

SEMINAR ON: EUROPE AND AMERICA IN THE 1980'ies. MUST
NORWAY CHOOSE?

Norway in the Pattern of US-European Relations.

This seminar has been convened at a most appropriate time. It is devoted to consideration of a most urgent subject. I appreciate highly the initiative taken by the three institutions which are behind this seminar. I would also like to say that I am gratified that so many distinguished representatives from abroad have found time to come here and contribute to the discussion.

It would be an overstatement to talk about a crisis in West-West relations. What we confront is rather the current

2

need to fashion trans-Atlantic relations in accordance with new realities and in response to novel challenges. The world is changing and our policies must adapt to the changes taking place and attempt to mould those changes.

The report which has been prepared by the working group of the European movement in Norway identifies many of the issues we confront and suggests directions of policy which should be examined. This seminar is an important element in a broad process of policy examination. I also want to refer to the very topical and thought-provoking report on Western security which was prepared by the sister institutes of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs in Bonn, Paris, London and New York.

The theme of this seminar has been given a somewhat provocative formulation in order to sharpen the issues and focus discussion. Trans-Atlantic relations have been the subject of discussion and controversy ever since the Second World War. Europe, America and the rest of the world are changing. New generations are assuming leadership of nations. Their perspectives and frames of reference are different from those which were shaped under the impact of the struggle in the Second World War.

It is a significant observation that Norway is a country with her back to Europe and facing the Atlantic. Norway cannot choose between trans-Atlantic ties and European connections. Our foreign policy must encompass both

4

dimensions. However, views may differ about the relative importance and emphasis of the two links and their tightness. There is also the question of the perspective of time. The scope for choice may broaden in the long term. The uncertainties as well as the options multiply as we try to look into a more distant future.

The links in both directions are manifold. They are present in the fields of political values, cultural traditions, economic interests, sentiment, identification, as well as in the area of military security. Norway is a European country with a strong democratic tradition.

Between the years 1865 and 1915 approximately 700.000 Norwegians emigrated to the United States. The total population of Norway was 1,8 million in 1865 and 2,5 million in 1915. In relation to the total population only Ireland had a higher ratio of emigrants. Almost all Norwegians have relatives in the United States.

Let me attempt briefly to place Norway in the broader pattern of Atlantic relations. Since the North Atlantic Alliance is the most obvious and visible expression of shared goals and interests, I shall take as my point of departure some of the basic considerations which relate to national security.

6

The first observation I want to make is that national and international security cannot be approached solely in terms of military factors. Basically security policy must focus on the structure and content of political relations in a broad sense. The means of security must reflect that conception. The military factor must be assessed and handled within a framework of political, economic, social and cultural relations. It cannot be allowed to define the framework of those relations.

Secondly, it is important that security policy be the subject of active debate and discussion. The issues are

not beyond politics, but an integral part of politics. There are few if any final solutions or permanent truths in the field of international security. There is a need for continuous, critical and active discussion. That process is important in order to maintain broad consensus and consensus is important in a small country in a strategically sensitive location like Norway. Broad consensus is needed in order to ensure predictability.

In terms of security it is broadly recognized that Norway depends on outside assistance. Our country is too large, too important in strategic terms, and our population is too small to allow for a national solution only to our

8

national security problems. And allied assistance has to be pre-planned in peacetime in order to maintain credibility and contribute to deterrence.

At the same time it is recognized that we have to contribute to the maintenance of a state of low tension in our immediate environment. Our security arrangements shall not be a source of insecurity for our neighbours. Therefore, Norway has adhered to a policy of self-imposed restraints, preventing the stationing of foreign troops in peacetime, prohibiting stockpiling or deployment of nuclear and chemical weapons, and observing a set of

restrictions with respect to allied manoeuvres.

In order to increase stability in Northern Europe Norway has chosen not to contribute to the construction of a separate military balance in this part of Europe. Such an ambition could intensify superpower rivalry in a sensitive region, and it could weaken the links to a broader equilibrium in Europe. But precisely because we have refrained from contributing to a separate military balance in Northern Europe, we remain dependent on a close integration into the broader texture of the East-West equilibrium and political order in Europe. Norway is clearly dependent on stability and balance in Europe.

10

From the point of view of Central Europe Norway is a flank area. Norwegian security depends in large measure on the ability of the Western alliance to prevent attack on the central front. That ability is important for the credibility of NATO's guarantees which are extended also to the flank members of the alliance.

At the same time Norway is of key importance to NATO's ability to control trans-Atlantic sea lines of communication. Reinforcement of Central Europe depends in large measure on the ability of the Western alliance to maintain the integrity of Atlantic sea lines of communication. The relationship in security terms between Norway and

continental Europe is one of mutual interdependence.

Norway occupies a key position in the security consideration of the superpowers, both with respect to the central balance of deterrence and the maritime balance. Only the United States is capable of providing countervailing power to that of the Soviet Union in Northern Europe. Therefore, Norway cannot choose between the United States and Western Europe. Norway is dependent on both.

In the period ahead the pursuit of stability in East-West relations in general and in Europe in particular must be at the core of our attention and efforts. The broadly scaled Soviet military build-up contains a challenge which

12

we cannot ignore. It must be met with determination and readiness. At the same time we must show equal determination and readiness to negotiate about arms control and disarmament. We want balance at the lowest possible level of military force.

It is becoming obvious that we have to promote stability also at the level of political relations. A framework must be created which is capable of absorbing the kind of social change which is taking place in Poland today without disrupting the international order in Europe. That means intensified efforts to create a more open and cooperative

order in Europe in consonance with the Helsinki Final Act and the follow-up process which is now being tested in Madrid.

A certain divergence of views is observable today between the United States and Western Europe over the balance sheet and future of East-West détente. An active consideration of the issues involved is necessary and a certain diversity of views and emphasis is desirable in an alliance of free peoples. From the point of view of Central Europe détente has brought concrete benefits and results. They fall short of expectations and hopes, but that is normal in political life. The United States quite naturally will adopt a global

14

outlook. From such a perspective the fruits of détente may appear less enticing. Soviet behaviour outside Europe did not conform with the norms for great power restraint which were at the essence of détente as a political goal. The military build-up which coincided with the political pursuit of détente resulted in increased danger, or at least the perception of increased danger, in the United States.

These are no inherent reasons why the West should despair about the future. The countries of North America and Western Europe exceed the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe in every dimension of material power.

The material advantage of the West is compounded by the spiritual strength of the democratic way. However, we do not want to mobilize an inherent advantage for military competition. Competition should unfold in other areas of human activity. Military balance is a necessary but by no means a sufficient condition for creating stability. It must be maintained, but it must be circumscribed by political arrangements which reduce the military factor. Only in this manner can we create a condition of real détente.

Looking back we can discern some of the basic reasons why détente did not measure up to expectations. Firstly,

16

political détente was not followed and strengthened by agreements on arms control and disarmament which could have capped the arms race and initiated a process of reducing the level of arms. Secondly, the great powers did not manage to agree on and to observe a basic code of conduct, based primarily on mutual restraint with respect to the use of military force. Thirdly, progress in the direction of greater transparency, predictability and humanity fell too short of the goals and aspirations which were established by the mid-seventies.

At the present time we must endeavour to construct a basis for a new beginning in East-West relations in Europe.

Stability is at the essence of what we must ensure and accomplish. But the modalities are important. We must avoid both the pitfalls of wishful thinking and entrenched distrust. The latter will almost inevitably lead to a renewed arms race and postpone mutual recognition of the interdependent nature of the security dispositions in Europe. Mutual interests point clearly in the direction of negotiation and reduction rather than competition and build-up.

A stable and viable order in Europe depends on stable and viable societies. It is important therefore that our security arrangements are shaped in a manner which is

18

acceptable and supportable in our societies. Only then will they remain stable and credible. If they produce disruptive controversy and broad opposition within our societies, international stability will weaken. In the area of defence it is not only a question of doing enough. We must also be doing the right thing.

There is a deep-rooted and sincere concern in many European societies today, Norway definitely included, that the arms race has escaped political control.

Nuclear weapons cannot, however, be disinvented. They are a part of our reality and of our responsibility. Political

19

leaders have to assume that responsibility. But they will carry credibility only if they can present realistic strategies for dealing with the nuclear issues. Let me underline that these are shared issues, irrespective of whether the states concerned are nuclear weapon states, have nuclear weapons stationed on their territory or do not permit such storage or deployment. This is why Norway has been actively engaged in the important issue of nuclear disarmament and in the follow-up of the double decision in NATO from December 1979. We feel a clear responsibility to contribute to a policy of nuclear weapons control and disarmament.

In the broader context of East-West relations Norway has a rôle to play, particularly by contributing to stability

20

in Northern Europe. Our policy in this respect encompasses several key elements.

First of all we shall continue the policy of prudence with respect to national security, balancing considerations of assurance and reassurance vis-à-vis our neighbours. We have provided for assurance through a substantial and steady national effort and through cooperative agreements with our allies for purposes of facilitating reinforcement in an emergency situation.

Secondly, we want to develop and broaden the scope of

constructive cooperation with the Soviet Union in concrete fields where we have shared or complementary interests such as management of fisheries, environmental protection, search and rescue, off-shore technology, etc.

Thirdly, we want to strengthen our ties with the other Nordic states. Economic stability will be sought primarily through an intensified industrial cooperation, including the field of energy, on the Scandinavian peninsula, starting with Norway and Sweden. At the same time we want to expand and deepen the political dialogue with Iceland, Finland and Denmark.

Norway has a privileged economic situation. Unemployment is very low. That is a result of deliberate policy. We recognize that the era of sustained and marked growth is gone. Structural reforms in our economies are needed and the Government has to play an active rôle.

22

Norway has a high dependency on economic relations with the rest of the world. We export half of what we produce and import half of what we consume. We maintain a large merchant fleet. Norway is actively interested in close consultations about economic and financial policy and is intent on intensifying consultations with the European Communities to that end.

As a small country Norway must base her trade policy on multilateralism. Binding agreements, rules and regulations for international behaviour protect the interests of small countries in difficult times. Bigger countries can safeguard their interests by unilateral action. Protective measures will hurt the smaller countries. More important,

they will damage international economic order. In this perspective we are concerned about the effects of possible protective measures taken by the United States under the pressure of competition from abroad.

In the area of energy Europe and the United States have significant common interests. However, they sometimes pursue those interests in conflicting ways, particularly in areas which impact on domestic consumption patterns or policies towards the Middle East.

The need for energy conservation is obvious, as is the need to economize in energy consumption. Equally important is the necessity of reducing the rôle played by oil in

24

total energy consumption through development of alternative sources of energy. Today oil still represents a larger part of total energy consumption than all other energy sources put together. When at the same time we know that oil is a depletable resource, and also that in large measure it has to be imported from areas which are politically volatile and vulnerable, there is no need to explain why a reduction of the part played by oil in total energy consumption must be an important objective for us all.

The choice of measures for the promotion of these joint objectives in the final analysis must be a matter for

each government to make. Obviously, however, it is desirable that national policies are harmonized to the extent possible so that we all try to pull in the same direction. We therefore attach weight to the exchange of views and the discussion which Western governments have in the International Energy Agency. We welcome the decisions taken by the Ministerial Meeting of the IEA in May of last year to seek to reduce the part played by oil in energy consumption to about 40% at the end of the 1980'ies.

One significant aspect of the joint interests of Western countries in the energy field bears on their relations with the OPEC countries. From the Norwegian side we have consistently stressed the need to develop a constructive

26

dialogue between consuming and producing countries, as part of the general North/South picture. We must not lose sight of the basic fact that in spite of some obvious differences in approach, producers and consumers of energy have a joint interest in preserving economic stability and in establishing a basis for economic growth in the world. Applied to the issue of prices and security of supply of energy this means that both sides should be interested in arrangements which can assure a greater degree of predictability than we have experienced in the last decade. We therefore hope that the United States as well as other Western governments will work actively towards an understanding with producing countries and that these will

respond in the same spirit. Certainly, Norway will do everything it can to assist in this process.

Norway will of course also be contributing in a more direct sense to the energy situation of the West. We shall in the eighties be exporting to other Western countries volumes of oil and gas which are roughly six times as large as our own consumption. There are limits, however, with regard to possibilities for further expansion of yearly outputs. We are glad to see that these limits, which partly arise from the impact of the petroleum sector on the rest of the economy, and partly from social, regional, environmental and safety considerations, are generally understood abroad.

28

As an oil producer Norway will always be but a marginal supplier. Marginal supplies are, however, important also in periods of shortage, however induced. With respect to gas Norway will be a significant exporter compared to the level of European consumption. Hence Norway is able to contribute to a diversification of European supplies.

We are witnessing a globalization of many international issues. Events outside Europe and the United States will impact on developments in the Western world and affect vital interests. It is natural therefore that political consultations be broadened. However, it is equally important to avoid any extension of the area of validity of the

Western alliance. The alliance has been concluded for the specific objective of defending a given area against attack. It is not a global alliance. From the point of view of global stability it is important not to generalize the East-West conflict in Europe and let it shape the pattern of international relations in the world at large.

While concertation is important, we cannot and should not behave in a manner which implies any kind of united front in the third world, which would too easily be perceived as a united front against the third world. Furthermore, we should avoid succumbing to the current fashion of considering formalized limited councils of the major Western powers for purposes of dealing with extra-European

30

challenges. Such constructions would inevitably create distance to the minor and middle powers in the alliance. They could make the alliance more controversial domestically, and paradoxically make policies towards areas outside the NATO area of responsibility more controversial within the alliance.

It must be recognized, in other words, that the alliance is made up of sovereign states. If we were to establish procedures which kept the smaller states outside the inner circles which really matter, it would be much harder to demonstrate that allied consultations provide a means for

all member states to exert influence. In this connection also there is a danger that the limited summits will detract from the vitality and centrality of consultations within NATO.

It is part of the present reality that European identity and the expression of European interests have been brought a big step forward through the European Political Co-operation. Diversity and pluralism does not amount to Western disagreement. It can be important also from the point of view of promoting international stability and diplomatic flexibility.

From the point of view of political perspectives and

32

interests Norway has in recent years arrived at conclusions which coincide very largely with those which have emerged through the EPC process. Therefore we have sought and shall continue to seek informal consultations between our Foreign Minister and the Presidency of the European Ministerial Council.

The current reassessments which are taking place in Washington, creates uncertainty - and maybe expectations of more dramatic changes than we actually will see. The new American administration has stressed its determination to reassert American power and contribute to greater predictability in international relations.

International relations is a continuous process. It does not stop and cannot be stopped every time there is a change of government in the major powers. Reassessments are to be expected as part of the normal political process. However, continuity of policy and engagement is an important precondition for predictability in international affairs.

At the present time we are witnessing a reglobalization of American foreign policy. A new assertiveness is emerging as the traumas of Vietnam and Watergate recede. However, a global policy has to reflect the complexity and diversity of international society. It has to be responsive to the needs and aspirations of poor and suppressed people who

yearn for the same freedoms which we enjoy and strive to protect. If we reduce complexity and diversity to a simple question of Soviet-American competition, international relations will harden and the dangers of confrontation will increase.

It is our hope that the new American administration will not break with the enlightened African policy of the Carter administration, and most particularly that it will continue to support UN Resolution 435 on Namibia and contribute to a united international front against the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Similarly, it is clear that Latin America will figure more prominently in US-European relations in the years ahead. Europe has strong historical and cultural ties with the Southern parts of the Western hemisphere which should be deepened in order to facilitate peaceful change and stabilization of the foreign relations of the Latin American states. Support for repressive regimes or the pursuit of a way through military assistance to regimes which polarize and destroy societies through repression, will weaken international stability and reduce the credibility of the West. This is a real problem in Central America, and most particularly in Guatemala and El Salvador. Differences between the United States and Western Europe over policies

36

towards Latin America could become an important factor of tension within the Western alliance in the decade ahead.

American engagement in Europe is necessary in order to preserve stability and balance. Similarly, stability and balance in Europe is a vital interest of the United States. The United States needs Western Europe as much as Western Europe needs the United States. Their relationship is based on interdependence. The management of partnership is a challenge to the states on both sides of the Atlantic.

Our alliance is based on common interests and shared values. This observation does not imply that we

necessarily have common interests also in areas beyond the NATO treaty area. Nor does it imply that we necessarily reach the same conclusions about how to protect our common interests in concrete circumstances. It does not mean that we inevitably agree on how our common interests are affected by the policies of other states or by developments in international relations generally speaking. But it does mean that we consider it important to discuss how common interests can be protected and promoted in the best manner. Such consultations take place between sovereign nations.

To conclude, with reference to the title of this seminar,

38

my first assumption is that the situation will not develop that Norway would have to choose between Europe and America in the 1980'ies. Secondly, I believe that Norway should contribute to a policy to avoid circumstances that could confront us with such a choice. Also in this context it will be of utmost importance that the alliance pursues the double track goal of security and of détente. This will be the main lines in our policy for the years to come.