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Gorbachev to speak on threats faced by Europe in Prague

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Prague, Sept 8 (CTK) - Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev will speak about the present threats to European security and the doubts accompanying European integration at an international conference in Prague next week, former foreign minister Jan Kavan said on behalf of the organisers on Thursday.

The September 16-18 conference will focus on security developments after the Cold War, new problems and ways to solve them, and aspects of European security in relation to Russia.

Gorbachev "will deal with the existing threats to European security as well as new challenges that cast doubt on the peace developments in Europe," Kavan (Social Democrats, CSSD) said.

"He will definitely also mention the recent rise of the political forces that challenge European integration and cooperation," Kavan added.

He said Gorbachev has always supported a calm and peace integration process.

A number of present and former diplomats and politicians have accepted the invitation to the conference.

Representatives of the Czech Republic will include Kavan and Hynek Kmonicek, head of the Presidential Office's foreign section.

Former Czechoslovak dissident and Slovak politician Jan Carnogursky will also be present, and the organisers still negotiate about the participation of former Austrian president Heinz Fischer.

The conference will take place under the auspices of Czech President Milos Zeman, who will receive Gorbachev in the Lany presidential chateau, central Bohemia, on Sunday, September 18.

The conference has been organised by the Gorbachev Foundation, Fondazione Italiani and the Iron Curtain Foundation in cooperation with the European Movement in the Czech Republic.

On the first day of the conference, Gorbachev will attend the presentation of Czech journalist Milan Syrucek's book "Mikhail Gorbachev - Did he save Prague from bloodshed?"

Syrucek previously said Gorbachev visited Czechoslovakia in 1969 for the first time. His latest official visit took place in 1999, when he received the top state award, Order of the White Lion, together with other world statespersons, from Czech president Vaclav Havel.

Afterwards, he only paid a private visit to the Czech Republic in 2002 when he stayed in the Karlovy Vary spa.

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