

## **September 7, 1993**

# **Memorandum of Telephone Conversation: Telcon with Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany on September 7, 1993**

### **Citation:**

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<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/300251>

### **Summary:**

Clinton and Kohl discuss the Uruguay Round of the GATT, the political and economic situation in Russia, and the upcoming meeting between Alija Izetbegović of Bosnia and Clinton.

### **Credits:**

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English

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Original Scan

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## THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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## MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon With Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany on September 7, 1993

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
Helmut Kohl, Chancellor of Germany  
Interpreter: Gisela Marcuse  
Notetakers: Jane Holl and Neil Bleicken

DATE, TIME: September 7, 1993, 12:24 - 12:51 EDT  
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

Chancellor Kohl: Hello? (U)

The President: Hello. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Hello Bill, how are you? (U)

The President: I'm fine Helmut, it's nice to hear your voice. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: And I'm very pleased to hear your voice. I think you are very busy like me. We have the budget today and many things we should say, so if you don't have any protesters, I can send you some to the United States. (U)

The President: Well, I have plenty of protesters on my own but if you want to send some of yours over I'll take them. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: We perhaps could start an international group of them. (U)

The President: How about an exchange program? I hope you had a good vacation this summer. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Yes, I'm fine, thank you, and I'm quite convinced we can make many good things happen this autumn. I wanted to talk to you on GATT. I have had very intense discussions with the French on it. I've always made clear to them that the first priority is the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round especially with the system of international recession. It is also urgently needed because of the economic situation in the industrialized nations, the United States and Germany, and also because of the underdeveloped countries. (U)

The situation in France is tied up not so much in GATT but with domestic interests. Next year they have Presidential elections and the leaders must place themselves in good positions. In

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relation to parliamentary elections last year a very strong polarization has occurred. (C)

German farmers are in a bad position, but French farmers are worse. I want to be frank with you about what I'm trying to do. It will be difficult. I want a successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round, but if possible I want to avoid a situation where France pursues an isolated policy -- a very difficult policy. My French colleagues realize they can't raise the ante indefinitely. I want a successful Round. We will discuss it in the Community and discuss the degree to which our Common Agricultural Policy is in line with Blair House. That must be decided within the EC. My people are very, very busy on this matter and for me the psychological importance is to keep them going. A very sensitive issue is whether we pay attention to the psychological issue. (C)

The President: From our point of view, the real problem with the Blair House Agreement is if it were to be reopened -- if the EC said it couldn't go along -- it is unlikely we could get a GATT agreement before my negotiating authority ends on 15 December. Our agricultural crowd wouldn't like it, and it might be pulled in the opposite direction. I know it is a problem for France, but alas it is a problem for us. We reached agreement at Blair House before I took office, and our farmers opposed the agreement at the time. I hope we can all stand by it. One other question I have concerns whether or not you believe the EC will proceed to implement a permanent corn gluten seed agreement this month? (C)

Chancellor Kohl: Why, that has outlined a point we are striving for. Before your authority will expire or if we can't work it out by then or before, then it will be very difficult, and, as far as the EC is concerned, there will be a whole new thing to do on this. By the way, I think Leon Brittan will be coming to Washington next weekend. (C)

The President: Yes, I think so. Let me just say one last thing which is that I agree with you. We very much need this Uruguay Round to be successfully concluded before the end of the year. I will be very busy working here on NAFTA and health care but if you can call back and let me know personally to involve myself -- people I can contact on this -- I will and I'll welcome your suggestions on what to do to help get the agreement. I believe we need to get this done this year and perhaps you can give some good ideas of things I can do. (C)

Chancellor Kohl: May I make one proposal? That I try to keep in regular contact throughout the next week to let you know how things are developing over here and if you consider it necessary you can call me. I give you my word that I will try to get this done but it will take a lot of time. I think it goes beyond trade because it affects relations between the United States of America and the European Community. (C)

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The President: Sure. I think that's a good suggestion and I will look forward to hearing from you at any time on this as I am very interested in this issue. (S)

Let me ask you a couple of other things. How do you think Yeltsin is doing with all this political controversy in Russia? (S)

Chancellor Kohl: It is very difficult, but in a way it's irrational. Things might go smoothly or very bad. On the other hand it could be his chances are less than 50% or it could also be said his chances are 50-50. I think we should stay our current position. Anybody that will come after him will not be as auspicious as they are now. (S)

The President: I certainly agree with that. We are about to take up the \$2.5 billion assistance package and the repeal of the cold war assistance restrictions to Russia, East Europe and COCOM. If he doesn't make it, I believe that anyone who will follow him will be worse, so we ought to stay with him. (S)

Let me ask you a question about NATO. We are planning on a summit in the next few months. I am interested in your opinion on the relationship of NATO to Eastern Europe -- between NATO and the Eastern European nations that have had contact with it. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: Before going deeply into detail to that question, can I suggest if members of my staff could come over to the White House to meet with your staff before the summit. I'd like to have Dr. Bitterlich meet with his counterpart. I'd like the two of them to stay in contact before the definitive day for that date has been settled. As concerns the question you have put to me, I think it is necessary to find a form of a relationship as a transitional period as with Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic that satisfies security needs. I do have my doubt about the possibility of these countries joining NATO and becoming part of it. (S)

The President: My thinking along those lines is very similar to yours. I'm glad you're sending people over here to raise these issues. I think it's a good idea to send your staff people over here and we will follow up on it. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: Mr. Bitterlich will contact his counterpart on your side. (S)

The President: One other question regarding Bosnia. Izetbegovic is coming here soon, in fact, tomorrow, to see us. I wanted to ask your assessment before I talked to him. I want to be supportive but I also want to take a sober view. I asked Yeltsin to pressure the Serbs. I hope we can get all three parties to agree. The prospect of air strikes has had the right affects and has improved the prospects of peace, but they are not the solution to the problem. I wanted to share my thoughts with you and ask what else you think we ought to be doing. I dread

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another winter. I want to be supportive, but also to be very certain to underscore the desirability of securing a settlement soon. I want to be supportive but I want your opinion on what we can do. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: But what you said in the last sentence is right. I think it's quite bitter to be as helpless as we all are. I'm quite distrustful of the leadership in Serbia, not the people, but the leadership, as I am of the leadership in Croatia. One other matter I think you need to know. That you, the United States, should not be drawn into a quagmire. It might prove helpful if you were very friendly in greeting Izetbegovic. This is the image the world will see and they will watch over there. At the same time that without exerting any pressure on him while letting him know an agreement has to be reached. It's beneficial for the Muslim world. (S)

You have brought about something which people a few years before would not have thought possible and please pass on to your staff my compliments. You are in a much more favorable position as far as the Muslim world is concerned. It is important for me that the American President is in a better position after all of this. (S)

The President: Thank you for that. I feel very grateful about the agreement in the Middle East. We hope to sign in the next few days. (S)

I also want to let you know our ambassador to Germany will be coming out in October. Dick Holbrooke is an outstanding foreign policy expert and is a long time friend of mine. I hope you will have a good relationship with him. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Bill, if you see him before he comes to Germany please give him my regards. It is important that you have a close personal relationship with him to facilitate the dialectic between us. (S)

The President: Thank you, that's what I thought too. He's a good man, and I think you will like him. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: OK, bye-bye now. See to it that you are staying in good health. Don't forget that if you have problems, others have them too. (S)

The President: Let's keep talking about the GATT round, and if anything happens with Izetbegovic in the next few days I'll let you know. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: Yes, good-bye. (U)

The President: Thank you, good-bye Helmut. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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