

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMCON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Helmut Kohl, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Helmut Kohl, Chancellor
Notetaker: Stephen Benko, NSC Staff

DATE, TIME August 22, 1990, 8:15 - 8:36am
AND PLACE: Kennebunkport, Maine

The President: Helmut, how are you, my friend? (U)

Chancellor Kohl: I am fine. How are you? (U)

The President: We're still here in Kennebunkport. Glad to hear from you. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: I just want to find out how you see the issues. You know we had the WEU meeting, after the EC meeting, on cooperation. I coordinated with Foreign Minister Genscher for full support of the U.S. position. I wanted to hear your thoughts after you heard about the results of those two bodies. (U)

There was something else I wanted to raise. As you know, at the time of the 1948 constitution, under the urging of the occupation forces in Germany, we accepted restrictions on military operations for Germany outside of its borders. (U)

The President: Yes. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: And now we are under pressure from the Socialists to defend the Constitution. We are trying to change the Constitution, but it won't happen very quickly. I hope that we can do it before the UN Resolution. It is very important that solidarity be a two-way street. The U.S. has always helped us, so we want to be able to help in any way we can. (U)

The President: Helmut, that's fine. I understand your position and respect it. I have followed the WEU and the internal German discussions. We respect your position and are grateful for the solidarity you were able to project. I felt the WEU statement

was very helpful. I also understand the constraints you face on out-of-area commitments and appreciate your efforts to modify them. We view your sending forces to the eastern Mediterranean as very helpful to substitute for those deployed to the Gulf. (Ø)

If you're asking for my viewpoints, Helmut, Turkey has been very steadfast. Ozal has been strong. So we need to consider financial assistance to Turkey. Same is true of Egypt. Mubarak is acting very well in all of this. Jordan is also in a squeeze. King Hussein says they are supporting the sanctions, but the jury is still out on that in my view. If they all cooperate fully, that's an area where we should give financial assistance. (Ø)

On the rest of the situation, we're determined to enforce the naval blockade, the interdiction. The Yemenis permitted one ship to go by. They said at the UN it would not unload. There are now three other ships on the way to Yemen which contravene the UN sanctions. (Ø)

Whether or not we get the collective action at the UN we want, these ships should not be allowed to get through. For your information, the captain of the first ship said at first that he was only carrying water as ballast. But later he admitted he was carrying oil. (Ø)

On the broader front, we continue to move forces to Saudi Arabia, and so do other powers. At this time, I believe it would be exceedingly reckless for Saddam Husayn to attack Saudi Arabia. (Ø)

Chancellor Kohl: I don't think he will. (Ø)

The President: I kind of agree with you on that. I'm also very concerned about the foreign individuals there. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Yes, quite so. (U)

The President: There is no basis for their position to call them guests. His actions make them hostages. But using human beings as human shields is unacceptable by any norms of human law. (U)

Another comment on the broad front: Saddam Husayn is trying to make this the world against the U.S. The world should make the case this is the civilized world against Saddam Husayn, Arab and non-Arab. (Ø)

Chancellor Kohl: I fully agree. I will say so. George, thanks very much for these thoughts. And if we can do anything more under the existing Constitution, we will be very happy to do so. Please phone me day or night. This is a big challenge, and failure has dire consequences. Many parts of the world are watching and will know what outrages they can commit. (U)

The President: I appreciate it. Any public statements you can make would be helpful in case we have to interdict. (Ø)

Chancellor Kohl: I will make a special point of it in Parliament. (U)

The President: I don't want to do anything reckless. But the status quo is unacceptable. I'm increasingly worried, but still hope the sanctions work. (Ø)

Chancellor Kohl: Thanks very much, George. There is another issue I want to raise with you which is gaining momentum in the elections. This concerns low-flying aircraft. This is a very important domestic issue. Stoltenberg has had good conversations with Cheney. There is one point I want to discuss. That is the altitude of 200-300 meters. It ought to be our aim to restrict aircraft to a figure above 300 meters. This is a clearly important and central matter to Germany. It is important and I would like to request you to request your people to help reach a satisfactory result. (Ø)

The President: Helmut, in about three hours Cheney and General Colin Powell will be here in Kennebunkport. I know Cheney and Stoltenberg have been in regular contact on this subject and we have already taken several steps to address the problem. I am acutely aware of the politics involved and will remind Cheney of them. (Ø)

Chancellor Kohl: This is very important to me personally. Despite many things going on, this is the most important of many domestic issues. If you could be of any help, it would be helpful. (Ø)

The President: If it's important to you, I'll tell Cheney to be responsive. Let's leave it at that. (Ø)

Chancellor Kohl: Many thanks. (U)

The President: We'll be in touch. Barbara and I give our best to you and Hannelore. (U)