

September 16, 1991

Memorandum of Conversation: Meeting with Helmut Kohl, Chancellor of Germany, September 16, 1991, 12:00-1:30pm

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Helmut Kohl, Chancellor of Germany

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Gisela Marcuse, Interpreter

Helmut Kohl, Chancellor
Mrs. Kohl
Peter Hartmann, Security Advisor to the Chancellor

DATE, TIME: September 16, 1991, 12:00-1:30pm
AND PLACE: Oval Office

Chancellor Kohl: We need to make good use of our time. We've had good talks here with academic people between the MIT group and California. I think the idea of a U.S.-Germany Academy of Sciences is excellent. Maybe we could inaugurate this next year. It is good to see this level of interest. I went to Berkeley because there are three centers of excellence in the United States: Harvard, Georgetown and Berkeley. We found both graduate and post-graduate students making good progress. Unification has led to an increase in the importance of German language in U.S. universities. I will note all of this in a letter to you. For now I just want to underscore how good it would be for both of us to pursue this kind of cooperation and exchange. It would be particularly good if we could do it in 1992. About 25% of the American people have German ties. (U)

The President: Please send me the material. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Even when there is an EC political community, we will be Germans and there will be 80 million of us. I was surprised that so many people in California were interested in Europe. There is a bit of anti-Japanese sentiment there as well. (S)

The President: Is there anti-Japanese sentiment in Germany? (S)

Chancellor Kohl: Not so much, but in Europe generally there is. The Japanese are more difficult for Europeans to understand than for Americans to understand. (S)

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The President: We have the Pearl Harbor anniversary coming up. I have to manage that so as not to make the problem worse. Anyway, I will come back to you on this. On another matter which General Scowcroft and Hartmann can discuss, I have been working on Mitterrand for months explaining how within European political union we can retain NATO. The calendar for that will start in the coming year. We agreed in 1986 that Europe would have a genuine common market. This will happen at the end of 1992. There is also the security aspect. It is complicated right now without the French. German unity was a blow to France. Now that nuclear weapons are no longer so important, and economic power is more important. Recently at a Franco-German meeting, we talked to Cresson and Mitterrand. They feel that Germany will have problems for two or three years but that we will be much stronger after that. But the people-to-people relations are fine between Germany and France. (S)

The President: Is Cresson pro German? (S)

Chancellor Kohl: She is not friendly. Mitterrand has a good attitude toward me. We are friends. Currently, the French are trying to get closer to NATO through the WEU. We should try to inch them along. I told Francois we should think hard about this. When we have gone a bit further we should have a trilateral meeting. (S)

The President: Could we do this without raising problems with others? (S)

The Chancellor Kohl: We would have to be careful, but I am hoping to give Mitterrand the credit. (S)

The President: What would be the outcome of such a meeting? (S)

Chancellor Kohl: The permanent representatives would be simultaneously WEU and NATO, thus, allowing France de facto to come back into the alliance. The General and Peter Hartmann can perhaps discuss it. We can tell Baker but it should not go further than that until we have it worked out. (S)

The President: Let's have Brent and Peter work on it. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: There is a good chance here to have European political integration help NATO. Many in Washington worry about political union. That is wrong. If it is worked out right, it can benefit the United States. It will happen in your term of office. I want it to be helpful to you. There is nothing in it for me personally. If we have this close link with you, it will be easier for us and also for the British. Thatcher is making things very tough for John Major. She was on holiday in Austria and told Vranitzky that Austria shouldn't join the EC. (S)

Mitterrand is looking for a way out of his situation. We spoke for a few hours just like this. Afterwards, Mitterrand said to his staff that it was the best meeting we had ever had. He has a difficult internal problem. I must work on him on the GATT. (S)

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Chancellor Kohl: If you can make headway on that -- we just must not fail. Even without the GATT we have to change the CAP. The situation is absurd and I have problems with our partners. We seem to have money only for the farmers. We have made genetic progress also. Tremendous progress yields one-third more now. This is not good for nature. The third reason to change is the Third World. They can't buy our machines if they can't sell us products. (S)

The President: Does Mitterrand think that the U.S. will leave Europe? (S)

Chancellor Kohl: Yes. (S)

The President: What do I have to do on GATT? (S)

Chancellor Kohl: I will call you in two to three weeks. I want to go through the agenda with DeLors, then I will call. (S)

Let me raise Israel. You must not give way. I think you have most Americans and all Europeans with you. The next war is on the horizon. It will be a long one. Fundamentalism is on the rise. In Turkey, they are worried too. There will be no compromise on my part. If we gave into Sharon, he would end up driving their policies and the peace process would come to an end. I have a lot of stake with the domestic policy as well. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: I am totally un-anti-Semitic. As a German I must restrain myself but there is no way to repair the pain from the past with money. We have tried insofar as money is concerned. Adenauer paid 100 billion deutsche marks. In the second half of 1989 Jewish organizations urged the GDR not to unify with the FRG. In December of 1989 representatives of the Jewish World Congress, including Mr. Bronfman, were in East Berlin and told the East Germans that the Jewish World Congress was against unification. (S)

The President: They've asked you for 10 billion - 5 in grants and 5 in loans? (S)

Chancellor Kohl: Yes. We will wait to see how you do. I fear restraint won't prevail on the Jewish side. The Israelis will emigrate, and they will vote for Sharon or Shamir. In 2-3 years things will be tougher in Israel. I will support you anyway I can; also in the EC. (S)

The President: Maybe we can get the sides talking. But not if we give in now. We won't do it. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: If there is no peace, Mubarak and Hussein will be in big trouble. Whoever comes after them will be much more difficult for Israel to deal with. (S)

The President: Hussein has behaved badly but he has big problems. (S)

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Is Mitterrand well? (S)

Chancellor Kohl: It changes. His problems are more psychological right now. He has a strong position constitutionally, but the world is changing around him. All of us want to join the EC but France is very restrained about that. He also wants to be able to pick his successor but this won't happen. He can't prevent Rocard from succeeding him. (S)

The President: Who does Mitterrand want? (S)

Chancellor Kohl: Fabius. (S)

The President: Let me ask about SPD politics now: the attitude in that party about NATO, about the U.S. and security, etc. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: Right now, there is no SPD view, but rather a multiplicity. Some day they will have a majority. In the 1970s the socialists everywhere drifted sharply to the left and Schmidt did nothing to stop it. (S)

The President: Baker just called to say that he had a three hour meeting in Israel half of which was one on one with Shamir. They have proposed a compromise but there is no deal. They argued that they were blindsided. Baker set them straight. He said that they still can get full benefits from sitting down with their adversaries. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: History doesn't repeat itself. But the Weimar experience is instructive. Jews didn't understand that they should support a moderate. (S)

-- End of Conversation --

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