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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Call to Chancellor Helmut Kohl of
the Federal Republic of Germany (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Helmut Kohl, Chancellor
Robert Hutchings, NSC Staff (Notetaker)
Gisela Marcuse (Interpreter)

DATE, TIME June 1, 1990, 4:03 - 4:23 p.m.
AND PLACE: The Oval Office (U)

The President: Helmut! How are you doing? (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Fine, thanks. How are you? (U)

The President: I am calling to give you a play-by-play, an up to date report. I thought you'd be interested in where we stand. We talked about German unification for about two hours yesterday afternoon. In the first place, Gorbachev seemed very personable. He was animated, but not confrontational. I made the point very clearly that a united Germany is no threat to anyone, including the Soviet Union, and I told him that Germany, in our view, has earned its place in the new Europe, that it will work for the collective good, and that Germany wanted good relations with the Soviet Union. I told him that right from my heart, knowing that you believe that. I of course supported your position very steadily that a united Germany should remain a full member of NATO, and that was our strongly held position. I did tell him that Germany is a democracy and it will be up to them to choose its alliance arrangements, but that our position is the same as yours -- that a united Germany should be a full member of NATO. I told him the German sovereignty must be complete at the time of unification, and I stressed that Germany should not be singled out for special status after unification. We used the word "singularization." (Ø)

He came back with the screwy idea that Germany should belong to both alliances -- have two anchors, as he put it. He returned to this several times, referring to a long transition period. He started off this discussion, Helmut, by saying that a united Germany in NATO would upset the balance. But actually, his comments seemed directed at NATO itself as much as Germany's

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2

membership in NATO. So he came back to the idea of a transition period as "new European security structures" are developed. He wasn't clear on what these structures might look like -- he was much more focused on getting through the transition. I had the sense that he was still feeling his way and that his position is not totally fixed. And he seemed to accept my argument that Germany should not be singled out, although he didn't specifically agree to that. Near the end of the thing, I thought he kind of agreed with my position that I support Germany's full membership in NATO but that it was up to Germany to decide. But then he returned to the idea of a transition period. (Ø)

He also took a strong interest in how NATO might change its doctrine, and I read him Article 2 of the NATO Charter, which Brian Mulroney had called to my attention, just to show him NATO's political character. And he took an interest in how NATO might evolve to become more a political alliance and how NATO and the Warsaw Pact might cooperate. In my view, it will be vitally important that we take steps at the NATO Summit to convince him that NATO is changing in ways that do not threaten Soviet security. (Ø)

We had no agreement at all, but then there was no hostility. And I had an opportunity to say Germany had earned its place and must not be singled out. So let me call you on Sunday or maybe Monday to let you know what else comes up today and at Camp David on Saturday. But I'm not even sure we will get back to that. (Ø)

One final point, Helmut: de Maiziere, the new East German Prime Minister, will be coming here on June 11. I'm going to have a meeting and a working lunch with him. He will bring his Foreign Minister, Meckel, with him. I think it will be a good opportunity to push our case with them. I would welcome a cable from you with any advice you have. And I look forward to seeing you on June 8, before that visit, so we can talk. (Ø)

Chancellor Kohl: We will be meeting before the de Maiziere visit. (U)

The President: Yes, on the 8th. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Then we can talk about the visit. (U)

The President: Okay. If you have any questions, just ask. I think we made headway, though there was no agreement. But when we have a press conference, he won't try to make it a big difference. (Ø)

Chancellor Kohl: Have you made progress in other areas? (U)

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3

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The President: It has been difficult on Lithuania, and thus on a trade treaty. On arms control, we will sign some agreements on START -- nothing spectacular -- and a good one on chemical weapons. The one that's causing him heartburn, though, is the trade agreement. (Ø)

Chancellor Kohl: Did he say anything about economic aid? (Ø)

The President: Not yet. I think he'll hit me with that tomorrow at Camp David. I told him that would be the time for frank talks. There have been some hints, but nothing as definite as in your discussions with him, or Baker's in Moscow. I expect to hear more tomorrow. (Ø)

Chancellor Kohl: George, on the German issue once again: I firmly stand by our position, and I would like to repeat once again why. Isolating Germany would have disastrous consequences for developments in Europe. If a united Germany is not in NATO, you and I know the U.S. would not remain in Europe, because there would be no more NATO. Then we would come to a point in Europe, a situation where the two nuclear countries -- France and Great Britain, would move closer together -- and the smaller nations would fall out of the security structure. Denmark, the Benelux, even Spain, Portugal, and Italy -- where would they go? (Ø)

There is another problem, which people here aren't thinking of. Because we will continue to expand the EC, destroying NATO would have disastrous consequences for unifying Europe through the EC. Therefore we are not willing to discuss Germany's not being in NATO. Give some thought to the following. I'll probably meet him pretty soon. (I'll go into details when we talk on Friday, in a small group.) We should tell him that's not the way to go. We are quite willing to move to quite close cooperation with the Soviet Union once unification is complete, but we are not willing to pay any price for singularization. This was disastrous for Weimar Germany, and it would be disastrous today. Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia -- they don't want it, either. (Ø)

The President: I told him that, and I think he understands. I also think he understands the singularization point. He just didn't agree. (Ø)

Chancellor Kohl: We have to change his mind. (Ø)

The President: You have no problem saying that Germany, under Helsinki, has the right to belong to NATO or not belong? (Ø)

Chancellor Kohl: Precisely. We believe that. But we still have to change his mind. George, I do think the economic side is more important. (Ø)

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4

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The President: I thought I had gotten him to agree, first, that Germany should be in NATO if it wants to be, and, second, if Germany decides not to be in NATO, that should be Germany's choice. I thought he agreed to that, but then he got into the transition stuff. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: I think when he talks about the transition, he is talking about the economic side. I don't think he can solve his economic problems without help. (S)

The President: Yes. If you would like, I'll call on Sunday. I think we've pretty much covered European security. The next step will be up to you or whoever sees him next. But I'm not worried about this. I'm not discouraged. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: I'm not discouraged, either. George, I would be happy for you to call Sunday night, the same time as now. I will be at home, in Ludwigshafen. You know the number. (S)

The President: Okay. Good luck. We'll keep your interests in mind. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: I know that. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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