

COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

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LETTER DATED 7 MARCH 1983 FROM THE ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DELEGATION OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY TO THE COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING A LETTER BY THE CHANCELLOR OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, HELMUT KOHL; TO THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST UNITY PARTY OF GERMANY AND CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE OF THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC, ERICH HONECKER

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 16 February 1983 by the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Helmut Kohl, to the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and Chairman of the Council of State of the German Democratic Republic, Erich Honecker.

I kindly request you to circulate this letter as an official document of the Committee on Disarmament.

(Signed) Frank Elbe
Alternate Representative

Letter dated 16 February 1983 by the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Helmut Kohl, to the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and Chairman of the Council of State of the German Democratic Republic, Erich Honecker, concerning the establishment of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Europe

Dear Mr. General Secretary,

Thank you for your letter of 4 February 1983.

I know we share the view that the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic bear grave responsibility for the preservation of peace in Europe and in the world. We should therefore earnestly try to provide positive impulses for the situation in Europe. It is my firm conviction that dialogue and co-operation, the implementation of existing treaties and increased contacts between people constitute an important contribution toward peace.

Mr. General Secretary, all efforts at arms control by the Federal Republic and the entire Atlantic Alliance -- in Geneva, in Vienna, in Madrid and in the United Nations -- are aimed at the goal of preserving peace. We want to safeguard peace with fewer and fewer weapons. We desire a stable military balance between East and West at the lowest possible level of armaments.

At present, our expectations are focused especially on the negotiations in Geneva on nuclear intermediate-range weapons. The United States, in concurrence with its Allies, has proposed that the United States and the USSR renounce their land-based intermediate-range missiles. Such a result would demonstrate that it is possible for East and West to agree on genuine disarmament measures, and would be a decisive contribution toward eliminating the nuclear threat to Europe.

The determinant for a territory to be under nuclear threat is not whether nuclear weapons are stationed there but whether nuclear weapons are aimed at it. Negotiations that merely result in moving the nuclear arsenals in Europe farther apart would therefore not enhance stability but would only create an illusion of greater security. They would detract from the ongoing negotiations on the reduction of nuclear weapons, thereby making it more difficult to reach prompt results.

Our main criterion for all arms control policy proposals is what contribution they make toward the prevention of any war, including a conflict with conventional weapons in Europe. The initiative for creating a zone in Central Europe that is free of battlefield nuclear weapons does not meet this requirement. We therefore do not find ourselves in a position to support it. In view of the conventional superiority of the Warsaw Pact in Europe, such a zone would actually increase the risk of a confrontation. We cannot overlook the fact that in the area alone that is covered by the Vienna negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Reduction of Forces, the Warsaw Pact has at its disposal more than twice as many divisions, tanks and cannons as NATO.

I consider it necessary that we should concentrate all efforts on those endeavours in the field of disarmament and arms control that are apt to bring about concrete, balanced and verifiable results. For this reason, we attach the greatest importance to progress in the ongoing negotiations.

Representatives of the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic are participating in a number of negotiations of this kind. I consider it useful to conduct a direct and objective exchange of views about basic questions concerning these negotiations. I therefore propose that our disarmament representatives meet for the purpose of continuing the discussion of those topics that have already been the subject of a mutual exchange of ideas. In our view, such a meeting could take place in April or May in Bonn.

With kind regards,

Helmut Kohl