

THE WHITE HOUSE

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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

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

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Chancellor Kohl

Interpreter: Gisela Marcuse
Notetakers: Tom Crowell, Frank Jarosinski,
George Chastain, David Higgins, James Smith
and Nancy McEldowney

DATE, TIME September 30, 1998, 9:35 - 9:42 a.m. EDT
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: Hello. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Hello, Bill. (U)

The President: Oh, Helmut. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: It is a pleasure to hear you, and it is also a great pleasure to be able to talk to you after the battle is over. Life goes on, as it always has. I have been through eight battles of this kind, and I lost one. I'll just have to live with it. But, life goes on, and as you see I am in good spirits. I would like to take this opportunity to express gratitude for the great friendship and cooperation we enjoyed, I am certain we will be able to meet yet again. (U)

The President: Oh, I hope so. I wanted to tell you that I am thinking about you. You have to be proud that you reunited your country and your continent. No one in the last 50 years has been more important to the future of Europe than you have. You should be very proud of that. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: I am proud of it. But you see, I think Bill, it comes down to the basics. We are all ordinary people. I have always been a great admirer of Pope John XXIII, and maybe

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you are familiar with what he used to say to himself. I think it is a very apt, a very appropriate kind of maxim. He used to say, "John, don't take yourself so seriously." That means that one is not unique -- just an ordinary human being with all the flaws of character one has as well as the strengths. That is exactly how I see myself. I have every reason to be grateful. I've had a lot of luck in my work. I've always been supported by many of my partners and friends. I've had the fortune to find good friends in politics, such as you. I think that is a good kind of thing to look back on. I hope I will continue to be in good health. I want to use this opportunity to explore the world a little bit and to try to be of service to my country. That is my outlook on life as it is now. (U)

The President: As always, you are inspirational. Hillary and I think you are wonderful. I will always treasure our friendship and will be your friend forever. I am grateful to have worked with you and grateful that you always did the right thing, as your Cabinet just did in their decision on Kosovo. (Ø)

Chancellor Kohl: Bill, first of all, my message to you now is that I absolutely believe that you are going to persevere, and I think you should, because the office of President of the United States is far too important. As you know, I will do whatever I can to support you, even speaking in public. Secondly, I hope to have the opportunity, perhaps next year, to go to Washington. I have a number of appointments to fulfill and would very much love to see you, if that is possible, because I think we will remain as we always have with each other. (U)

The President: Absolutely. You just let me know when you are coming. You are always welcome here. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: In the meantime, you may be in need of some useful hints. Please feel free to call me -- we can handle it in a very low-key, discreet way. No one needs to know, and no one ought to know. Please give Hillary my love, and Hannelore sends her love. I am absolutely confident we will meet again and have an opportunity to talk. (Ø)

The President: That's great, Helmut. I hope to see you soon. It is good to hear your voice and to know that you are in good spirits. You should be, because you still have a lot to do.
(U)

Chancellor Kohl: Good-bye. (U)

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The President: Good-bye, Helmut. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Thank you. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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