

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

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

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

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: September 6, 1990, 8:06 - 8:25 a.m.  
The Oval Office

The President: Hello, Helmut! (U)

Chancellor Kohl: I am very glad to hear your voice. (U)

The President: I am very glad to hear yours, and delighted to receive your call. What's happening? (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Thank you for your letter of September 5 regarding preparations for your meeting with Gorbachev. First, let me tell you, with reference to the call we had last week, that we now have agreed on dates for a meeting with Jim Baker next week. (Ø)

The President: Very good. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: We will discuss what the Federal Republic can do to help along the lines you described, regarding economic assistance to Syria, Egypt, and Jordan. Apart from that, we are working on how we can help the U.S. with the shipping of cargo. (Ø)

The President: That would be very helpful, very constructive. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: We are thinking about other things. We are talking about detection vehicles, which can detect nuclear, biological, and also chemical weapons. Those we sent could stay with American forces there. Generally, we will look into all these things and do our best to help. I very much regret that so far we have not been able to change the constitution before unification. (Ø)

The President: We understand that fully. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: It is intolerable that the Germans, who have been shown so much solidarity by the Americans, cannot play a greater role. (U)

Regarding Helsinki, I have one piece of information, one request. I would be glad to see all things put into effect that will lead to a rapid conclusion of CFE. This is very important for the November CSCE Summit. (Ø)

The President: I hope so, too, Helmut. I don't have a feeling as to how far we can go, but our feeling is the same as yours. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Good. Regarding the Two Plus Four, so far we have made good progress. Mr. Seitz, who is leading your team, is doing a very good job. Apparently, the Soviet Union had a problem actually achieving the withdrawal of troops by December 31, 1994. I don't think it means bad will on their part. They apparently do have enormous problems finding housing for all these troops. But I told my people that for me the date is non-negotiable. After all, that will mean they have stayed in Germany for 50 years. In 1944 they reached the territory of the then German Reich. 50 years is long enough. (Ø)

Let me say, regarding bilateral negotiations between our side and the Soviet Union, progress is being made. They have unrealistic expectations concerning financing, and I will have to call Gorbachev personally, but I think we will achieve a solution. During these negotiations, I have been able to see how catastrophic the situation is there. It makes it all the more important for him, from a psychological viewpoint, that the meeting in Helsinki give him a good image. (Ø)

The President: I agree. We have some differences on the Middle East, but they are overridden by our common interests. (Ø)

Chancellor Kohl: Let me raise one different question and address it in a frank and open manner, because this may possibly also be a subject of your meeting with Gorbachev. I am talking about the October 3 date of our national unity. Of course, we would like to see the President of the United States in Berlin, if only for a few hours, if possible. I have the impression from what we have been hearing informally from Moscow that Gorbachev would be quite interested in such a meeting. I know you have a very heavy schedule. That is why I have been reluctant to mention this to you. The day before yesterday, for the first time we heard something from Moscow through a public announcement. I did not talk to the Soviets about this, but that announcement triggered a discussion here, and your press spokesman made some friendly noises regarding the announcement in Moscow. But I want to clarify this with you before I ask the Federal President to issue formal invitations. (Ø)

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The image of you, Gorbachev, Thatcher, and Mitterrand in Berlin would be a very impressive image and would also send very important messages, including to the Middle East. George, let me say again that I hesitated for a long time, but knowing that we are friends, I thought I would just say what we are thinking about. I completely understand your position and will understand whatever you decide. You may want to discuss this with Gorbachev in Finland. (C)

The President: Let me tell you my problem. It is a very complicated time. One month from then will be our national Congressional elections. I have been spending all my time, to the exclusion of domestic problems, on international problems. Therefore, from a scheduling standpoint, it is extremely complicated. On the other hand, I will consider it and will be glad to discuss it with Gorbachev. But I want to be frank. Strictly from a scheduling standpoint, it may be very difficult. I totally agree with you on the symbolic value and agree that it could also show solidarity regarding the Middle East. And with each decision I make, I want to be sure it is helpful to you with your elections coming up. (C)

I will get back early next week with a definite answer. I don't want to mislead you. I am not optimistic, but since you have personally raised the issue I will give it every consideration. (C)

Chancellor Kohl: Please, I don't want to put you in any difficulty. Be very free to decide what is right for you to do. I already told you the issue entered into public debate because of information from Moscow. I made no statement at all, but I can't exclude that Gorbachev may raise it with you. (C)

The President: If he does, I will tell him it is a good idea, but that I have problems concerning my schedule. (C)

Chancellor Kohl: Okay. We will talk again next week. (U)

The President: Yes. There is one last point. On this Two Plus Four, we have a problem. I don't want to raise it with you now but will ask Jim Baker to do so when he meets with you. It concerns restrictions that would forbid U.S., British, and French forces to enter the GDR even after, even after, Soviet forces leave. There is a new Soviet demand that causes us problems. Rather than talk now, I will ask that you discuss it with Jim Baker when you see him. (C)

Chancellor Kohl: I will be glad to talk with him. (C)

The President: Okay. It is complicated, but we've got difficulties with it. Thanks for your call. I will give you a full report of my meeting with Gorbachev. (C)

Chancellor Kohl: Thank you. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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