

JOINT TEXT OF THE LETTERS SENT BY MR. ERICH HONECKER, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE SOCIALIST UNITY PARTY OF GERMANY AND CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE OF THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC, AND MR. LUBOMIR STROUGAL, PRIME MINISTER OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK SOCIALIST REPUBLIC, TO MR. HELMUT KOHL, CHANCELLOR OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, ON 13 SEPTEMBER 1985
(Translation)

"The Governments of the German Democratic Republic and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic believe that there is a practical possibility that chemical weapons will be eliminated and, above all, that a chemical-weapon-free zone will be set up in Europe. This would be a way to arrive at the removal of the chemical weapon stocks existing in the region and to ensure that no new, extremely perilous types of such weapons, notably binary weapons, will be deployed on European soil. This very approach was reflected in the talks between the SED and SPD on the establishment of a zone free of chemical weapons, which climaxed in the presentation of the political initiative known to you.

"Next to nuclear weapons, chemical weapons are the most dangerous means of mass destruction. It is a matter of utmost urgency to prohibit and completely eliminate them. What is needed are resolute efforts both on a global and regional scale. The Governments of the GDR and Czechoslovakia have consistently been advocating a comprehensive convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction. Moreover, they are convinced that regional agreements on the establishment of chemical-weapon-free zones would be concrete steps towards confidence-building and a worldwide ban on chemical weapons. For this reason, the Governments of the GDR and Czechoslovakia are prepared to conclude an agreement with the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany that would result in the elimination of chemical weapons on the territories of these countries, which are situated right along the dividing line between the two politico-military alliances.

"In making this proposal, they - neighbours of the FRG - want to encourage in Central Europe arms reductions as a form of concrete action to safeguard peace and security.

"We strongly believe that the proposal submitted by the two Governments can lead to a relevant agreement. Such an accord would be important in strengthening security in Europe and would add to the joint efforts aimed at eliminating the risk of the use of chemical weapons in Europe.

"The Governments of the GDR and Czechoslovakia invite the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany to enter into negotiations on the establishment of a zone free of chemical weapons, which should comprise the territories of these three States, to begin with. In these negotiations, the GDR and Czechoslovakia would be ready to put forward their ideas on the problems involved. It is their understanding that the FRG for its part will present specific proposals and reflections of its own and that the agreement on the establishment of a chemical-weapon-free zone should be open to all other interested States for accession."