

in 1982.⁵ This proposal, as well as several others, called for a nuclear demilitarized zone approximately 200 to 300 kilometres wide at the border between East and West Germany.

There are serious problems with the nuclear weapon-free zone idea. Not the least of these is the difficulty in monitoring the strict performance of any nuclear-free zone agreement. It would be impractical (and probably unacceptable to the states involved) to attempt to control the entire demilitarized zone's boundary as if it were a national frontier. The countless secondary roads running into the zone from both sides would make effective monitoring impossible. Furthermore, the commonplace presence of weapons that can deliver either conventional or nuclear warheads (tactical missiles, rocket launchers, howitzers and tactical aircraft, for example) would make verification a nightmare. And the potential for the easy transport of nuclear weapon systems to sites just outside the zone would generate further mistrust. However, most important, such nuclear weapon-free zones would pose no barrier to nuclear weapons overflying such zones. For these reasons a nuclear weapon-free zone might actually prove to be a "confidence-degrading measure." Little of the distrust generated by the above arbitrarily located neutral "zone" would develop if the zone were comprised of several countries of the region.

It must be recognized that real security can only be achieved by ensuring the perceived and actual security of all parties, East, West and neutral. The spiralling acquisition of more weapons will not improve security and peace in the region, nor is it likely that simple arms control and arms reduction agreements will be of a reliable or durable nature.

⁵ Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues (US), Common Security: A Blueprint for Survival, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1982.