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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

0019

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: President's Telephone Conversation with
FRG Chancellor Helmut Kohl

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Rudolf V. Perina, NSC (Notetaker)
Gisela Marcuse, State Department
(Interpreter)

Chancellor Kohl

DATE, TIME January 23, 1989, 10:07 a.m. - 10:12 a.m.
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President identified himself and asked the Chancellor how he was.

The Chancellor greeted the President and said he was very well. He said he watched the President's inauguration on television with great interest. It was a big event. He wanted to wish the President good luck, much success and God's blessing.

The President said this was the first call he was placing because he wanted to thank the Chancellor for the very warm message of congratulations.

The Chancellor said that this was how he hoped the two could handle matters in the future. It would be very useful to call even when no urgent business was at hand.

The President replied that he was strongly in favor of that. He had one point to make today. Because he knew how opposed the Chancellor was to chemical weapons, he was personally outraged by some of the recent commentaries on the Libyan issue in the U.S. press. He had spoken out on this publically, and he hoped the Chancellor's staff had shown him these comments.

The Chancellor said he had seen the comments and was grateful for them. He wished to reiterate clearly that it was his intention in coming weeks to amend the legislation which had led to this problem. The present legislation had been in effect since before he came to office, and up until now it had presented no problem.

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The Chancellor said he was strongly opposed to the involvement of any German firm in the production of CW anywhere in the world. He wanted to bring the present firm to court but this required evidence, and the situation regarding evidence was not good. There was an old saying that the President perhaps knew: Before a court and the open seas, one is in the hands of the Lord.

The President said he understood. He asked the Chancellor to convey his love to Hannelore and say that he looked forward to seeing them.

Chancellor Kohl asked the President to give his love to Barbara and to tell her that she was doing a great job. She was doing things in her own way and everyone liked her for that. She should not change.

The President said he would convey that message, and the two leaders said good-bye.