

Letter from Helmut Kohl to the governments of the world on the occasion of German unification (Bonn, 3 October 1990)

Caption: On 3 October 1990, in a letter addressed to all governments maintaining diplomatic relations with Germany, the German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, confirms reunified Germany's determination to contribute to world peace and promote European integration.

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Letter from Chancellor Kohl to the governments of the world (Bonn, 3 October 1990)

Today, the German nation has become reunited in peace and freedom. Forty-five years after the end of the Second World War, which originated from German soil and caused untold suffering in Europe and throughout the world, the painful separation of the Germans has come to an end.

In exercising our right to free self-determination, in harmony with our neighbours and on the basis of the Treaty on the Final Settlement with respect to Germany, we Germans have today united to form a single state - the Federal Republic of Germany - with complete sovereignty over its internal and external affairs.

On behalf of the German people I would like to thank all those who stood up for our right of self-determination and smoothed our path towards unity. Conscious of the continuity of German history, we particularly appreciate this contribution.

I

Through its regained national unity, our country wants to serve the cause of global peace and advance the unification of Europe. That is the mandate of our time-honoured constitution, the Basic Law, which will also apply to the united Germany.

At the same time, we stand by our moral and legal obligations resulting from German history.

We know that upon unification, we will also assume greater responsibility within the community of nations as a whole. Our foreign policy will therefore remain geared towards global partnership, close cooperation and a peaceful reconciliation of interests.

In future, German soil will be a source of peace only. We are aware that the inviolability of the borders and respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all states in Europe is a basic precondition for peace. That is why we have confirmed the final character of the united Germany's borders, including the border with the Republic of Poland. At no time in the future will we make territorial claims on any other country. Now that German unity has been established, we shall discuss with the contracting parties concerned the international treaties of the German Democratic Republic with a view to regulating or confirming their continued application, adjustment or expiry, taking into account protection of confidence, the interests of the states concerned and the contractual obligations of the Federal Republic of Germany, as well as the principles of a free, democratic basic order governed by the rule of law, and respecting the competence of the European Community.

II

The unification of Germany is inextricably linked with that of Europe. We will resolutely continue to strive for European unification with the same determination with which we worked towards German unity.

Important steps are directly before us. Together with our partners in the European Community, we want to complete the single European market by 1992. We are steadily advancing towards economic and monetary union. The united Germany will play an active part in the development of political union.

The European Community will be open to close cooperation with the other countries in Europe. In particular, we intend to contribute to the development of closer ties between the European Community and the countries of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe which have won their freedom and set out on the path towards political, economic and social reform.

We are convinced that the countries of Europe can best safeguard and strengthen their independence and their citizens' human rights and fundamental freedoms if they work together. For this reason, an important forum for our cooperation is and remains the Council of Europe.

We are committed to the process of security and cooperation in Europe as a source of hope for the European nations and as a signpost towards their future unity. We are therefore strongly in favour of this process being intensified and institutionalized.

III

The community of free Western democracies based on shared values and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization have preserved peace and freedom on our continent during difficult decades. That is why the united Germany will continue to be a member of this alliance.

Together with our allies, we also want to develop further this successful alliance in line with the progress made in East-West relations and the changing demands of our time, as well as preserve its role as the basic pillar of new, overarching security structures in Europe.

We advocate a joint declaration by the members of the two alliances in Europe, reaffirming their intention to refrain from the threat or use of force and establishing a new partnership in the development of a just and lasting peaceful order in Europe.

Disarmament and arms control remain key elements of our security policy.

In the context of German unification we have reaffirmed our renunciation of the manufacture and possession of as well as control over nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. The united Germany remains committed to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Our willingness to reduce the united Germany's armed forces to 370,000 is at the same time a contribution to the success of the negotiations on the reduction of conventional forces in Europe. We assume that in the follow-on negotiations the other participating countries, too, will play their part in consolidating security and stability in Europe, not least through measures to restrict force strengths.

On the global level, too, we shall seek disarmament agreements that will enhance stability and security. The principle of gearing the level of forces solely towards self-defence requirements must apply throughout the world.

An agreement on reductions in strategic nuclear weapons between the United States and the Soviet Union, negotiations on reducing American and Soviet short-range nuclear weapons and, not least, a global ban on chemical weapons are still urgently required.

IV

The countries of Africa, Asia and America can continue to count on the solidarity of the united Germany. We will not invest in German unity at their expense.

On the contrary: The end of the conflict in Europe will release intellectual powers and material resources for tackling the central tasks for peace now facing us; for the struggle against poverty and underdevelopment and for the preservation of our natural environment.

Terrorism and drug abuse are challenges to all states throughout the world, which call for joint action. We will shoulder our share of the responsibility.

V

The elimination of the East-West conflict has also opened up new avenues for fully implementing the lofty goals of the United Nations Charter. At the same time, the events of the last few weeks have demonstrated to what extent world peace is still endangered by disregard for the principles of the UN Charter.

The Federal Republic of Germany wishes to play a part in ensuring that the United Nations fulfils its indispensable role in the process of building a peaceful world and meeting the global challenges we face.

Now that German unity with complete sovereignty has been achieved, the Federal Republic of Germany is prepared to participate in UN measures aimed at preserving and restoring peace through the deployment of its forces, too. We will create the necessary internal conditions for this.

At the beginning of the last decade of this century, we see new opportunities for a world which solves its problems through reconciliation and understanding, and remains committed to the principles of international law. Our country stands shoulder-to-shoulder with all those who are committed to peace, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as individual well-being.

Now that the burden of division has been lifted from us, we are prepared to redouble our efforts towards shaping a common peaceful future in trustful cooperation with all countries and peoples who share these worthy objectives.