

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

## MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Prime Minister John Major of Great Britain

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
John Major, Prime Minister of Great Britain  
Interpreter: None  
Notetaker: Jane E. Holl

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: August 7, 1992, 1:40pm - 2:00 pm  
Oval Office

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

Prime Minister Major: Fine, George, how are things going for you? (U)

The President: I'm holding up. It is a big battle, but I am going to try to use the Major model. I feel quietly confident. As you know, it is quite different when you're out around the country. The economy is slowly moving along, we had a .2% drop in unemployment -- it will mean a couple hundred thousand jobs, though and that's good news. I read an article in the Times or Post about your economy. (S)

Prime Minister Major: It wasn't terribly accurate. But there's nothing we can do about the economy but to sit it out. (S)

The President: I'm calling on this terrible problem in Bosnia. I know and respect all the problems your people have put forward with this, but we feel we should push this "all necessary measures" resolution. (S)

I'm probably as reluctant as anyone to get into the Desert Storm force business. I can't tell you the political and emotional pressure that has resulted because of these pictures of concentration camps and TV scenes. (S)

Some are taking one look at these pictures and saying that we're having genocide. But our intelligence hasn't backed up those claims with facts. We know there is brutality and ethnic cleansing. I didn't want to embark on an open-ended military commitment, but rather to signal our resolve that we mean to get relief to victims one way or the other, we can improve our chances of getting some relief through while keeping our responsibilities bounded. (S)

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PER E.O. 135262012-2385-MR  
9/1/2014 MM

We've got to demonstrate that we're not impotent here. I hope we can get together on this. I want to try to get on the same wave length on the need for a broad resolution. We won't get in front with a military plan in which everybody is called on to act. I don't want to raise expectations. Your conference will play an important role in moving us toward a settlement. (S)

Prime Minister Major: Our conference will have to run a long time. There is no easy, quick solution. We believe two or three things are absolutely necessary. [Discussion of Major's attendance at Olympics in Barcelona.] (S)

There's been an increasing flood of evidence at what's happening in camps in Bosnia. It seems to me that with this new evidence about camps, several things are necessary. Everyone is absolutely shocked. We need independent observers to go into the camps without delay; and second, we need to get the camps under UN supervision to reassure our publics that we're not letting things get out of hand. (S)

The President: We think it's important to continue to protect the delivery of humanitarian supplies. (S)

Prime Minister Major: Our concern is how to carry it out. We don't want open-ended military involvement. I'm not certain we won't get dragged nearer and nearer to exactly that. (S)

The President: What's your feeling about our resolution that's being talked about now? (U)

Prime Minister Major: I don't have a current version. Douglas Hurd has been working it. He passed some instructions to our people in New York. The meetings are still going on. (S)

The President: Well I know that we do have some differences. [Pause to get copy of resolution.] (S)

Prime Minister Major: It is an issue of stages for us. We may end up where you want to be, but for now we are a bit more cautious. It's really a timing difference. We prefer more action on the humanitarian front, then if difficulties develop, we'll go slower. We don't want to be left with our military filling the UN role. (S)

The President: I don't have the final word. One step at time is your view. No precipitous movement. (S)

Prime Minister Major: Yes, that's right. We have two reasons for this: one, is our fear that the UN will go, and two, is our fear that the public will not go for troops unless we go the last mile. We will need to be in a better political position. (S)

The President: Air power is the next step we have in mind. We know it won't stop the problem, but it will send a tough and frightening message to Serbia. Committing ground troops is the absolute last stage -- I said so in public today. (S)



Prime Minister Major: My people say that we will need 30,000 ground troops just to do what the UN does. The UN is negotiating with dozens of war lords. To fight there would take lots of troops and air cover. We'll be into a major military operation. (S)

I share your view that we must take some action -- action on convoys. First, we need a new resolution; second, we need convoys under UN rule; and third, we need to gather evidence to take war criminals to trial. That will be a very positive move. (S)

The President: I'll talk to my people to review the bidding. I really think we'll need to make clear that we're doing what it takes. We don't want 30,000 troops. Think about air power. (S)

Prime Minister Major: It is infinitely better than a large ground presence. But our worry is that it won't do any good and it will kill lots of civilians. Also, and this is important perhaps, but if we use air power, and it fails, then what do we do? We're sucked into it. I've asked my military to assess our options. (S)

The President: We're doing the same thing. (S)

Prime Minister Major: Well, I'm here and available if we need to talk some more. (S)

The President: I'll talk to Baker and the NSC and I pass along your concerns. I really want a resolution behind us. (S)

-- End of Conversation --