

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

0595

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

DECLASSIFIED
PER E.O. 13526

2015-0776-M (1.44)
7/31/2018 KBH

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Chancellor Helmut Kohl of
Germany (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Chancellor Kohl

Interpreter: Gisela Marcuse
Notetakers: James Smith, David Higgins,
Robert Ford and Nancy McEldowney

DATE, TIME January 26, 1998, 12:53 p.m. - 1:02 p.m. EST
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President and Chancellor Kohl exchanged opening
pleasantries. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: I will send you a letter by fax dealing with
the situation in Indonesia because I continue to consider the
situation there to be very serious. You may have heard that I
had people there and they've reported. I also want to get
President Soeharto on the phone again. We believe it would be
very important if the G-7 could react, could make a common
response. I hear your people right now do not favor this,
because they believe Congress would make it very difficult. But
it would be very difficult for us if the situation there takes a
negative turn. I'm afraid it might have an effect on Japan, and
we don't need a chain reaction -- a chain reaction that might
end up in the People's Republic of China. (C)

The President: I agree with that. I know your economic team is
working as hard as mine to find ways to supplement the IMF
program. I want our teams to work together. Please urge your
team to keep in touch with Bob Rubin. (C)

Chancellor Kohl: May I make a suggestion? Because I don't
think it's optimum to talk about this on the phone, I will send
you by tomorrow afternoon, Washington time, a letter by fax for
you personally, outlining my ideas. My heartfelt wish is it

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Classified by: Glyn T. Davies
Reason: 1.5(d)
Declassify On: 1/26/08

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

2

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

will not be left somewhere on your desk, although I know that you have much more pressing matters on your desk now, but that your people read the letter and contact my people or get back to Mr. Bitterlich. (S)

The President: I will. I will read it very carefully. I think it is a huge issue with enormous consequences. I'm prepared to do whatever I can to resolve it. I think it is important that Soeharto provide reassurance about the future, through naming a vice president who instills confidence in the markets and broadens participation in the political process. I know you're close to Soeharto, and he's been a good friend to me and the United States, but this is the best way to secure his legacy. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: Shall we proceed then? I will send the letter by fax. (S)

The President: Thank you. We are working very hard on Iraq and Saddam Hussein's challenge to UNSCOM inspections. We have pursued the diplomatic route carefully for months, but it hasn't seemed to work. I'm compelled to review military options. I'm aware there is a big downside to this, but I can't allow Iraq to rebuild its WMD. I may have to come back to you before long. I haven't reached a decision, but I wanted you to be aware of my current thinking. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: You will get back to me before you take any action? (S)

The President: I will. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: Thank you. I'll keep my fingers crossed for you. I'll get back to you. When do you give the State of the Union address? (U)

The President: Tomorrow night. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Very good. Bye. (U)

The President: Bye, Helmut. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~