

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Lech Walesa, President of Poland

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Lech Walesa, President
Interpreter: Val Chlebowski
Notetaker: Robert Hutchings, NSC Staff

DATE, TIME August 19, 1991, 4:45 - 4:54 p.m.

AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President: Hello. (U)

President Walesa: This is the President of the Republic of Poland, Lech Walesa. (U)

The President: How are you, my friend? I'm just calling up to talk to you about events in the Soviet Union. ~~(S)~~

President Walesa: Yes, we are worried about the situation. Actually, we are worried about the reforms in the central European countries. ~~(S)~~

The President: May I make a few talking points here and then ask you for your views? ~~(S)~~

President Walesa: Yes, by all means. (U)

The President: First, as I say, you are very much on our minds as we wrestle with the situation over here. We have convened our experts and at this point we see no Soviet threat to your security, nor do we believe that they are going to want to give you any trouble, what with all the trouble that they've got themselves. And I think the Soviets know that creating problems for you would produce an even stronger western reaction. We have had a message from the self-appointed president of the Soviet Union making some commitment to reform and democracy inside the Soviet Union, but we are not impressed. We are going to keep a close eye on the situation and certainly we will keep you informed. We don't know anything more than you, I'm sure, right now. If there is anything we can do in helping you to keep your people calm and avoid actions that could be used against the reformers in the Soviet Union, I would like to know what that is, but it is very important that the people there in Poland remain calm. Of course, if you want to make this telephone call public, expressing the U.S.'s keen interest in the reforms inside Poland and our commitment to help with those reforms, please do that. I'd like to mention the call here. I think that might help calm

some troubled waters. But how do you see the matter from your vantage point, Mr. President, my friend? ~~(S)~~

President Walesa: Mr. President, thank you very much. It is very important that you have called me here. Of course, we realize that there is no physical danger on the part of the Soviets for us right now. We will have problems with our reforms, especially economic reforms. Of course, we wanted very much for Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary to be united with the rest of Europe. That would be one guarantee of these changes.

~~(S)~~

The President: Yes. (U)

President Walesa: We do have some problems with that, but that is absolutely necessary and that would be a guarantee of the irreversibility of these reforms. Of course, we are ready to defend ourselves and we will defend ourselves. We will not surrender. I am convinced that the reforms in the Soviet Union will prevail too. We are afraid of one thing in the Soviet Union -- anarchy. When I talked to you, sir, before, I said that most probably a lot of people will flee the Soviet Union through Poland. That's one area where we expect the most problems. Of course, we have many agricultural products, but there is no money. We have nowhere to sell it. We expect that the rest of Europe will cooperate with us on this matter. Today that would help the Soviet reforms also. ~~(S)~~

The President: I see. (U)

President Walesa: We certainly hope that the NATO alliance will get stronger and that it will provide some balance in that respect. The U.S. presence in that alliance will also act as a stabilizing factor. Of course, I would like to make this conversation public because it's important to us. ~~(S)~~

The President: OK. Let's stay in touch, and if we learn anything that has an effect on you, good or bad, I will be in touch with you. ~~(S)~~

President Walesa: Mr. President, thank you very much indeed, and please could you help us unite with the rest of Europe. ~~(S)~~

The President: I think you'll find a receptive Europe when the EC meets tomorrow in the ministerial. I hope you will. I think you'll find more receptivity now. Yes, the answer is we will try to help. ~~(S)~~

President Walesa: Mr. President, thank you very much from the bottom of my heart and on behalf of the Polish nation. ~~(S)~~

The President: Thank you. Goodbye and good luck. (U)

-- End of Conversation --