

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Chancellor Kohl of Germany (U)

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

DATE, TIME: January 22, 1991, 1:23 - 1:45 p.m.
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

Chancellor Kohl initiated the call. (U)

The President: Helmut! Good day to you. How are you? (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Fine. I hope you are well, too. How is Barbara? (U)

The President: She is fine. She is walking with a cane but is doing well. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Please give her my love and Hannelore's love. We didn't know she was in training for the sledding world championship. (U)

The President: What's new? (U)

Chancellor Kohl: I wanted to know your thinking about the Gulf situation and ask a couple of questions -- one about Saddam Hussein's state of mind and another on Israel. (U)

The President: Let me take a few minutes to fill you in. First, things are going pretty well. The air campaign is on schedule. The weather was bad for two or three days over the weekend, but despite that an enormous number of sorties have been flown, we think with good effect. The air campaign will go on for quite a few more days. We are pleased with the laser-like accuracy of going after targets. We think we have held innocent loss of life to a minimum. We think already there has been enormous damage to his nuclear bomb capability. Similarly, there has been enormous damage to his communications and support effort -- command and control, and so on. But we can't say all of this is taken care of yet, so we have to continue our mission. We think his air defense is virtually destroyed, at least his ground-to-air missiles. Now a lot of attention will be paid to his elite Republican Guard troops and equipment. So generally we are happy with the way the air campaign is working and happy that Saddam

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Hussein has not been able to brutally damage population centers, because of the effectiveness of Patriot. In air-to-air combat, every time they have gone down -- every time, without exception. The loss of Allied air power that we mourned has come about because of the concentration of air power for the most part. (S)

On our assessment of Saddam Hussein that you asked about, he may believe that he can keep some planes hidden and hold his forces back for an attack. He may still believe that, but we do not believe that. One interesting sidelight his propaganda minister, in charge of public relations, told Bernie Shaw of CNN that he did not believe Allied aircraft could get to Baghdad. I still believe Saddam Hussein is making assessments on the basis of erroneous data. (S)

You also mentioned that you had a question about Israel. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: Yes, of course. Will you be able to keep them under restraint? (S)

The President: My answer is that I don't know, but I do think they have been pleased with the way Patriot has been used over Saudi Arabia. We had several talks with Shamir on this. So far we are pleased with their restraint. I am now pretty well convinced that if Israel does take some action the coalition will nevertheless hold together. I hope the coalition won't be put to that test, so we are urging continued restraint on the part of the Israelis. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: What is Shamir's mood, his psychological state of mind? (S)

The President: He is grateful for the Patriot batteries. Israel is concerned about these blatant attacks. He knows that Saddam Hussein is trying to undermine the coalition, but he sees the situations in terms of what a Prime Minister must do with regard to attacks on his population. (S)

Helmut, one other point: what this man is doing when he parades prisoners on television is causing a strong reaction against Saddam Hussein in many countries. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: It is an incredible crime. It sets us backward to the terrible situation in years past. However terrible it is for those involved, it has had a positive effect on world opinion. (S)

The President: That is one way of looking at it, that's true. I have given you some of my views. What are your thoughts? (U)

Chancellor Kohl: I have two questions. We are considering sending someone to Israel with a message of sympathy and provision of financial support. (S)

The President: Do you want me to respond to that? (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Yes, as a friend -- not a diplomatic response.
(U)

The President: I think it would be well appreciated. I don't think it would have any adverse effect on coalition members, because the aggression against Israel has been so blatant. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: The second point: your Treasury Secretary and Finance Minister Waigel met in New York yesterday. I haven't yet received a report, but I assure you that as far as financial support is concerned, we are more than ready. I told Jim Baker that. (S)

The President: That is very important. I am very grateful. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: On a completely different question, the political forces that came up in 1983 are up again. The Social Democrats are making deals based on the fear of war. They are starting a campaign. It is very sad. The Socialists in other countries are taking very good positions. I told our British friends that we should have Kinnock here. (S)

The President: Yours are pretty unreasonable, I think. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: That brings me to the subject of Turkey. (S)

The President: May I interrupt? I was just handed a note -- in high confidence -- that a Scud is headed toward Israel right now. That just came in and shows you what kind of war we are dealing with. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: Thank you. Back to Turkey, I don't know if Saddam Hussein will attack, but perhaps he will mount an air campaign or even a missile attack. The question of NATO involvement may come up. You have been able to count on Helmut Kohl up to now, and you will continue to be able to count on me now, even if I am facing great troubles. (S)

The President: We do not yet carry a high likelihood that Saddam Hussein will attack Turkey. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: I simply want to say that there may be things, nonsense, written in our papers, but you can count on us. (S)

The President: Thank you very much. We were very pleased with the movement of forces into Turkey and hope it doesn't cause too many problems at home. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: We will remain in contact. (U)

The President: All right. If there are any questions, don't hesitate to call. Likewise, I will call you if anything comes up. I appreciate your conversation with Jim Baker and your willingness to do more. That is very important to German-U.S. relations. So I hope that can be worked out without problems for you, given the Social Democratic position you told me about. (S)

Okay, thanks. Are you worried about the election in Hesse? (C)

Chancellor Kohl: I am not worried. It is similar to an election in one of your states. The last time we had a victory. This time we lost, but it was only a slight loss. (C)

The President: Okay. Thanks for calling. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Thank you. Good-bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --