

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Call from Helmut Kohl, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
Helmut Kohl, Chancellor  
Interpreter: Gisela Marcuse  
Notetaker: Robert Hutchings

DATE, TIME June 15, 1989, 7:01 a.m. - 7:19am EDT  
AND PLACE The Oval Office

Chancellor Kohl initiated the call, as he said he would do in his June 7 telephone conversation with the President. After opening greetings, Chancellor Kohl gave a lengthy debrief of Chairman Gorbachev's just-concluded visit to the Federal Republic. He found Gorbachev in very good shape, much more optimistic than when the Chancellor had visited Moscow in October. The Chancellor said Gorbachev is in a stronger position following his election to the presidency and the structural reorganization of the Supreme Soviet. These general impressions were echoed by Aleksandr Yakovlev, who accompanied Gorbachev on the visit. (Ø)

Chancellor Kohl then turned to a discussion of Eastern Europe, which he thought the President would find useful in light of his forthcoming trip to Poland and Hungary. The Chancellor emphasized Gorbachev's very close personal relationship with General Jaruzelski and their common approach toward developments in Poland. No such personal relationship exists with any one Hungarian leader, the Chancellor added, but Gorbachev also supports Hungary's reform efforts. By contrast, there is an enormous distance between Moscow and Bucharest, and also East Berlin. (Ø)

Chancellor Kohl said that Gorbachev was dismayed about developments in China but offered no elaboration. On the Middle East, the Chancellor found it interesting that Gorbachev is very eager to find a settlement -- partly because he thinks he will have a problem with Islamic fundamentalism in the Soviet Union. (Ø)

Chancellor Kohl noted that he and Gorbachev had talked for quite some time about the President. It was clearly apparent, Kohl said, that Gorbachev has greater hope for establishing good

contact with the President than he had with President Reagan. At an intellectual level, Gorbachev sees eye to eye with the President and wants to deepen contacts with the U.S. and the President personally. The Chancellor said he had told Gorbachev that there will be no opportunities for driving wedges between the U.S. and the Federal Republic or between the President and the Chancellor. Gorbachev, the Chancellor reported, said emphatically that wedge-driving was not his intention, and that the Soviet Union does not want destabilization in Europe, because this would mean disruption in the USSR as well. (C)

Chancellor Kohl said again that it was his impression that Gorbachev is seeking ways of establishing personal contact with the President, adding that Gorbachev also has a favorable impression of Secretary Baker. Kohl thought that if the President moves forward with talks, there will be a good basis for progress. While noting that there is lingering Soviet mistrust toward the U.S., Kohl felt nonetheless that Gorbachev was serious in his desire for establishing better relations and moving forward on the issues. (C)

Chancellor Kohl said that he was somewhat surprised that Gorbachev does not seem to think that a twelve-month timetable (for a CFE agreement) is a problem. Gorbachev thought there could be rapid progress. The Chancellor said he had agreed with this view, citing the INF Treaty as an example of how fast progress can come when there is real political determination. (C)

Chancellor Kohl then made a suggestion and a request. Once negotiations are underway in Vienna and work has begun through official negotiating channels, the Chancellor said, it would be a good idea for the President to send direct messages to Gorbachev from time to time. This would signal the President's confidence, which is a key word for Gorbachev, who places a high premium on "personal chemistry." (C)

Chancellor Kohl found it interesting that Gorbachev spoke openly about Soviet domestic problems and about the crimes of the Stalin era. Gorbachev said he was resolved to make all the facts available to the (Soviet) public and to bring the truth out, as the Hungarians were doing (with regard to the 1956 revolution). Gorbachev had been frank in admitting Soviet economic problems and anticipated a few tough years ahead. (C)

Chancellor Kohl said that Gorbachev's most important message to the Germans had been that the war is over and a new generation has come to the fore. The Soviet Union and the Federal Republic have their differences but want reasonable cooperation. Gorbachev acknowledged that the two countries have different views on central issues like Berlin, but Kohl found him much more restrained than he had been in October. (C)

Chancellor Kohl, summing up, said he was very satisfied with the visit. Gorbachev knows which side the FRG is on, Kohl said, and knows he must respect that. But Gorbachev is trying to make improvements and has created a reasonable basis for future work. (Ø)

The President thanked the Chancellor for his debrief and said he had listened very carefully, adding that if the Chancellor had further thoughts the President would like to hear them. (Ø)

Chancellor Kohl said he would call again in a couple of weeks to discuss preparations for the Economic Summit. (Ø)

The President welcomed the idea and proposed that he call the Chancellor at the end of the following week. It would be his nickel, the President said. (Ø)