

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON**MEMCON**

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Call from Chancellor Helmut Kohl of the Federal Republic of Germany (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Helmut Kohl, Chancellor
Robert Hutchings, NSC Staff (Notetaker)
Gisela Marcuse (Interpreter)

DATE, TIME March 15, 1990, 8:37 - 9:01 a.m. EST
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

Chancellor Kohl initiated the call. (U)

The President: Helmut! Wie geht's? (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Very well. It's good to hear your voice. George, I had my last meetings in the GDR yesterday. 300,000 were there. I don't think I will see that again. I had one million in the audience in all six public events. (U)

I don't know how the elections will turn out. The situation is very vague. I hope the result will bring about a reasonable coalition. The GDR still has to bear the consequences of 40 years of Communist rule, with its snooping, spying, and blackmailing. There was just another case of someone blackmailed at age 16, when he was still a student. It is very difficult to pass judgment in a situation like that. (C)

Otherwise, things are going well. Best regards to Barbara from Hannelore. (U)

Let me just make a few remarks regarding the overall development of Two Plus Four. First, I hope that the GDR will bring about a new government very soon -- by Easter at the latest. Then, we will work hard to bring about a monetary union. We must stop the exodus, and this is only possible through monetary union. Since January 140,000 people have left the GDR for the FRG. It is difficult under these conditions to build up the country. I hope we will make a smooth settlement and resolve the problems with our neighbors. It will remain my objective, as I told you at Camp David, that under no circumstances will we make a fait accompli. The security and foreign policy issues must be settled first. Only then will we take decisions here. I am not hectic, as the New Yorker described me, but the population here and in the GDR want movement. If they don't get it, they will run around the situation. (C)

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Concerning the Two Plus Four, as we discussed at Camp David, I completely agree that the Poles should be consulted in all those areas that affect them. It was correct what the Ministers agreed at Ottawa -- two on our side and four on the other. Regarding the border issue, we have taken an important step forward. After the Volkskammer has been constituted, we will very quickly -- not in a matter of months, but weeks -- make common declarations between the Volkskammer and the Bundestag. We will state once again, with the support of the two governments, that we wish to enter into obligations that an all-German government will immediately conclude an internationally binding treaty. The Poles are now making further demands. They want a sort of agreement before that; but this, under international law, would not be legally binding. The other solution is much stronger. I was amazed to hear something else floating around. This is non-negotiable for me: that the Two Plus Four discussions about the border should take place in Warsaw. If this happened, we could go to "Yalta" right away. I won't do that. I would like the border issue to run smoothly. The Left here raises it all the time. These are the same people who want a new constitution. That would mean, if we change the Basic Law, that NATO membership would have to be renegotiated. They want us out of NATO. They want the U.S. out. And they want neutrality. Membership in NATO will be a very important point. We will fight that through. It is interesting that there is a positive echo in the GDR. I wanted to say all this by way of briefing you. Once I have new developments, I will call again. (C)

The President: I have a question. Did you say that the concept of a united Germany fully in NATO is gaining popularity in the GDR? (C)

Chancellor Kohl: Yes. I saw that in the public events at which I was speaking. People there are badly informed. I have tried to explain the situation. Last night I told 100,000 in Leipzig that the main advantages of what we have achieved goes to the citizens of the GDR. It is important to tell them that, because they were in the same square where the demonstrations took place in September, October, and November. The second remark I made was that our gratitude goes to our partners in the Alliance -- first and foremost to the United States. I said that without them I would not be here today. It is a pity you weren't there, George. The people applauded enormously. Then the third point I made was that it is thanks to Gorbachev's perestroika that these new developments were possible. Again they applauded. Fourth, I said I was grateful to the reform movements in Hungary, Poland, and now Czechoslovakia. The actions of Hungary particularly made possible the events of last year [in the GDR]. People applauded again. I said that the Poles need not be concerned. A unified Germany would give guarantees on the Oder-Neisse border. The last point I made was that a reunified Germany will be a part of the European Community and NATO. People applauded that, too. This is my five point program, and this is what the people want. (C)

The President: That is all very good. I appreciate your bringing me up to date. The Polish border question, as you know better than I, is still very sensitive. We will be meeting next week with the Prime Minister of Poland. I will discuss what you have told me with our top people. If there are any questions, I will call you back. (C)

Chancellor Kohl: Yes. I will be pleased to hear from you. It would be good if you could call before Mazowiecki comes. When does he arrive? (C)

The President: Next week. I believe it is in the middle of the week. The idea of a meeting in Warsaw -- this is the first I have heard of it. We're not pushing that. (C)

Chancellor Kohl: Let me say once again, very clearly: I am determined in these next weeks to give, from the federal government and the Bundestag, a very clear declaration and very clear assurances. I predict that the same will be done by the newly elected government and parliament in the GDR. In November, the Poles were quite satisfied. Now they want to put us in the situation of concluding a treaty, but we do not have a mandate to do that. I don't understand why they insist. It is a very strange thing to doubt declarations made by two governments. (C)

At no time did I link reparations or ethnic minorities to a treaty on the border. I only wish that what the Poles have already declared be declared once again at the time of unification and a treaty, so that the subject of reparations can also be dealt with once and for all. The President of the Polish Parliament (not Mazowiecki -- he didn't say this) again spoke about billions in reparations. The Israelis have also mentioned billions in the event of unification. This is an extremely difficult situation domestically. People here say it is almost 50 years after the war. They cannot understand. People here also think back to their old home towns. This is a second problem in Poland -- which Mazowiecki can solve very easily, if he only states again, when unification occurs, that the rights of minorities in Poland will be respected. He is a very respectable man, a man of integrity. There are 500,000 Germans there. They should stay and be a pillar of the bridge that links Poles and Germans. I sense, quite frankly, that the problem is not with Mazowiecki. Jaruzelski's remarks in Paris, their tenor and tone, were not favorable for unification. I would be grateful if we could talk again next week. (C)

The President: Okay. I will call. I think we are on the same wavelength, but I will talk to my people and will call you. I understand the sensitivities and stand by my position at Camp David. (C)

Chancellor Kohl: I know, I know. You adhere to the position you took. I am not taking issue with that at all. If all our partners were as reliable as the President of the United States of America, I would have considerably fewer problems. I do think there are dividends that will arise out of this very close relationship. Remember the observation I made about people in the GDR? They set great store on the West and do not want neutralization. They feel a part of central Europe, which we are. (C)

The President: Okay. This has been a good conversation. I'll be back in touch early next week. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: I hope you are not having too much work. (U)

The President: No. It's beautiful here. You ought to be here. We could go for a long walk. (U)

-- End of Conversation --