. If we agree on your proposal then I will accept it, even though I prefer my solution. I would like to tell you one more thing, Mr. President. I was talking to the King of Morocco about this issue. He is currently the President, or Chairman, of the Organization of Islamic Conference and he told me that the OIC Contact Group is meeting in Geneva tomorrow at 4:00 pm, just at the end of the meeting in London. He told me many of the members are very nervous, and if we fail tomorrow, the King is very worried about initiatives that could be taken by some Islamic countries in favor of the Bosnians -- by Iran, Turkey and maybe some others. So we need to succeed at the meeting tomorrow; even though I am very worried about your proposal and think others might not agree to it, I will accept, but I tell you it is very dangerous. ~~(C)~~

The President: I think all of our options are somewhat dangerous, Jacques. The consequences of a Serb military victory, under the watchful eye of the UN, are very dangerous. There are no risk-free courses. We need to find a balanced one. If air power is used in the form of an ultimatum instead of using it in advance to clear out the air defenses, that way there will be no dual-key empty threats. We may not have to use it. But they have to know we will do it. That is my hope. ~~(C)~~

President Chirac: We shall see. But I agreed it is time to stop the Serbs. It is also time to speak with Karadzic. I don't understand why our friend Holbrooke is stopping it. It is a very grave mistake. ~~(C)~~

The President: I will take that up here today and be prepared to say something to you and your folks tomorrow. ~~(C)~~

President Chirac: Thank you Bill. Good night. (U)

The President: Good night. Say hello to His Majesty for me.  
(U)

-- End of Conversation --