

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMCON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany

PARTICIPANTS: The President.
Chancellor Kohl
Stephen Benko, NSC Staff (Notetaker)

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: November 11, 1990, 1:38 - 1:48 p.m.
The Oval Office

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This call made on Nov 8 not 11

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The President: Well, I'm very glad you called. Public opinion is very important because of the enormous problem in the Middle East, and that's holding up well. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: That's exactly what I meant, the importance of public opinion. It's very important when you look at Boston and Massachusetts. (U)

The President: That was from the Helmut Kohl speech at Harvard about how you turn things around. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: (Laughs.) Yes, but it was unprecedented. (U)

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

Chancellor Kohl: Hello George. I've just come from a meeting with Prime Minister Mazowiecki. He asked me to convey his best regards. But the real reason for my call is that I have been thinking about you very much in the past few days because of the elections. We are all specialists in winning and sometimes losing elections. I am pleased that apparently things went well for you at the ballot box. It should provide you with a solid foundation for the years to come. (P)

The President: It's very sweet of you to call. Of course, there were some personal disappointments, Florida and Texas, for example. But in historical terms, we did better -- we defied history -- than a party in power usually does. We did better. Normally the party in power loses more seats. (P)

Chancellor Kohl: That's exactly what I meant when I said a solid foundation. Here in Germany newspapers were full of prophecies which didn't come true. (P)

The President: Well, I'm very glad you called. Public opinion is very important because of the enormous problem in the Middle East, and that's holding up well. (P)

Chancellor Kohl: That's exactly what I meant, the importance of public opinion. It's very important when you look at Boston and Massachusetts. (P)

The President: That was from the Helmut Kohl speech at Harvard about how you turn things around. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: (Laughs.) Yes, but it was unprecedented. (U)

The President: Exactly. But it was a very good thing for my party if you look at Massachusetts and elsewhere. (Ø)

Chancellor Kohl: I am thinking particularly of the next two years. (U)

The President: Yes. But we have tough economic problems. A recession, if we have a full one, will be over soon, and that will help in 1992. (Ø)

Chancellor Kohl: The second point I wanted to raise is that on GATT. We now have a basis for discussion. (Ø)

The President: That's good news. I'm not sure I had heard about it. (Ø)

The Chancellor: I do believe we have a good basis. (Ø)

The President: Good. We must break the agricultural deadlock if we are to save the Round. (Ø)

The Chancellor: I hope we'll be able to succeed in working this problem together. The third point I wanted to raise is the Middle East conflict, obviously. (Ø)

The President: We're going forward together. I'll announce very soon that we're sending more forces to the area, as I believe Gerhard Stoltenberg knows. It is a sizable force, and if that doesn't get Hussein's attention and cause him to abide by the UN resolutions, I don't know what will. Maybe we need more UN resolutions. Secretary Baker is talking to various countries about that. I look forward to talking with you about it. We have varying reports of the effectiveness of the sanctions. They are having an effect, but the question is whether it is enough. I continue to worry about the lives and safety and health of the so-called "guests," the hostages in Iraq and Kuwait. This is the one that really plays on my soul, because we are not going to change our policy because of his brutality. What is your latest thinking? (Ø)

Chancellor Kohl: Let me say first of all, that we totally agree, that one shouldn't give in to that sort of brutality. There is one factor of reaction, which is his reaction to the sanctions once they begin to bite. That is the decisive question. (Ø)

The President: Yes it is. I'm certain that we can't go on forever. That is an unacceptable answer. The stance of the U.S. and around the world is that we can't let it go on forever. (Ø)

Chancellor Kohl: Yes. (U)

The President: I look forward to seeing you to talk about it all. I think that not very far from now, on November 18, we'll be seeing each other. (Ø)

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Chancellor Kohl: Let me say that I look very much forward to that visit, and look forward to seeing Barbara too. Is she coming? (U)

The President: She will be, and she looks forward to seeing you and Hannelore. I appreciate your phone call, and am very, very grateful for it. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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