

November 11, 1989
**Information about the Content of a Telephone
Conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev and
Helmut Kohl**

Citation:

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Summary:

Information about the Content of a Telephone Conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev and Helmut Kohl regarding discussing the desire to see reforms in the GDR occur in a calm and non-chaotic manner

Original Language:

German

Contents:

Translation - English

The conversation took place on 11 November on the Chancellor's initiative.[1]

The Chancellor said he wanted to respond to the verbal message from Mikhail Gorbachev, which he had received at the beginning of the meeting in West Berlin the previous day.

Helmut Kohl stated that the FRG welcomed the beginning of reforms in the GDR and hoped that they could be carried out in a calm atmosphere. He said: "I reject any radicalization and do not wish to see any destabilization of the situation in the GDR."

The Chancellor admitted that the majority of East German citizens that had crossed the borders to the FRG in the last few days did not want to stay in West Germany forever. He also assured him [Gorbachev] that the leadership of the FRG did not seek this either. Kohl said a mass resettlement to the FRG would be an absurd development. "We want the Germans to build their futures in their current homes." Kohl informed him [Gorbachev] that he was preparing for a meeting with Krenz at the end of November. In this context he mentioned that, given the current conditions in East Germany, the new GDR leadership should work dynamically to implement the reforms.

Mikhail Gorbachev emphasized that the current profound changes in the world would take different forms and occur within varying shape and intensities in different countries. It was necessary for all sides to maintain stability and to take a balanced approach.

[Gorbachev:] Overall, the basis for mutual understanding was improving. We were growing closer, which was very important.

As far as the GDR is concerned, the current leadership has a far-reaching program. All those questions, though, have to be worked through carefully, which required time.

I understand that all Europeans, and not only they, are following the events in the GDR. This is a very important point in world politics. But it is also a fact that the FRG and the Soviet Union, for historical reasons as well as due to the character of their current relationship, also have a greater interest in this development.

Naturally, every change is accompanied by a certain degree of instability. When I speak of maintaining stability, I mean that all sides should think through their actions very carefully.

I believe, Mr. Chancellor, that we are currently experiencing a historic change to different relationships and a different world. We should not allow careless actions to damage this change. Under no circumstances should the developments be forced in an unpredictable direction, which could lead to chaos. That would not be desirable under any circumstances.

Therefore I take very seriously what you told me during our conversation. I hope that you will use your authority, your political weight and your influence to keep others within the boundaries required to meet the demands of the time.

Kohl agreed with Gorbachev's statements. According to him, the FRG government had discussed this question in this spirit.

The Chancellor emphasized his interest in maintaining contact, including with regard

to the situation in the GDR.

[1] The document is information sent from the Soviet embassy in East Berlin to the SED General Secretary. According to Horst Teltschik, the phone conversation took place around 12:00 p.m. See Horst Teltschik, *329 Tage*, pp. 27-28.