



**November 09, 1990**  
**Record of a Conversation between M.S. Gorbachev and  
Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl in Bonn**

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**Summary:**

Kohl expresses concerns about Gorbachev's control over the situation in the Soviet Union and offers his support. The two then discuss the recent invasion of Kuwait by Iraq.

**Credits:**

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**Original Language:**

Russian

**Contents:**

- English Translation

## RECORD OF A CONVERSATION

between M.S. Gorbachev and the Federal Chancellor of the  
FRG, H. Kohl.

(one on one)

Bonn, 9 November 1990

H. KOHL. I am pleased to welcome you in Bonn, Mr. President. This is already our third meeting in this year. [World] affairs are moving dynamically, and we have things to discuss.

Today, we have clear, sunny weather, and even the sky is welcoming your visit to Germany, whose people is thankful to you for everything that you personally have done for it.

M.S. GORBACHEV. Good weather puts one in an optimistic frame of mind. We will have to do fundamental work, and I am sure that we will fulfill the broad program which is envisaged for our stay on your soil.

H. KOHL. Above all, I would like to know how things are going for you at home, in the Soviet Union. We receive information, but it is clearly insufficient, and we would like to be more fundamentally informed.

I will say sincerely that we were scared by what happened on 7 November in Red Square. A month ago, an attempt was made on the life of the minister of internal affairs, Schäuble. A psychologically disturbed person, a drug addict, fired at him. Now, Schäuble is paralyzed.

M.S. GORBACHEV. We had a mass demonstration in connection with the October celebrations. In contrast to previous years, the initiative did not come from above, but from below. There were many discussions about the advisability...

[The following seven pages of the original are omitted.]

H. KOHL. I am telling you entirely officially that, as Federal Chancellor of Germany and simply as citizen Helmut Kohl, I am betting on [*stavliu na Vas*] you, Mr. Gorbachev. On you in particular, and not on everyone who is alongside you.

For that reason, I consider myself called upon and obliged to cooperate with you in achieving those good deeds which you have noted. You can be sure that I will be next to you on this difficult length of road.

Now, as I have already said, above all you need, among other things, competent and qualified expert help. These experts do not necessarily have to be Germans. Among them could also be representatives of other countries. But you must listen to their judgments in order not to stray into the dark.

I consider that time will not be patient, neither in the short, nor the medium, nor the long term. It is necessary to act. What point is there to reform if there is no air. We see this and are adopting appropriate measures.

In Rome on 27 October, I said that [at] the upcoming meeting in December in the framework of the session of the European Council in the capacity of a fundamental theme on the agenda, its main point should define an examination of the course of reform in the Soviet Union. We must enter this session well prepared.

For that reason, I am thinking of sending you my closest assistant, Telchik and two or three authoritative economists with him in two or three weeks. Delor[s] and Gonzalez also intended to do so. In this sense, much has also changed in Washington. There, they are also beginning to lean on a series of issues toward the European way of thinking. Not long ago, I was talking on the phone with President Bush and told him that in Europe, people were responding with satisfaction to the strengthening unity and cooperation between the US and the USSR in relation to the situation in the Middle East, and in particular, in the Persian Gulf. You can imagine, I told Bush, what would happen if the Soviet Minister of Defense at present were Marshall Ustinov.

This morning, I received the former Secretary of State Shultz. We agreed completely that Gorbachev must be helped, and, moreover, [must be helped] right now, on the threshold of winter, with food and consumer goods.

M.S. GORBACHEV. I have already said that the most crucial stage is coming. We will enter the market. In the next 10-12 months to a year and a half, we will need assistance.

H. KOHL. Dear friend, you can rely on me. I consciously call you friend, because we have done much together, and still have much to do.

I consider myself to be within my rights when I say the following. I get the impression that the Japanese want to change their position, and intend to work more closely with the "seven," [and] to find positive approaches.

It seems to me that if the basis for a conversation with the Japanese arose, things would go differently. You, of course, understand what I have in mind.

M.S. GORBACHEV. I should think so! For us, the issue is pointed and sensitive. It cost Yeltsin to raise the issue; the people directly asked: is it true that he plans to give away our land? In general, we must be very circumspect when it comes to the territorial issue. It is better to go down the path of cooperation, increasing economic cooperation and a multifaceted expansion of economic ties...

[The following seven pages are omitted in the original]

H. KOHL. We are ready, in particular, to open courses in barracks in your country to re-qualify military personnel, to train them for prospective civilian professions, for instance, for work with computers. We have 200 million marks set aside for that.

We will examine the issue of a combined commission.

In that regard, the issue arises of the fate of property which belongs to Soviet military organizations. We know that your business people who either want to buy something or to set up a joint venture are showing an interest in this. That is a matter with very good prospects.

H. KOHL. I heard about an interest in your aerodromes. I think that other establishments also have prospects for cooperation. We will work in that direction.

M.S. GORBACHEV. Now about the Persian Gulf. This crisis is testing us, our ability to work in a different way from before. Everything that has been done through joint efforts up until now within the framework of the UN is a huge achievement. For the first time in history - and not only in post-war history, - we are acting together in an acute situation, in a spirit of unity and of understanding of our responsibility before the world community in the framework of the UN, an obligation which consists of the defense and preservation of peace. The aggressor has been condemned; decisive measures have been taken, which are unstintingly being put into practice. All efforts to shake our unity have suffered defeat. We will not back down from our position.

Not long ago, I wrote a letter to President Bush and assured him that we will preserve the integrity of our jointly worked-out position.

Well-known internal processes are taking place in the US, and President Bush's time is limited to a short period, and for that reason, he must be supported.

H. KOHL. The situation with the hostages is very dangerous. Those who know the Americans, their history and their psychology, will immediately understand that this is a very dangerous game. It is always the case when one is talking about any American hostages that public opinion in the US and the position of the Senate can change by 180 degrees in the space of 24 hours.

We are for resolving the crisis without military intervention, in a political way, by way of fulfilling the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. But I will say directly: if the hostages of other states are freed and only the American are left, then a catastrophe will take place.

In this region, there are those whose interests are served by a war. Syria will not cry, and Israel will not be able to influence the situation positively. Israel has an unbelievable lobby in the US, although in this respect, Bush's hands are tied less than Reagan's [were]. Reagan himself, as well as his spouse Nancy, were in a different position.

M.S. GORBACHEV. Bush's understanding of the fact that we are not talking about a defeat, but of a victory, must be strengthened. The entire world community has condemned the aggression. We are preserving a region which is a source of energy for the world economy, and this means that the world economy is functioning in the interests of the entire world community. The blockade measures are working. All of this, taken together, is an important victory for the United Nations.

Hussein must feel that he is being put in his place. He is beginning to understand that. Firmness, pressure, and military demonstrations have a sobering effect on the aggressor. We should not discard political means.

Yesterday, I agreed with Secretary of State Baker to think up new steps so as to impel Hussein's regime to free Kuwait...

[Remaining pages missing from the original.]