

THE WHITE HOUSE
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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: TELCON with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Chancellor Helmut Kohl

Interpreter: Gisela Marcuse
Notetakers: Karen Dragone, Mary Ann Peters,
John Feeley and Alexander Vershbow

DATE, TIME: September 23, 1995, 2:56 - 3:14 p.m. EDT
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: Hello. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Hello Bill. (U)

The President: Helmut, how are you? (U)

Chancellor Kohl: I'm fine. I have lots of work. I'm quite content. (U)

The President: I think we are making significant progress in Bosnia. Many serious issues remain, but I think a settlement can be reached in the coming weeks. (C)

Chancellor Kohl: For the first time I believe, too, that it is going to work. Your people are doing a good job. (C)

The President: I believe now we can bring negotiations to a conclusion. It is essential that the Croats and Muslims work closely and constructively in the Federation. The meeting between Tudjman and Izetbegovic in Zagreb was stormy. The Bosnians are clearly worried about Tudjman's growing ambitions in western Bosnia, they are afraid this could lead the Bosnian Croats to pull out of the Federation. I understand your Ambassador, at your personal instruction, recently delivered a demarche to Tudjman on the need for military restraint. I really appreciate your stressing to Tudjman that the Federation and a strong Bosnian-Croat alliance is critical to the success of the peace process. I have warned him that our relations with Croatia could be affected if his support for the Federation is insufficient. It is very important we keep Tudjman with us. It must not blow up. We don't want to snatch defeat from the jaws

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of victory. As we get closer to settlement, it is very important that we complete preparations for implementation and post-war reconstruction. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: No, we don't need that. Which one of your people is there now? Is the Assistant Secretary there? (S)

The President: There are two members of the team there now, Bob Owen and Chris Hill. Holbrooke is coming back to brief us. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: Where is Holbrooke? (S)

The President: He is either in New York or on his way there. The Foreign Ministers of Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia are meeting in New York on Tuesday. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: Okay, on Monday, I am going to tell Bitterlich to call Holbrooke for a long talk. Then I will send someone to see Tudjman. (S)

The President: It will not be hard to find him. He is in New York. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: Okay, that is what I will do. I am going to send someone to see Tudjman, and then I will call him directly myself. (S)

The President: If there is anything else I can do, please let me know. I am pleased that NATO is moving ahead on planning for implementation with no serious differences between us and the French on need for NATO command and control of the operation. I know you do. I am concerned about Italy, given their importance to NATO operations in the Balkans. The Italians should be brought into the "inner circle" in planning for peace plan implementation. We have proposed that experts meet this week as five instead of four. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: I have the least amount of problems with that! You know where the problems are. (S)

The President: Of course. Although negotiation sessions should be limited to the original Contact Group, we should also expand the circle for consultations on the peace process to include the Italians, Canadians and Spanish. I hope you will support that. I would like to raise a few other issues if you have time. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: Of course I do. (U)

The President: I am pleased NATO's study on enlargement has been completed, and I want to thank you for German support that was

critical to the process. I am glad the briefings for the members of PFP will begin in the next few days. But I'm very concerned by Russian statements regarding enlargement that make clear this remains a difficult issue in Moscow. (X)

Chancellor Kohl: As you are aware there is an election campaign going on in Moscow. The elections for the Duma are in December and the Presidential elections are in June. It is a very diffused situation. Zhirinovsky's influence has abated; he does not stand a chance. But the candidacy of Lebed is ascendant, and I think Boris himself won't decide what he is going to do until February. Quite frankly, I see a major problem by things being said in Congress by a few people. Yeltsin told me he didn't have any problems with you (and he will meet with you in New York). But he is concerned that the Republicans will use the Primaries to get Polish-American votes. You must make sure that things don't degenerate to irrationality. (X)

The President: My position has been steadily improving. The more it does, the more I will be able to restrain them. I will do my best to make sure the world knows that Congress doesn't run our foreign policy. (X)

Chancellor Kohl: I know that. That's why you have broad support here. The 15 heads of the EU just finished meeting in Majorca and talked about that at length. The view is unanimous and clear. They want NATO enlargement, especially with a view toward Poland, which is Russia's main concern. And, of course, a problem for Russia. We need to be careful that the Russian election campaign doesn't destroy everything. All colleagues agreed to be with you...to support your steady hand, so to speak. But we do have some concern that the primaries are having some kind of impact. Do you understand? (X)

The President: Absolutely. (X)

Chancellor Kohl: You have lots of support here. I can make that public. You must tell me when it would be useful. (X)

The President: Thank you. If we can solve the crisis in Bosnia it will help us all calculate what we say about Russia before the elections. We wouldn't want to promote the election of a reactionary that could make life much more difficult. (X)

Chancellor Kohl: And it is very important things be done in sequence, one after another. (X)

The President: One thing we could do to help Yeltsin would be to resolve the CFE flank problems. The Russians' initial reaction to the NATO CFE flank proposals has been encouraging. They see

problems but acknowledge it is an honest attempt to meet them half way. It is critical that Yeltsin be encouraged personally to support the proposal. Could you talk to Yeltsin and get his support? (Ø)

Chancellor Kohl: Aren't you going to tell him yourself in a few days? (Ø)

The President: Absolutely. (Ø)

Chancellor Kohl: When will you see him? (Ø)

The President: Next month, October 23. (Ø)

Chancellor Kohl: I will have a long talk with you before you meet him. Is that okay? (Ø)

The President: Of course. You still talk with him all the time, don't you? (Ø)

Chancellor Kohl: Yes, I certainly will in the next two weeks. (Ø)

The President: One last thing. I'm pleased to hear the end of the Hugo Princz case. It was a very thorny issue. I want to thank you for your efforts to solve it. If Bitterlich wants to call Holbrooke, he can call the White House Situation Room. Thank you, Helmut. (Ø)

Chancellor Kohl: All the best, Bill. (U)

The President: Thanks Helmut. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Don't believe everything that people say. I believe in you; and I want you to win. (U)

The President: You still made a good bet. (U)

The President: Good-bye. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Good-bye. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Regards to your wife. (U)

--End of Conversation --