

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with Helmut Kohl of  
the Federal Republic of Germany

PARTICIPANTS: U.S.  
The President  
Philip Zelikow, NSC Staff (notetaker)  
Pat Battenfield, NSC Staff (stenographer)  
Gisela Marcuse, State (interpreter)

FRG  
Chancellor Helmut Kohl  
Mrs. Weber (interpreter)

DATE, TIME May 16, 1989, 8:07 a.m. - 8:18 a.m.  
AND PLACE: Oval Office

Chancellor Kohl began by complimenting the President on his recent speech on U.S.-Soviet relations. Although the West German press had not received the speech as well as might have been wished, the Chancellor thought the statement was very good and he had made a strong positive statement about it. He urged the President to pursue his policy toward the Soviet Union along the lines described in the speech. (✓)

The President said he was not too concerned about the press reaction. He noted that generally there was now a growing wave of understanding for the speech's forward-looking character. (✓)

The Chancellor said one should not be too impressed with the press comments, since they expect miracles every day. What was important was for friends to stand together and do a good job. That was why the Chancellor had called. (✓)

Defense Minister Stoltenberg, the Chancellor continued, would be arriving in Washington on Wednesday night (May 17). The government had just drawn up its proposal on the SNF issue, and it needed the President's attention. The Chancellor asked if the President might have an opportunity to meet Stoltenberg personally on Thursday, May 18, or at least meet with Secretary of State Baker, a meeting already scheduled for Friday, and National Security Adviser Scowcroft. Stoltenberg would of course be seeing the Secretary of Defense and others in connection with

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the normal business of his trip. On Saturday the Defense Minister would return to Bonn and the Chancellor would see him on Sunday morning. (S)

The Chancellor offered, if the President agreed and if it seemed necessary, to send Horst Teltschik to Washington on Monday (May 22) with one or two other responsible officials. The Chancellor wanted to arrange matters so that, by the beginning of next week, the Federal Republic and the U.S. were making headway on this issue. The Chancellor continued to believe that the issue should be "arranged" before the NATO Summit and had told his people that this had top priority over anything else. (S)

The President said he was pleased with the Chancellor's remarks. He noted that Robert Gates had reported to him the day before and brought him up to date. He had also talked to Secretary Baker. The President welcomed Stoltenberg's visit and knew Secretary Baker and General Scowcroft would be delighted to see him. (S)

The Chancellor asked if the President could see Stoltenberg on Thursday, in order to gain time and accelerate the discussions. (S)

The President replied that he needed to go up to New England early Thursday morning to prepare for his meeting with French President Mitterrand. But if, after Stoltenberg met with Secretary Baker, Secretary Cheney, and General Scowcroft, he felt he needed to see the President, then Stoltenberg could come up to Maine. The President said the issue was very important to the U.S. and to him. (S)

The Chancellor thanked the President and said he would tell Stoltenberg to decide how to proceed once he was in the U.S. The Chancellor did not want to be a nuisance. But he would arrange matters in Bonn so that, if necessary, Horst Teltschik and two other gentlemen would be in position to travel to the U.S. on Monday. Next week he and the President would get in contact again. (S)

The President asked the Chancellor to tell Minister Stoltenberg that he, the President, would be pleased to see him if he felt it was necessary after his meetings with the President's top officials. Teltschik was most welcome. The President also liked to think that the SNF matter could be resolved before the NATO Summit. He appreciated the Chancellor's call very much. (S)

The Chancellor said he wanted to do something too, and he was very optimistic that the U.S. and the FRG would be successful. (S)

The President said the U.S. would be working very hard on the SNF issue and that it might be necessary for the President to call

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the Chancellor next week, but the Chancellor's effort today was a very good step. (P)

The Chancellor said that, in any case, he would call again next week. It was good to stay in close contact and talk. The President should remember that he had good friends in Bonn.

(P)

The President said he knew that, and thanked the Chancellor. (P)

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