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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Chancellor Kohl of Germany of
December 13, 1994

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Chancellor Kohl

Notetakers: Julien LeBourgeois, Brian Gates,
Madelyn Marmol

DATE, TIME December 13, 1994 10:34 - 10:56AM
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: Helmut? How are you? (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Hello, Bill. I'm very well thank you. We still have the budget to discuss here. The EU Summit meeting went very well. The economy is looking good. We're in for two good years, but I don't want to work. I'm fed up with it all. If I belonged to a union, I would protest at the working conditions. (U)

The President: Let's go on strike. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Unfortunately, it would be a strike against myself. (U)

The President: Yes. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: I wanted to report to you about my recent meeting with President Yeltsin. I think the dialogue will continue and we will meet again in January or February. But it will not be publicized yet. I told him it was important to keep in close and constant contact with you, and that no one in the West, certainly not you, had any interest in creating a new chasm between them and the West. He should not listen to those around him who are making him distrustful. They have influenced him to be distrustful of our purposes. My impression is that people around him are not keeping him aware of the reality of the situation. There are quite a few who aren't interested in keeping him informed or in working toward goodwill. (U)

I also told him something he didn't know at the time: that this meeting took place before the EU Summit, to which we would invite the heads of Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Czech Republic and Slovakia. It [the EU Summit] was a remarkable, impressive

meeting. It will be the first step to later accession of these countries to the EU, but there is no concrete date. There will be time differences in accession. Some will accede at the end of the decade and some at the beginning of the new century. This development will have an impact on their NATO status. We will have to explain this to him very carefully and not be hasty or premature in any way. (X)

The President: Do you think you did any good with him? (X)

Chancellor Kohl: My impression was not a bad one. I hinted that there are certain forces that are pitting him against us and do not want him to be friendly. He also has enormous problems domestically, especially now with the Chechnya crisis. I don't really see any way out. We will have to take the long view. (X)

The President: That's what I think. You know he really hurt me with his statement a couple of weeks ago. Some here are using that to try to force me into a different posture. They are saying: "President Clinton's policies with Russia were wrong. He was naive about Russia." (X)

Chancellor Kohl: I don't think you would be so naive to let that influence you. (X)

The President: No! No! I'm beating them back. I know there are forces there trying to move him away from me and you. We have to keep working with them. I think we have to keep them informed. I just said what I did to reinforce your point about the need to take the disciplined, long view. (X)

Chancellor Kohl: Well, I'm confident I am not overstating the case in saying there are only two people in a position to get any movement or some sort of headway in this matter. If we look at Bosnia, we need him with us. (X)

The President: Let's talk about Bosnia for a moment. Where do you think we are on that? Where do you think the British and the French are going with this? It is not clear to me what their goal is, except to make sure there are no more NATO airstrikes, no matter what. (X)

Chancellor Kohl: This problem lies with the UK, France, Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands and Denmark. These countries have contingents of soldiers and do not want to take sides or be drawn into a fight. We talked about this in Essen at the EU Summit. They all wanted to bring all parties to the negotiating table. They talked about a possible initiative to bring about a negotiated settlement. I think that if in the near future there is no progress, then we will have to bear in mind that some

countries would withdraw their troops. If the winter is harsh, it could be a humanitarian catastrophe. If there is no peaceful, negotiated settlement, then the question of lifting the arms embargo with all its consequences will be on the table. I will keep you apprised of the situation. (S)

Obviously there are also domestic political concerns. Italy is in a critical situation; it is equally bad for Spain; John Major does not have a majority any longer; and French elections are coming up soon. It will be fairly bitter during the campaign. Now that Delors is not running, the Left has no chance at all. Chirac and Balladur will conduct a major fight. The poor health of Mitterrand is also a factor. That is the situation for the weeks and months to come. I will do my best so that the situation with the Senate does not become intolerable for you. We all heard what Bob Dole said in London. (S)

The President: We want to bring about peace in Bosnia. But our fundamental interests are to prevent the conflict from spreading and to ensure that our fundamental alliance doesn't weaken, whatever differences we have. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: I must say Bill, contrary to what some people might say, I don't see a medium-or long-term weakening of the alliance. I don't share these concerns. You should not be particularly concerned. (S)

The President: In the next couple of months, I will be particularly focused on the situation here at home. It is important that I get Congress off to a good start. I will need your counsel on situations there while I concentrate on work at home. I rely on your views quite heavily. I will not be able to travel as much this year and there are problems in other parts of the world, but I want to make sure the U.S. is exercising proper leadership. I hope we can have conversations on a fairly regular basis. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: Bill, I will always be there to help you. You can rely on that. Perhaps we should plan for a February or March meeting for 24 hours. I would go to Washington. (S)

The President: That would be a good idea. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: A trip without a big delegation or hullabaloo. Just to get together for a few hours. (U)

I have just one more question. What is your position on the WTO candidates? There are three, the Italian, Salinas, and the Korean. (S)

The President: I'm for Salinas. (C)

Chancellor Kohl: If there is no agreement, would you favor a compromise at the end? (C)

The President: I will have to play my hand out. I don't want to weaken my support for Salinas unless I know he can't win. There is some merit to having someone from a developing country with a demonstrated commitment in the area of free trade and who has quite a bit of strength, sophistication and prestige. (C)

Chancellor Kohl: Well, I think we'll hear from you and where you stand. Warmest regards to your wife and I hope that over Christmas you have a least two or three days off. (U)

The President: I'll pass that along. I hope you have a wonderful Christmas, and say hello to your wife. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Same to you and good-bye. (U)

The President: Thank you. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Good-bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --