

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

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

PARTICIPANTS: The President
John Major, Prime Minister
Interpreter: None
Notetaker: Barry F. Lowenkron

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: June 27, 1992, 11:16 a.m. -- 11:27 a.m.
Camp David

The President: Hello John, how are you? (U)

Prime Minister Major: Fine George. I'm sorry to have been so elusive. I understand it's an important day for you. (U)

The President: Well, I'm on the tennis court. The bride to be is on the one next to mine. It's a beautiful summer day. Listen, I hate to confound your busy schedule but I'm anxious to know about your meeting. Jim Baker talked to Douglas Hurd. I talked to Yeltsin for about 30 minutes, although I haven't talked to other European leaders yet. I'm calling because we're just being dragged along, hoping for a cease fire to take effect which is not happening. So we need a more forward leaning position, including the use of military support by air. I'm not eager to see forces go in on the ground. (S)

Prime Minister Major: Well, we did have a lengthy and acrimonious discussion over this, with the outcome the following. The member states will transport material to a common site, most probably an airport in Italy. In addition we decided not to allow Yugoslavia to participate in any international organization, including the CSCE. There were other views on delivering supplies without a cease fire. Italy was the most hardheaded, the French less so. We're more cautious. It's the responsibility of the UN, not the EC, and without full knowledge of what others are prepared to do we should be careful about how to proceed including the use of the military. I'm not excited about it. (S)

The President: I'm not either. But there is a humanitarian need. We've got to get the UN going. We need a resolution to authorize whatever is necessary. We may be farther out in front on this than you. But, we're reluctant dragons. I'm reluctant to use U.S. troops. I'm proposing to go with supplying air power, for the lift and cover. (S)

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2

Prime Minister Major: Yes, an airlift, and the possibility of airdropping supplies if we can pinpoint where to drop them. (S)

The President: We talked about this. Colin Powell and Dick Cheney were more pessimistic than I would have thought. They said an air drop would be random and scattered. (S)

Prime Minister Major: I see. Have you thought of what kind of resolution you want? (S)

The President: Probably one that authorizes all appropriate measures to launch and implement the relief operation and keep it going, although I haven't talked to Butros Ghali on this. But if we don't, then we're back to square one. (S)

Prime Minister Major: Yes, I see. The phrase, "all appropriate measures" does keep all of our options open. (S)

The President: Yes it does. None of us are enthusiastic about use of force. I hope we can get together on this, and I recognize your concerns which we generally share. Jim Baker is prepared to go to Europe, but I'm not sure it's necessary given the change in the EC. (S)

Prime Minister Major: Yes, there has been a change in the EC because of the change on the ground. I've just looked at Hurd whose sitting across the room and he sees no need for Jim to come over, but we would rather talk to him about GATT. (S)

The President: OK. Yeltsin is on board completely, despite opposition. I would have though he might have some problems, but he supports us on this completely. (S)

Prime Minister Major: I don't know what "appropriate means" means? What are the number of troops? Where would they come from? What would they do? (S)

The President: We don't know either. The Italians are supportive, the French are more forward leaning. How about the Dutch? Our military people are not talking about a lot of forces, but an aggressive force if need be. Brian Mulroney supports us and the idea of going to the UN. (S)

Prime Minister Major: We need to share with you and with the UN our military analysis before another UN resolution. (S)

The President: Maybe, yes. (U)

Our planners should talk to yours, perhaps tomorrow? (S)

The President: Who would you get? (U)

Prime Minister Major: We'll get our military to be in touch. (S)

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3

The President: Good, and have Stephen Wall and Brent Scowcroft talk.

Prime Minister Major: Yes. Our military planners are not keen. I spoke to Dick Vincent and he asked me if I had seen a map of the Sarajevo airport. I told him I had not. He told me to look at it, that it was a dead ringer for Dien Bien Phu.

The President: Our military guys may be talking to your guys already. That is what they did too, they showed me a map of the airport surrounded by hills full of crazy bastards who would rather die than compromise.

Prime Minister Major: We'll get the Serbs to back off initially, then an international organization like the Red Cross will deliver the supplies. Soon snipers will start shooting at them, and we'll have to send troops to protect them. Step by step we'll be dragged into an even bigger operation. That is our nightmare.

The President: Maybe we can tailor the resolution so we deliver the aid and haul ass out of there -- although that might be too easy. But, let's Brent and Stephen talk tomorrow.

Prime Minister Major: Fine.

The President: OK

Prime Minister Major: Congratulations, and good luck with the wedding.

The President: Thank you, bye.

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