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CONFIDENTIAL

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For: Hillary  
From: Sid  
Re: Tony Blair, EU presidency, Tory Party, & Berlin trip

One of your agenda items behind the scenes on your Berlin trip can be to discuss the future of the EU, the European presidency and the prospects of Tony Blair. If Blair does not become EU president the position will likely be filled by a third rank nonentity in the Brussels bureaucratic mode incapable of realizing the possibilities in the creation of the office, continuing the feebleness of Europe as a political idea and reality. Of course, it is in the US interest to have a strong Europe—and the naming of the first European president might be the most important opportunity for the US to strengthen Europe, to give it actual sinew, for a long time and a long time to come.

The Conservative Party is split over Europe and Blair. Hague represents the Tory right, which is the center of the party. He is supported prominently by Boris Johnson, mayor of London, also known as the Tory “clown prince.” The responsible wing, such as Chris Patten, the former European Commissioner, and Douglas Hurd, former Foreign Secretary, are pro-European and not necessarily hostile to having Blair there as a counter-weight to the anti-Europeans of their own government, helping to tilt things more their way. All present themselves as “pro-American,” sine qua non of Conservative rhetoric, though there is a nasty anti-American undercurrent on the Tory right. Hague tried to paper this over in his conference with you and was disingenuous about the nature of the far right parties the Tories are aligned with in Europe. Nobody in the UK or Europe is fooled.

Cameron is trying to balance the wings of the Conservative Party. On domestic policy, he is more radical than his Etonian image suggests (profound connotations of the Conservative paternalistic, aristocratic one-nation tradition), more influenced by the Thatcher legacy, more like George W. Bush influenced by Reagan and Reaganism than by his father and vestigial moderate Republicanism. On foreign policy, Cameron is unsure, inexperienced, oblique, and largely uncommitted. So far his foreign policy is little more than projection of his domestic politics, especially his need to keep his party behind him going into the election. His political

imperatives have pressured him to lean right, including on alignment with the far right European Parliament affiliation. His future problem is that he does not want to be the leader who takes Britain out of Europe but is putting himself in a position where he may not be able to prevent his party doing so.

Enter the Blair factor. The Europeans do not want a Britain sliding out of Europe or acting as an uncertain partner. Blair is probably the best possible solution. But the anti-European forces within Europe and within the Tory Party are conspiring against Blair now to thwart that possibility.

I spoke with Jonathan Powell this week and he tells me the following: "The argument is slipping away from us a bit at the moment so anything Hillary can do would be gratefully appreciated in speaking to other European leaders or what she says in public about the need for Europe to have a major figure at its head so that other powers can relate to it."