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06. Telcon	Memorandum of telephone conversation between President George Bush and Helmut Kohl, Chancellor of Germany [SENT FOR AGENCY REFERRAL] (5 pp.)	3/21/91	(b)(1)	S

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON



MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with Helmut Kohl, Chancellor of Germany

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Helmut Kohl, Chancellor
Adrian Basora, NSC Staff (Notetaker)
Gisella Marcuse, Interpreter

DATE, TIME: March 21, 1991, 3:02 - 3:23 p.m.
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President: Helmut! (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Hello, George. (U)

The President: They tell me you look like Arnold Schwarzenegger because you are taking such wonderful care of your body these days. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: I have no desire to look like that. (U)

The President: I thought you were up there getting some rest and going through a good program. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Well, I've been doing this for many years. I found out many years ago that the world's religions are very wise in recommending a period of fasting, so I've been doing it for two weeks every year. During that period, I do whatever official things I have to, but other than that I totally concentrate on relaxing, I read a lot and I have a fine opportunity to think. And for 12 days I don't eat anything at all -- just drink water. (U)

The President: I remember you told me about that and I think you're on to something. It must get your mind clear. I really salute you for doing it. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: You know, George, in our job, it is really important to do some thinking and not simply to do daily business. (U)

The President: I know. I'm going to do some fishing in Florida in early April. It ought to be a relaxed time, but its not quite long enough. (U)

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Chancellor Kohl: I hope that the dates are right and I'll be able to see you after Whitsuntide in May, I believe that is. (C)

The President: Well, we'll work on it because I'm very anxious to sit down and have a good relaxed talk. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: George, I have two points mainly. First, what news do you have regarding Iraq? How do you view Saddam Hussein's situation? Is he going to stay? What is your assessment? (S)

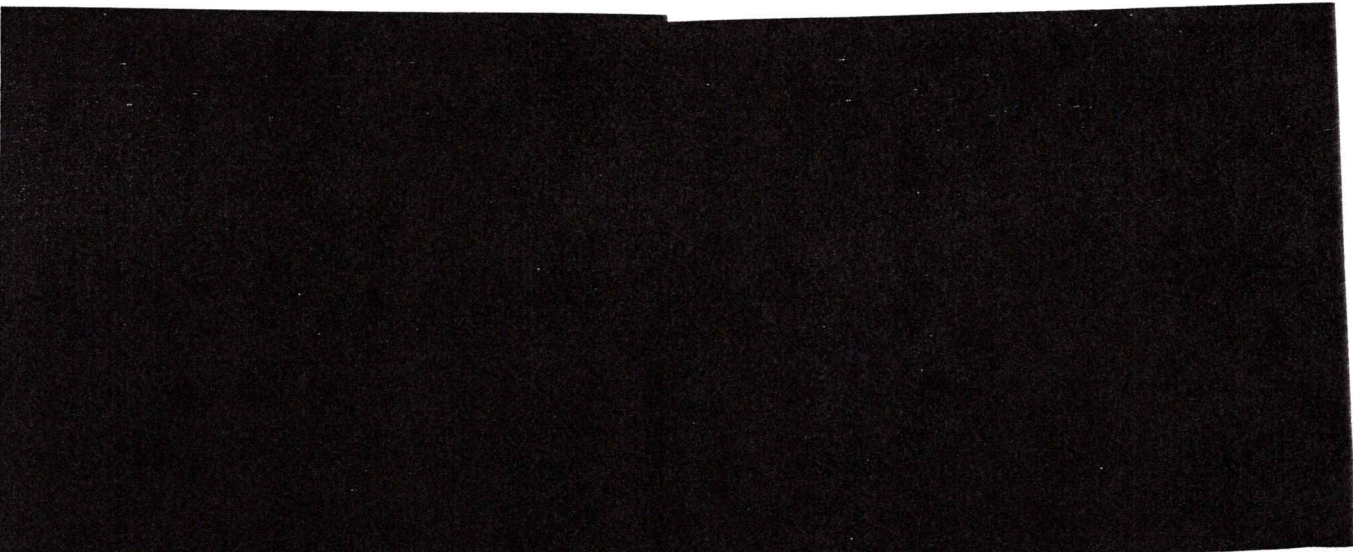
The President: We're still keeping on the verbal pressure to make clear to him that there will be no normal relations with the United States if he does stay. I think the feeling in the area is that he will have to get out one way or the other. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: That would be best. (U)

The President: It would be the best. As you know, the Saudis met with some of the opposition leaders and, of course, the opposition leaders from disparate backgrounds all came together feeling that he will be removed one way or another. We are proceeding, Helmut, to try to finalize the cease-fire. We are worried about a totally unstable Iraq. (S)

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Chancellor Kohl: You are right. (U)



Chancellor Kohl: I think that's smart. George, when I come back, I'll be talking to Francois and before that, in the next two weeks or so, I'll call you to get a feeling for the situation. I think it's important that he doesn't embark on a path of his own. (S)

The President: I must tell you we had a very good talk in Martinique. And, although he still is committed to some sort of international conference and still committed to having the Security Council chiefs of state meet, he wasn't pushing a specific proposal. And he was anxious to hear about how Jim

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Baker's trip went. We will be filling him in, as we will you, on what Baker found, because maybe there will be some other idea that's better than either of his two ideas to really start moving toward a peaceful Middle East. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: George, I want to talk with you because, after my return, there will be a special EC Summit on April 8, and I would like to be in touch before and coordinate. (S)

The President: Absolutely. I'd like to and when you get home, before that EC Summit, give me a call. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: My second point: the Israeli Foreign Minister came to see me. They have really immense ideas about financial aid. They are thinking on a magnitude that I simply cannot handle. I would like to help them within the bounds of what we can manage, but I'm not entirely clear to what extent they are willing to make a real contribution toward reconciliation. (S)

The President: We're not sure, either. When Jim Baker was there, they talked a little more flexibly, seemed a little more open. But the Prime Minister still has the problem out on his right wing with Sharon, Arens and some of those people, so we don't know the answer to that question. I hope you'll keep probing them as to what they're willing to do. Its my view, Helmut, that with your financial help and our help out there with the military and everyone else involved, we have reduced the threat to Israel from its biggest enemy, Iraq, and that should reduce some of their requirements. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: And as we continue to negotiate with them, George, I want to remain in close contact with you and I want to use whatever options I have to say we don't want to support anything that might ultimately be counterproductive. They are going to be needing a lot of money because in three years they will be receiving 1 million immigrants from the Soviet Union. They expect that number and I welcome that. However, if they go ahead and settle those people in the occupied territories, they're not going to be contributing to peace, but rather to upheaval throughout the Arab world. (S)

The President: That's true, and they know our position -- but then their Housing Minister, Sharon, comes out with a very difficult statement. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: I, for one, will not support that kind of a plan financially. (S)

The President: That's good. Helmut, the other thing I am anxious to talk about when you get back, or when we meet, is your broad views on the Soviet Union. We're worried about it. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: I shall keep you posted whenever I find out something new. George, there's one last point I'd like to bring up, and that's a matter I find very irritating. Members of the SPD party group in the Bundestag have, during their visit to

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Washington, as usual, had many talks on the Hill. Then they returned and they said the Federal Republic had been paying far too much money. They said they had heard from the Americans that the actual cost of the Gulf war had been lower, and then they took the whole thing and turned it into a debate and they brought this up recently at the level of the Bundestag. (S)

I want to make a very clear statement in this context. We, the Federal government, do, of course, stand behind the obligations that we have undertaken and, of course, the last installment will be paid. In that sense, the discussion that is ongoing in the Senate, too, is really quite absurd. But -- and this is a big request, George -- we must talk with each other prior to announcing the official costs, so that I don't get into a position where I'm being accused to having acted incorrectly. And, of course, as I said, I made a commitment and the money will be paid. But it would put me into an awkward position if the U.S. Congress said at the end that the Germans paid too much. I need not tell you that that would be most awkward and therefore I do have an urgent request. Finance Minister Waigel will be in Washington next week, and I ask that you see him. I think a date has been set. (S)

The President: It has been, yes. I look forward to seeing him. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: George, the important thing as far as I'm concerned is that you and I do not say different things. We can talk about anything at all, but in the end we must come out with identical statements. As an experienced parliamentarian, so to speak, you know how important that is and I was quite angry that the debate came up at all. But it originated in Congress. (S)

The President: Yes, yes. (U)

Chancellor Kohl: Members of Congress told German members of Parliament that the Federal Government had paid too much. So they couldn't wait to get home and open their mouths in a big way in Bonn. (S)

The President: I don't know which Members of Congress are saying that, but there will be a full discussion with Waigel when he is here. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: But it's important that in the end you and I say the same thing, and that we are united in our approach. My intention, of course, has always been to help George Bush and, if that discussion hadn't come up somehow, it wouldn't have been an issue in our country. (S)

The President: I think we can straighten it out, and we do have to be on the same wavelength. (S)

Chancellor Kohl: Waigel is a good man. (C)

The President: I know he is, and I like him. (C)

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Chancellor Kohl: He does have my confidence and trust. (S)

The President: I'll see that he's well received. Take care, and I look forward to talking to you when you get back. (C)

Chancellor Kohl: Please give my regards to Barbara. (U)

The President: I will. Is Hannelore there with you? (U)

Chancellor Kohl: No, this is the kind of thing you have to do alone. (U)

The President: I think you're right.

-- End of Conversation --