

Letter from Rainer Barzel to Willy Brandt (10 August 1970)

Caption: On 10 August 1970, Rainer Barzel, leader of the conservative political group CSU-CDU in the Bundestag, writes a letter to German Chancellor, Willy Brandt, criticising the Germano-Soviet Treaty.

Source: The Treaty of August 12, 1970 between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Bonn: Press and Information Office of the Federal Government, 1970. 204 p. p. 171-173.

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Letter from Dr. Rainer Barzel, Parliamentary Party Chairman of the CDU/CSU to Willy Brandt (10 August 1970)

Dear Mr. Federal Chancellor,

The CDU/CSU Parliamentary Party has expressed its standpoint on policy towards Western and Eastern Europe in the attached unanimous resolution of May 26, 1970. This resolution remains the guiding principle of our decisions.

From the very beginning, we have viewed the efforts towards a speedier and more complete union of free Europe and those towards a reconciliation with the states of Central and Eastern Europe as parts of an undivided whole. We have also assessed in context the efforts of the Federal Government towards the securing of free Berlin, the improving of the situation in Germany as a whole, and the proposed treaties with the Soviet Union, Poland and Czechoslovakia. Hereto, our standpoint remains firm.

In consequence, we recommended that the Federal Government should only affix its signature to the initialled German-Soviet treaty if satisfactory solutions had been found to the other questions, and above all to the Berlin and intra-German problems.

We are prepared to state in detail during confidential talks with the Federal Government what the CDU/CSU Parliamentary Party understands by satisfactory solutions to these questions, and to bring about understanding on these points.

The German-Soviet treaty draft fulfils some of the expectations of the CDU/CSU Parliamentary Party, but allows considerable misgivings to persist. The CDU/CSU Parliamentary Party is so far unable to detect a balanced relationship between the contribution of the Federal Government and the contribution of the Soviet Union. It still sees no advantage for the people of divided Germany. By contrast with the policy of previous Federal Governments, which, for example, led to a reconciliation with France, and in so doing laid the foundation for the European Community, we are unable to detect in the German Soviet treaty draft constructive elements orientated towards the future, and principles of a better, peaceful status quo for all Europeans.

This draft treaty, its text, interpretation, consequences and context require careful consideration. This requires intimate knowledge of facts and reports. The treaty can finally only be assessed when this examination has been made, and results have been forthcoming on Berlin, on the intra-German question, and on Poland and Czechoslovakia. The Federal Government itself considers that such a treaty can only come into force after a satisfactory solution to the Berlin question. We call on the Federal Government — also in regard to the number 1 guiding principle set down as a binding declaration of intent in the talks with the Soviet Union, by which all agreements of the Eastern Policy form one undivided whole — to make available to the Bundestag all these arrangements and agreements as a unified whole. The CDU/CSU Parliamentary Party will at all events judge all details in context, and in consequence does not consider the time is yet ripe for a final vote on the draft of the German-Soviet treaty.

Our judgment will, as we have repeatedly stressed, depend on whether the German question remains open on essential points, and whether an improvement in relations, a lessening of existing tensions and improvements for those people concerned, are all achieved.

We expressly stress once more that the unification of free Europe and the maintenance of the Atlantic Alliance are and remain for us the basis of every Eastern Policy. Our overall judgment will also depend on whether progress becomes possible in these fields.

Yours sincerely, Dr. Rainer Barzel