

**April 26, 1967**

**Memorandum of Conversation between President  
Johnson and Chancellor Kiesinger**

**Citation:**

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**Summary:**

In this conversation, Johnson and Kiesinger discussed the state of U.S.-German relations, Johnson's irritation with German critical press coverage and public opinion, Kiesinger's worries about the NPT and the withdrawal of U.S. forces, Johnson's concern about the high costs of keeping troops in Western Europe, and U.S. interest in a "different relationship with the Soviet Union."

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

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By 118, NARA, Date 1-22-96

DATE: April 26, 1967

TIME: 10:30 a.m.  
12:30 p.m.

PLACE: Chancellor Kiesinger's private residence

Participants: US  
President Johnson  
Harry Obst (Interpreter)  
Press Secretary Christian (Last <sup>forty</sup> ~~twenty~~ minutes)

FRG  
Chancellor Kiesinger  
Hermann Kuesterer, (Interpreter) <sup>forty</sup>  
Press Secretary Von Hase (last ~~twenty~~ minutes)

Chancellor Kiesinger stated that he had been thinking about their earlier conversation and would like to repeat the following:

1. His government was strongly interested in maintaining good relations with the US, its government, and the President.
2. The President had been a little annoyed about some of the comments coming out of Germany recently that had contributed to a certain strain of relations. He wanted to assure the President that his government would do everything possible not to create any difficulties for the US. He did not intend to make any statements on the matters discussed between them that would tend

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to involve him in any efforts by any party directed against the President or the US government. The German Government was aware of the big burden and heavy responsibility the President has to carry and did not want to add to it.

In general, he first would like to say how happy he was to be able to be with the President though the occasion may be a sad one. The very fact of the two of them meeting for the first time was more important than any of the individual decisions they would have to make in the coming weeks and months. He would like to emphasize that he himself, his government, and the majority of the two ruling parties wanted good relations with the US and trust<sup>d</sup> the President and the US. As a matter of ~~fact~~ fact, they did not only want to continue those good relations but indeed ~~xxxx~~ <sup>to</sup> try to make them better and closer.

Two days ago the President had talked to him about his concern <sup>for</sup> ~~on~~ keeping certain subjects more "in the family circle". He agreed with that. In the last year the Germans had some worries. It had been necessary for him to make certain public statements at certain

times but anything that he or Vice Chancellor Brandt had said had always appeared in the American news media magnified and exaggerated. In the light of this experience he would tend to be more cautious in the future.

As regards German public opinion -- and he was ~~always~~ always following reports on this matter closely -- there seemed to be general conviction that permanent reconciliation between France and Germany would have to be established. On the other hand he would like to emphasize that the same people just as much advocate ~~good~~ good relations and close cooperation with the United States. These two sentiments were not in opposition to each other. He believed that at this time public opinion in the FRG was more favorable to the US than in any other European country. He would also like to say a word about the occasional doubts that had arisen in the FRG. These doubts were not so much about the President's actions but had arisen from the general developments. For some years, there had been the question whether some change of <sup>US</sup> policy ~~of~~ <sup>US</sup> versus Europe had taken place.



Any thing that could be done to allay these doubts would be advantageous. He did not want to discuss this matter in great detail. However, he wanted to assure the President that it did not amount to a crisis of confidence. Such doubts could be understood <sup>from</sup> ~~out of~~ the fact that the cold war had abated to a certain extent and that people had not yet <sup>become</sup> ~~gotten~~ adjusted to the new period properly.

President Johnson interjected that he was familiar with those doubts and agreed that some of them were due to the change in climate <sup>of</sup> ~~in~~ the cold war.

He believed that current German public opinion presented a big problem. Once a wife started to believe that her husband might be unfaithful the situation was dangerous. So far, the United States had not reduced <sup>had</sup> its troop level in Europe and/not given up its support and efforts in other areas <sup>despite</sup> ~~dispite~~ the serious balance of payments situation. The question was, if he could continue such a policy in the face of so many doubts<sup>?</sup> During the last six months the US press each day had been full of statements about German

doubts, lack of faith in US policy and questioning of our commitments. He could not quite understand what was really causing those doubts. The US was maintaining over half a million troops in Europe and spending over a billion dollars there annually. This very morning Secretary of Defense McNamara and Under Secretary Katzenbach were testifying under oath before Congressional committee. The first question that would surely be put to them would be "Why do we not pull out of Europe in the face of the changes that have taken place." The closer ties between Chancellor Kiesinger and de Gaulle, the European statements about detente and other reasons would certainly be brought up by people like Senators Fulbright and Mansfield. Mr. McNamara would have a hard time to make them believe anything.

Chancellor Kiesinger stated he understood <sup>(that)</sup> if the US were to withdraw some forces at this time it was planned to cut the number of aircraft in half. The people would ask why does the United States not try simultaneously to make the Soviets agree to similar cuts<sup>?</sup> The US had introduced the "rotational plan" which

~~which~~ he considered to be reasonable. The people would ask why would it not be possible for the US to try to get some commitment from the Soviet Union, which would tend to lessen the danger of war. out of the negotiations on the Non-Proliferation Treaty. They felt if there ~~was~~ were changes to be made there should be some reciprocity on the other side.

He had been told by de Gaulle in Paris on January 13-14 that he, even Adenauer, were too ~~obedient~~ obedient to the United States. He had answered de Gaulle that he was not obedient to the US. Certain changes had taken place since the height of the cold war. During that period US and German interests had been completely identical. He realized that US policy/had to follow <sup>in Europe</sup> the US interests. This was legitimate. He also believed that Bonn and Paris should not proceed on anything without the knowledge of Washington. Both sides should review where their interests are identical as well as where the areas of friction are. They had neglected to do this until now.



In the final communique in Paris he had stated that France and Germany agreed on certain matters. However, he had stated the disagreements, for instance on NATO, with equal clarity. He had made this very clear to the public and had emphasized that the FRG fully supported an integrated NATO. There was no ~~danger~~ danger that the FRG would drift away from the US. This he had also stated clearly in a speech in the Bundestag. However, he could not prevent ~~that occasionally~~ certain people <sup>occasionally</sup> would <sup>make</sup> use of his public statements on certain matters to their advantage and ~~would~~ try <sup>ing</sup> to exploit them..

He would like to say a few frank words also with regard to his predecessor Ludwig Erhard: He had a very high regard for Erhard's excellent accomplishments as Minister of Economics. However, the German people thought that his foreign policy was a little "naive", that he failed to analyze the situations in depth and failed to recognize at times where the true interests lay. The people believed that he failed when he visited the President last year. This failure was one of the major reasons that the



German public had lost confidence in him. His party prior to that had had a constant majority in public polls. This had dropped to 38% during the final days of the Erhard administration. The Social Democratic Party at that time had received over 50% of the votes taken by the public opinion polls. Now, happily, the Christian Democrats were above 50% again. He was happy about this fact as otherwise the coalition might break up if the Social Democrats should receive a majority. This tendency had been reaffirmed in the elections last week in Schleswig-Holstein where the SPD had not received the landslide they had hoped for.

The doubts about a changed US policy, he believed, started as early as the last period of the Eisenhower administration. He wanted to make clear, however, that there was no real distrust about the present relationship between the US and the Soviet Union. However, there were some ~~xxx~~ people who were saying that the US had sold out to the Soviet Union and was no longer supporting the cause of German reunification. Some of this might just be the result of so many years of frustration on matters like German reunification.

The President ~~had~~ asked why the Chancellor thought that such doubts were already present during the Eisenhower administratic

The Chancellor replied he thought this started with the Camp David meeting with Khrushchev. The people believed that Eisenhower had been too trusting and <sup>on top of</sup> ~~added to~~ this came the constant warnings of <sup>former</sup> ~~the~~ Chancellor Adenauer. Some of these doubts were allayed by President Kennedy through the excellent speeches he made during his visit to Germany. However, later the same doubts arose again.

After a period of <sup>personal</sup> distrust it seemed to him that during the last meeting with the dying Adenauer the latter seemed to have reached a point of trusting that <sup>he</sup> ~~(Chancellor Kiesinger)~~ would follow the general direction of policy set by Adenauer. The Chancellor stated he strongly believed in the necessity for close ties between Germany and France, but without the "romantic attitude" on this question that Adenauer had displayed.

He, Kiesinger, was convinced that it was impossible to guarantee German security and find solutions to the German problems

without the United States. <sup>X</sup> Solutions to these problems could not be found by any drastic actions but only by a gradual approach and by creating an appropriate climate. Most of the German people had no illusions about this matter and realized it would take a long time. If the US and Germany would stand united, show trust in each other and support each other's interests as far as possible, those doubts should be appeased. The people realized that a certain relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States was necessary in ~~the~~ view of the power and the heavy responsibility of these two countries. Otherwise, the result might ~~might~~ be disastrous. Some people were talking a different language but they should let them talk, because it did not matter as long as the leaders would consult each other closely and make their own decisions.

The President <sup>said</sup> /~~emphasized~~ the Chancellor should make no mistake about the US determination to support German reunification and the Alliance. He was aware that the Soviet Union kept making attack on the FRG. However, he invited the Chancellor to appoint ~~his best~~



his best research man on these matters to make a comparative chart of Soviet accusations made against Germany and those made against the US President. He was convinced he would come out number one on such a comparative chart.

The President stated he had ~~xxxxx~~ very strong feelings about the real nature of the Soviets, just as much as Adenauer did. He just did not talk so much about them.

The Chancellor said it was shameful in what <sup>(L)</sup>blatant way the Soviet Union could permit itself to attack the FRG in foreign capitals. The only European ally that had spoken up in defense of the FRG had been President Saragat of Italy. If the Soviets were to attack one of his allies like this he certainly would speak up in his defense with determination.

Many people did not realize the complexity of the situation, the domestic antagonism against the President and the immensity of the problems he was facing in South East Asia and other parts of the world. He wanted to repeat again that despite existing doubt there was no present crisis of confidence, no serious situation.

There had been a feeling that Erhard had not taken a firm enough stand on the offset problem during his last visit in Washington. He, Kiesinger, was happy that a solution had been found for this problem now. He had been forced to take a firm stand, not <sup>least</sup> ~~last~~ because of the threat emanating from the <sup>propaganda</sup> ~~propaganda~~ campaign of the NPD. The NPD was not only composed of national socialists but contained a great number of what the French would call "poujadists", i.e. mostly disgruntled small businessmen, and a few old hard-core nationalists. The NPD knew that its campaign could only succeed if the party was able to create anti-American feelings in the German population. Fortunately, they had received less votes during the last two state elections than they had expected. The elections in Schleswig-Holstein were a hopeful beacon, as the NPD had only been able to poll 5.6% of the vote in this state which is traditionally very nationalistic. Gallup polls indicate that <sup>their</sup> ~~there~~ national strength does not exceed 3%. Their propaganda plus statements by Adenauer on the Morgenthau plan and his declaration that the US had turned its back on Europe and did not really see the magnitude

of the Communist threat had contributed to the doubts they were talking about. He wanted to reemphasize, however, that these were not major doubts and could be coped with.

On the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Chancellor saluted the President/<sup>'s</sup> intervention through which some important ~~points~~ points had been cleared up. The individual points of the present text he considered acceptable but the question was if the FRG could accept the Treaty out of the consideration of its relationship with the Soviet Union. The FRG had alone committed itself to forego nuclear weapons in the WEU agreements and had reiterated this policy ~~was~~ repeatedly in public. The FRG wanted better relations with the Soviet Union ~~was~~ but was running into such statements as Kosygin's declaration in London that it would have to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty whether ~~it~~ ~~liked~~ it liked to or not. There was a strong group in his own party disliking the Treaty and the Bavarian branch of the party had voted against it altogether. There was also some opposition in the SPD. The question was what could be done ~~to~~ to meet the desire



of the US to have the Treaty and get the necessary approval in the Bundestag. Many people including himself and Prime Minister Moro felt strongly that the Treaty should be of a limited duration. Five years had been suggested, but he himself felt that such a period would be too short and he would consider ten years more acceptable.

During the ten years one could see what could be accomplished on disarmament and how German-Soviet relations would develop. Then one would be in a better position to talk about a possible permanent Treaty. The idea of a limited Treaty was spreading fast. It might be useful for both of them to resume discussing the NPT after the US congressional hearings and the fourth coming Bundestag debate (would) have been concluded.

He was not an expert on the liquidity question. It had not been possible to get French cooperation on this matter. He would have to explore it further to try and find out where the difficulties were located.

On the reduction of troops he was prepared to do all that

~~that~~ he possibly could. He favored ~~to~~ first explore<sup>ing</sup> the matter further in joint discussions. It would have to be reviewed in the light of the needs of European security and in the light of future developments (e.g. the changes expected in China during the next ten years). The thinking of the FRG on these matters was not guided by egotistical motives. The common good was very much on their mind.

The Chancellor then asked the President if he had any thoughts on a possible visit in Washington. He said he was prepared to come at any acceptable time.

The President might want to think about the possibility of including their principal assistants for the remainder of the talk and what to ~~see~~ tell the press. He would suggest ~~to~~ telling the press that they had friendly and comprehensive discussions, and that they wanted to continue the close and friendly relations that had existed between the countries in the past.

The President replied he had no objections ~~xxx~~ to saying that to the press.

He said he was trying to put himself in the Chancellor's position and wondering how he could convey to him a picture of ~~the~~ <sup>Comparing</sup> ~~comparision~~ of the problems that the Chancellor had with those that the President had without becoming ~~ag~~ argumentative or disagreeable. He believed that the picture on German sentiment and German public opinion painted by the Chancellor was about correct. He was of the opinion that in the next few months public feeling here and public feeling in the US would somehow jell and move jointly into one direction or into the other. He was disturbed and doubtful about the state of German public opinion at this time and still was not sure what was really causing it; the change of government in Germany; the sentiments of former Chancellor Adenauer; de Malle's reproaches on being too obedient; or whatever else it may be.

(VON HASE entered room)

While this was going on in Germany there was a similar type of "unfaithful husband--wife" thinking towards Germany



in the United States . People were saying to themselves:

Why should we continue to spend over a million dollars? Why should we keep on maintaining our troops there? Why should we not let them handle their own defense? They are grown up now. They have rebuilt their countries. They can take care of themselves. They have a better balance of payments situation. Why should we stay if de Gaulle feels we should get out, if the Germans doubt us? Why should we not talk to them in terms of the 20th century, in terms of planes and rockets rather than in 19th century terms of ground troops? If they are looking for defense protection by the French, why not let them do just that?

The President repeated that he had congressional hearings starting this very day in which many of these sentiments would be echoed. He also repeated that 13 of his own party leaders had voted down his own suggestions on these matters in a committee. He was opposing their views 100% but he did not know if he would always be able to prevail. The question was what action to take in view of the sentiments in the two countries. He did not want to be

the architect of the dismantling of the Alliance. However, in the last months much had happened to further such a dismantling.

(Mr. Christian entered room)

The European press was feeding our press. And he was reading in his press ideas like: LBJ did not care about Europe, LBJ was forcing the non-proliferation treaty on them, LBJ was only interested in Southeast Asia. This was very disturbing. There was a difference between your wife telling you in the secrecy of your bedroom that she thought you were unfaithful. It was another matter reading it in all the papers next morning. The press was saying: it had become fashionable in Germany to ~~be~~ be independent, to ~~criticize~~ criticize the US; some governments believed the US to have become a second-rate power; the US was "buddying up" to the Russians. Some people were doing all they could to try and divide the two countries.

He wanted to be friends with Germany. First of all, he had no illusions about the Soviet Union, not any more than the late Adenauer, President Eisenhower, or President Kennedy. He also had no illusions about the importance, necessity and desirability

of enduring friendship and loyalty to the German people.

He would never want to give up this partnership. He had been the first to say this when the Berlin Wall went up. He was speaking up for the reunification of Germany. He had made clear if the need should arise that he would do whatever was necessary with the troops stationed here. He had made clear his desire to ask for concessions from the other side whenever possible. If he <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ to reduce his forces to any significant extent he fully intended to ask the other side to make similar reductions in their troops, their ABMs and to ask them also to adjust to the 20th century.

As far as the NPT was concerned, the US was not close to an agreement with the Soviet Union. If the ~~x~~ Germans really meant what they were saying, namely that they did not want to have any nuclear arms, he felt sure that a satisfactory arrangement~~s~~ for the ~~xx~~ treaty could be found. The US had changed the treaty text 25 times, just for the benefit of the FRG. He <sup>The President</sup> ~~(K)~~ still could not accept the current version. The treaty was not all set and ready to be signed, as he had also told Prime Minister Moro yesterday.



He did not believe the Soviet Union would accept a treaty with a time limit. This seemed out of the question. He was in no hurry to rush the treaty and do anything that might help the Soviet Union and hurt the Germans. But at the same time he did not want to be looked upon~~x~~ as "the guardian of Germany". That was the Chancellor's job. (The Chancellor nodded approval.) However, he would not sign a treaty directed against Germany.

To repeat, he had changed the draft 25 times for the benefit of the FRG. The US was not close to signing the treaty. The latest ~~version~~ version also was not acceptable to the Soviet Union. He was ready to cooperate with the Chancellor and Prime Minister Mor. The news media constantly made it appear as if he were making a secret deal "behind the barn", as if he were telling the Germans "to get in line"<sup>v</sup>. Nothing could be further from the truth. The ~~two~~ two sides were not close to an agreement. The German people did not know these things.

The Chancellor said he had stated several times in public that the United States had been very cooperative with the FRG

on the NPT. \* The idea of limiting the treaty was mainly born out of considerations of German policy commitments towards the Soviet Union..

President Johnson repeated that the US did not yet have a treaty with the Soviet Union. He would have to see what progress could be made now in the negotiations. He would not sign the treaty without having first consulted again with the FRG.

The Chancellor should not be misled by the statements of Mr. Kosygin nor by those of Mr. Foster. Neither of the two was President of the United States. The Chancellor should make his own judgement about the President. He could be sure that this President would work with him. Likewise, he was looking towards Kiesinger, the Chancellor of the Federal Republic, and did not really much care what Mr. Strauss and others might have to say.

He would like to say just a few words about the two previous Chancellors, Adenauer and Erhard. He had had great respect for Adenauer and for the great accomplishments of his life.

However, he thought that Adenauer sometimes had taken ~~two~~ <sup>too</sup> strong a stand vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. One did not want to close a door permanently just because somebody was trying to break in.

We had not thought of Erhard "as a softie". We did not believe that he had neglected the interests of the German people .

He was wise to see the danger of an ~~xx~~ isolationist trend which was growing in momentum in the US and he was willing to make certain concessions in an effort to head it off, just as we were trying to meet German interests on the question of the growing popularity of the NPD. Erhard had left a "good taste in our mouth."

The American people were not angry with Germany. After 20 year of being committed all over the world they were just growing weary and wanted to go back home.

Chancellor Kiesinger asked about the 172 planes the US intended to withdraw from Germany.

The President said the figure was 144 and not 172..



Chancellor Kiesinger replied, 144 planes would be one-half of the US planes stationed here.

The President ~~replied~~ indicated his disapproval and pulled out a paper from which he determined that there were 662 planes of the US on European soil.

Chancellor Kiesinger replied he believed there were 288 US planes on German soil, thus it would be one-half of that figure.

Mr. Von Hase interjected withdrawing one-half of the US air force in Germany would have a strong psychological ~~an~~ impact on the German Luftwaffe.

Chancellor Kiesinger said he believed this would not be the time to try and make any specific suggestions on this matter. He was not a military man.

The President asked him if he meant to say that he wanted to reserve ~~this~~ this decision for the future, after more consultations on the expert level.

Chancellor Kiesinger answered, yes, he ~~is~~ would. They should not try to decide too many difficult problems all at once..

The President summarized that there were basically four problems he was concerned with now, plus the added problem of public sentiment. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

First of all, he wanted to repeat the following: the US, as before, was in favor of German reunification; the US was determined to stand by Germany; the US was prepared and ready to defend Germany if that should become necessary; The US considered Germany a trusted ally.

First, on the NPT: the US had made the adjustments wanted by Germany; it was working together with German experts on this matter; it would not sign the treaty without prior consultations at the top level.

*secondly,*  
On the question of consultation and trust, he would like to tell the Chancellor about the first meeting he had with Chancellor Erhard. At that time Erhard had told him of his constant fears about the Soviet Union. He had then <sup>taken</sup> ~~shaken~~ Erhard's ~~hand~~ hand and pledged to him the US would stand by his side against any aggression by the Soviet Union.. That handshake was more important

than any individual assurances. He had told them he would remain the friend of Germany. He was ready to renew this pledge to Chancellor Kiesinger. (The President then took the Chancellor's hand and shook it.)

The Chancellor thanked the President for this pledge.

The President continued by ~~emphasizing~~ emphasizing the importance to the US of a successful outcome of the liquidity talks. He said he expected that the Chancellor would not affect our position adversely.

In the fourth place, on the matter of troop levels, the President said, he expected understanding from the German side. He believed, the Chancellor understood this problem well.

One matter which might well be more important than any of the above was the question of doubts. Statements about feeling neglected, lack of consultation, ~~being~~ being ~~guilty~~ guilty of complicity, etc., were doing much to hurt <sup>the</sup> ~~this~~ standing of the German people in the United States. He reminded the Chancellor of what he had said before about the difference of saying something



In privacy and having it all over the news media. He suggested, therefore, the Chancellor "put an adhesive tape on Mr. von Hase." He suggested also the Chancellor call him directly if he should ever have any serious doubts. What the press was writing was only helping people like Senator Mansfield . It did not hurt him personally but he did not think it was good for the German people.

He was aware that the Soviet Union was trying to divide them any way they could. Equally, there were people in Europe trying to do the same. They were both smart enough not to be influenced by this. It was with this alliance (between ~~the U.S.~~ the U.S. and Germany) that the survival of freedom would best be served. If the Chancellor would stand by the U.S. as we were loyal to Germany, nobody, neither the Soviet Union, nor De Gaulle, nor anybody else would be able to divide us. We believed that the future of Europe also depended on complete trust between Germany and the U.S.

He had never said anything unkind to De Gaulle but the

General had told him to "get out" and he had left quietly without creating a scene. They should not allow themselves to be swayed by the pronouncements of people like Kosygin, De Gaulle, Nixon, Erhard, Adenauer or Robert Kennedy. They were the Chiefs of State and as long as they <sup>stood</sup> would stand together everything would be all right.

He hoped the FRG would keep its economic commitments, and a successful Kennedy Round would be in the interest of the FRG as well as in the interest of the U.S. He trusted <sup>that</sup> the FRG ~~but~~ ~~tries~~ would try to support our interest in the liquidity talks.

There was no agreement on the NPT yet. Neither Mr. Foster nor Mr. Kosygin could speak for the President. He would not <sup>sign</sup> ~~find~~ the treaty without prior consultation with the Chancellor.

The Chancellor expressed his agreement with the latter suggestion. He said it had been necessary for him to speak out on certain points. Sometimes it was impossible to remain silent. However, he knew a little better now to <sup>what</sup> ~~which~~ extent each of his

statements was being magnified by the news media in the U.S.

He therefore agreed that it was good to exchange certain views in confidence.

The President agreed that it was necessary to speak up at times. One could not be a statesman without getting elected. One had to have the support of the people. One could not do much good without being in office (he mentioned Stevenson, Erhard and Goldwater.)

Apart from the NPT, the U.S. was working in many areas for a different relationship with the Soviet Union. It had adopted a Space Treaty and was working on a Consular Treaty. The Consular Treaty was not only in the interest of the Soviet Union and of the United States but in the interest of the entire free world. The Soviets had plenty of people in the United States. The U.S. was interested in getting some of its people into the Soviet Union to be able to observe at close hand what was going on there. Did the Chancellor follow him on this? (The Chancellor nodded in surprise.)



The President suggested that the Chancellor present his views on troop reduction and that they consider the question at the highest level. Both sides ~~should~~<sup>should</sup> give and take until a satisfactory solution ~~would~~<sup>could</sup> be found. ~~These~~ details were not so important; what counted was the handshake. x That pledge would be honored ~~when~~<sup>roll</sup> "when the ~~role~~ is called."

The President and the Chancellor then agreed on what to say to the press after the meeting.

The President then repeated that he was making no "back-room deals" with anybody, that he believed there was strength in unity and disaster in division. They should not let themselves be driven apart by columnists or other prima donnas.

The Chancellor said that he was very gratified about this conversation. He wanted to repeat that he would do nothing that might damage the good relations ~~between~~ the two countries. As a matter of fact, he would try to strengthen those relations. He accepted gladly the President's suggestion to call on his advice

and have joint talks and try to find solutions on any difficulties that might come up. He believed that the small worries of Germany and the uneasy feelings could be overcome. He believed that public opinion in Germany and in the U.S. would move again in the direction of closer friendship. The President would always find understanding here. The majority of the German people were for the President because they knew that whatever happened to the U.S. would happen to the entire free world.

The President said he wanted to add one more thing. He wondered how big the German population was -- sixty million? (The Chancellor nodded <sup>yes</sup> approval.) Those sixty million, he said, eat very well and are dressed very well but there were over three billion people in the world that were not faring so well. The FRG should think about sharing some <sup>more of its</sup> ~~of their~~ prosperity with, for instance, the people of Asia and support his food program. This might be worth a few squadrons to him.

The Chancellor assured the President of the willingness of the FRG to cooperate as much as possible. He explained the

restrictions placed on him by the bad financial situation of the Federal Government.

The President stated that the U.S. was willing to give three million more tons of grain to India if the rest of the free world would match that total together. He urged the Chancellor to do his utmost to support this program.

At this point, the conversation ended, having lasted a little over two hours.

By Harry Obst - State Department Staff  
Interpreter



NOTE:

P.S. X The conversation was preceded by a fifteen-minute social talk with the entire Kiesinger family, including Mr. Kiesinger's son-in-law from Washington. The atmosphere was very cordial. The President, during that conversation, extended an invitation to Mrs. Kiesinger to accompany her husband to the U.S.

The private conversation between the President and the Chancellor also was conducted for the most part in a very cordial manner. It was noticeable that the Chancellor was feeling slightly uneasy about the emphatic, determined and simple-worded delivery of the President's thoughts. He seemed unable (the Chancellor) to control the direction of the conversation as he normally does. However, toward the end, much of this uneasiness seemed to dissipate and it became clear that the President had made a positive impression in many respects on the Chancellor. The President, on the other hand, <sup>appeared</sup> ~~seemed~~ completely at ease throughout the conversation.

~~SECRET~~ ~~NO DIS~~