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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with President Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Mikhail Gorbachev, Chairman of the Supreme Soviet
Notetaker: Condoleezza Rice

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: February 28, 1990, 7:14 - 7:51am EST
The Oval Office

The President: Good morning. How are you? (U)

President Gorbachev: Good morning. But it is good afternoon here already. (U)

The President: I have been reading about your changes and the strengthening of the Presidency. It is all over our newspapers this morning. (U)

President Gorbachev: Yes, Mr. President, yesterday was a long and difficult day. I am sorry that I could not take your call when you wanted. (U)

The President: That is alright. I fully understand and this was not an urgent matter. I wanted to talk with you about Nicaragua and to fill you in on my conversation with Chancellor Kohl this past weekend. (S)

President Gorbachev: I will listen with pleasure to your comments but first, are you well? (U)

The President: Very. I am going to the West Coast today. Barbara and I are both well. The weather is miserable and cold in Washington. But we are fine. (U)

President Gorbachev: I am pleased to hear that. I wish you and Barbara the best. (U)

The President: The same to you and your family. Now, may I read through a few talking points and then we can discuss anything you would like. (S)

President Gorbachev: I am listening. (S)

The President: The elections in Nicaragua were free and fair and this was a victory for democracy and the Nicaraguan people. This election was received well by the Venezuelan, Costa Rican and

Mexican Presidents as well as other democratic leaders. (S)

I want to thank you and the Soviet leadership for your role in bringing about the free and fair elections. I noted the forward-leaning statement that came out of the Soviet Union, not only recognizing the results of the elections but offering to help. (S)

The initial statements of reconciliation and congratulations from Daniel Ortega were encouraging but now there are troubling signs that he will not give up the army and the police -- the Ministry of Interior. (S)

I think Perez and other leaders will impress on him the need to transfer power. I hope you will use your influence too. We will use whatever influence we have with the Contras that they lay down their weapons. The fighting should be over now. My plea is that we work together with the countries of the region to bring about the peaceful establishment of the government. If we could do that it would send a wonderful signal to the rest of the non-Latin world that we can work together. (S)

Now I intend to make a couple of comments on the Kohl visit but if you have comments on Nicaragua -- What do you want? (S)

President Gorbachev: Let me respond. We in the Soviet Union proceeded from the assumption that the Nicaraguans should take care of their internal problems. Therefore, we supported the electoral process. We in no way interfered with that process and we are maintaining normal relations. At this stage you can assume that we will not interfere in their internal affairs. We want the Nicaraguans to solve their own problems based on political methods. That has been our policy and it will continue. If there is a need on any point for the two of us to consult, we can be in touch on this. (S)

I can say that it is only from you that I have heard of this unpleasantness. Maybe that is because I have been so busy. We have not been approached by either side, at least I don't know of any approach. I will look into this matter after this call. (S)

The President: I am just referring to some statements that came out yesterday and maybe its Ortega trying to control his extremist elements. But there was an explicit statement about the army and the police. If you can influence them quietly. I have no specific appeal to you today, these were just general comments. (S)

President Gorbachev: Alright. (S)

The President: On the Kohl visit -- we feel it was helpful. We agree with Kohl that German unity is a positive development. We expressed our common goal of building a democratic and united Germany which -- in firm alliance with its long-standing allies and as a part of an increasingly integrated Europe -- will be one of the pillars of stability and peace in Europe for the long-

term. (S)

The Chancellor and I agreed that the unified Germany should remain in NATO; that American troops will remain in Europe as long as the Europeans want them; and that there needs to be a special status for the former territory of the GDR. (S)

There seems to be increasing concern in West and East about what might result from a united Germany but it is our view that the unification of Germany should not abridge the legitimate security interests of any state in Europe. The FRG is ready to work with its neighbors, the Soviet Union and its allies to promote peace and stability in a rapidly changing Europe. (S)

Chancellor Kohl and I had long talks about this and I am sure that it is true. I am sure you know this but we did discuss the Soviet Union's role. Your personal role in respecting the changes in Eastern Europe has been crucial. That led Kohl to encourage me to have as much contact with you and to move forward on the arms control front. I told Kohl that you wanted to move forward in arms control too and that we would. (S)

One last point. Thank you personally for your generosity with your time when Jim Baker was in Moscow. Thank you for that. (S)

President Gorbachev: Very well, Mr. President. To this second part of your remarks let me say that we share the point of departure. This means that we agree that there should be common security as the result of the events in Europe and those connected with the unification of Germany. I believe that both of us understand that we regard this in the context of the post-war, all-European process. In this context, not everything is clear in the position of Chancellor Kohl. This provokes concern with many Europeans including with us. Even in the FRG itself it is being mentioned that Kohl has not spoken in recognition of the post-war borders. I had to mention this in my interview in Pravda. This point requires clarity. (S)

Another element is the future of a united Germany in the context of common European security. Given the fact that European security is important to world security this is a key matter. You have said that you have a mutual understanding with Kohl. I must disappoint you -- we do not yet have a common understanding with Chancellor Kohl. You have said that no one should be concerned about these changes and about the threat of a united Germany. But then if that is so, if you believe a united Germany would not be a threat -- Why do Western countries want to incorporate them into one alliance? If we find that this would negatively effect the Soviet Union, we would have to think long and hard about it. (S)

And after these remarks, I want to invite you to continue to consult with me and with Chancellor Kohl and I will do the same. (S)

Mr. President, I hope you will regard with understanding our

special situation in this. I hope we will find mutual understanding and a solution to this common problem. And of course I am pleased with Secretary Baker's impressions of our session in Moscow and also with the work we were able to do. It shows how much progress we can make when we work together. Mr. President my remarks were a little long but the points you made were important. (S)

Thank you for taking the initiative of this phone call. That is twice and I am in debt. I will have to draw some conclusions from this. I am sending my regards -- I hope we can continue our cooperation and dialogue. (S)

The President: I appreciate your comments. Some day we'll have a better line to talk more frankly. Let me assure you that the reservations you have raised -- are not just reservations of the USSR -- there are concerns throughout Western Europe. I hope you will have no reservations about speaking frankly. (S)

I wanted you to know that even with our history of loss of life ourselves, we believe a united Germany need not be an aggressive force or threat. Finally in response to your question of why we want Germany in the Western alliance -- I must say to guard against uncertainty and instability. (S)

President Gorbachev: To your last remark -- We need to continue the dialogue and I hope we can use all means available to us. Eventually I hope we can weigh all factors and find the approach that can be consistent with the interests of our two countries, the united Germany and Europe as a whole. (S)

The President: I agree. If it is agreeable to you, I want to say that we chatted on matters concerning the elections in Nicaragua and issues of Eastern Europe. You are free to say what you wish but it is better sometimes to be on the same wavelength. (S)

President Gorbachev: We will say what the subjects were but without details. (S)

The President: Good. (S)

President Gorbachev: Let me wish you a good trip West. (U)

The President: I look forward to seeing you. We want to make progress on the agenda that Jim and Mr. Shevardnadze talked about. I am looking forward to another visit with you. (S)

President Gorbachev: I too Mr. President am looking forward to our visit and hope for success. (S)

The President: Good day. Regards to Raisa. (U)

President Gorbachev: Goodbye, Mr. President (In English) (U)

The President: That's very good. Goodbye. (U)