

Havel

DEPARTMENT OF MOLECULAR AND CELLULAR BIOLOGY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

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Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138



8 June 1995

Dear President Havel,

I hope that you will not take it amiss if I make use of this opportunity to provide you with information regarding the progress towards entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993 and to urge you to use your good offices in support of this treaty.

The Convention prohibits the development, production, stockpiling, retention, transfer, and use of chemical weapons. It will enter into force 180 days after deposit with the UN Secretary General of the 65th instrument of ratification.

Thus far, 29 states have deposited their instruments of ratification. Ten are in Europe: Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Norway, Romania, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. The Netherlands has ratified and is about to deposit.

It is my understanding that the necessary legislation for ratification by the Czech Republic is being prepared by the executive and has not yet been given to Parliament.

By far the largest stockpiles of chemical weapons, many tens of thousands of tons of mustard gas and nerve gas, are in Russia and in the United States. The participation of both states is essential for success of the Convention and it is unlikely that Russia will ratify before the US does. Our ratification awaits the advice and consent of the Senate, where, owing to disinterest rather than opposition, very little is happening. Without Senate action this year, the next opportunity may not come until 1997, after the Presidential election. By then, international momentum toward entry into force could have dissipated.

Timely ratification of the Convention by the Czech Republic would be in the tradition of Czech leadership in arms limitation and international humanitarian law in the Central European region. And your personal support for the Convention would enhance the prospects of timely US ratification because of the high respect you and your country enjoy among influential members of the US Senate.

Sincerely,

Matthew Meselson
Professor