

Universitetets Aula
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Med forbehold om endringer

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OPENING ADDRESS BY PRIME MINISTER GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND TO THE
THIRTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC ASSEMBLY

Mr. President,
Fellow Parliamentarians,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed an honour and pleasure for me to address this prominent gathering on the occasion of the 33rd Annual Session of the North Atlantic Assembly. This Assembly reflects the true character of the Atlantic Alliance. Our alliance is more than an organization strictly for military cooperation among member countries. It is also an alliance for political cooperation among nations which share the same basic values and way of life. Firm commitment to democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law are important parts of the legacy which our nations are allied to safeguard.

Through close cooperation in the Atlantic Alliance, our nations are committed to protecting and developing these shared values by promoting stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area and by making concerted efforts for collective defence and for the preservation of peace and security. Our common defence efforts are designed to prevent war by maintaining robust military forces. Our Alliance is also committed to promoting detente through dialogue with the East and through arms control arrangements.

The North Atlantic Assembly is gathered in Oslo this week in the wake of a breakthrough of genuine significance for East-West relations. The Norwegian Government welcomes the progress made towards the conclusion of an INF agreement. The announcement which was made following the meetings last week

between the US and Soviet foreign ministers signals optimism about the future. The agreement in principle to dismantle a whole category of nuclear weapons, short and long range intermediate nuclear forces, is indeed of historic significance. For the first time we shall see real disarmament in addition to limitation of nuclear weapons.

Norway fully supports the double-zero solution for US and Soviet INF missiles. Such a solution is consistent with NATO's dual-track decision of 1979. Inclusion of short range INF in a global INF treaty considerably reduces the problem of circumvention of an agreement eliminating long range INF missiles alone. This has been a problem of special concern to front-line states in the Alliance, such as Norway. We regard Chancellor Kohl's offer not to modernize and to dismantle the German Pershing IAs upon the final elimination of all Soviet and American INF missiles as an important contribution to the process of realizing a comprehensive INF agreement.

In the wake of the removal of INF missiles, NATO countries will need to pay increased attention to the preponderance of the Warsaw Pact in conventional forces. Conventional disparities must be dealt with as a matter of urgency in the wake of an INF agreement, most particularly in view of the Warsaw Pact's capacity for surprise attack and large-scale offensive action. Our efforts should be made along two parallel tracks - improvement of the conventional forces in the Alliance, and arms control negotiations. The new negotiations on conventional stability in Europe should therefore focus on remedying disparities which diminish stability and security.

Last week's political breakthrough in the INF negotiations is of major importance. It provides proof that negotiations can produce results. This progress should contribute to increased mutual confidence between East and West. The breakthrough offers the promise for further progress along the road to an agreement for substantial reductions in strategic nuclear forces. It is a major stimulus to the emerging talks on conventional stability in Europe.

The Norwegian Government also hopes that another summit meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev will inaugurate a new era of negotiation and detente. They share the awesome responsibility of turning the tide away from the nuclear precipice. Nations can no longer achieve security at the expense of other nations. We hope that a forthcoming summit meeting will prepare the ground for further progress in disarmament and arms control, contributing to the improved relations between East and West that have long been an Allied objective.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Politically, economically and culturally, Norway is firmly anchored in the Western community. We have chosen to safeguard our security by means of strong and effective defence efforts within the framework of the NATO Alliance and through parallel endeavours to promote detente, arms control and disarmament. In its inaugural statement to Parliament last year, my Government emphasized that the main lines of Norway's foreign and security policy will be carried forward. We have traditionally had and continue to have a broad consensus on these main lines in our Parliament. And this consensus reflects in turn the attitude of the Norwegian people.

Norway occupies a rather unique geopolitical position on NATO's northern flank and bordering on the Soviet Union in Europe. This special position is reflected in the formulation of our security policy and the structure of our defence policy. Norway is no longer a peripheral country from the point of view of Central Europe. The north and center constitute an integral theater of military operations. In the context of the central balance of nuclear deterrence, Norway has occupied an exposed position since the outset of the nuclear age. Hence Norway has had to fashion her security policy in the context of the general East-West balance as well as in the context of the Nordic region.

Consecutive Norwegian governments have endeavoured to contribute to the maintenance of stability and low tension in the

High North by a policy resting on two pillars - credible deterrence based on a strong defence, and reassurance through the exercise of appropriate restraint. Our neighbours should have no reasonable cause to doubt that our defence posture is designed for purely defensive purposes. It is our policy to seek and develop correct and good relations with the Soviet Union. In line with this policy, Norway strongly supports efforts to promote detente and conclude arms control agreements between East and West.

The first of the two pillars, credible deterrence based on a strong defence, encompasses a substantial national defence effort supplemented by Allied reinforcements. Over the years Norway has increased her defence spending in consonance with the general targets established by the Alliance. Norway's defence expenditure amounts to some 3 percent of her GDP. In terms of defence expenditure per capita, Norway ranks second in the Alliance. It is the intention of my Government to increase the defence budget by approximately 3 percent annually in real terms in the years ahead, in tune with the established NATO target.

Allied reinforcements are needed to maintain credible defence in a crisis. Such reinforcements reflect the military and political solidarity among the members of our Alliance. The credibility of the Allied commitment is demonstrated through regular exercises and physical arrangements for the reception and support of Allied forces in Norway.

We realize that if our Allies are to be able to transfer troops to our country in an emergency, the task must be feasible from the point of view of logistics, training and host nation support. Prepositioning of equipment in Norway for Allied forces, as well as regular exercises, constitute necessary conditions for making deterrence credible in the Northern areas.

Norway has concluded agreements with several Allied countries for prepositioning equipment for forces earmarked for reinforcement of Norway or which have transfer to Norway as a potential option.

NATO forces participate regularly in exercises on Norwegian territory and in Norwegian waters. The maritime exercise "Ocean Safari 87", which ended just a few days ago, provides evidence of our collective will and capacity to conduct coordinated and effective military operations.

It is important that forces from several Allied countries be committed to the defence of Norway. Our perspective here is political, and the importance of Allied contributions is not confined to the military capability involved. Political identity is equally important. We hope therefore that the Alliance will be able to muster a viable alternative to the Canadian forces, which will be reassigned to the central front. We need effective Allied contributions. The structure and composition of the forces involved must also be compatible, of course, with regard to the maintenance of the state of low tension in the North.

Naval developments in the Northern waters over the past twenty years have been unfavourable to Norway and the Alliance. Although the increase in Soviet naval activity is not directed primarily against Norway, it is a matter of concern to us that Soviet naval forces have been operating further west and south in the Norwegian Sea. Such developments herald increased threats against the vital sea lines of communication across the Atlantic. Norway, along with the rest of the Alliance, depends on the integrity of those sea lines of communication for reinforcements and resupplies. We welcome an Allied naval presence in the northern waters as a means of counteracting impressions of Soviet preponderance, as a demonstration of our capacity for operations in these inhospitable waters, and in order to create incentives for mutual restraint. Permanent naval patrols are neither desirable nor a practical proposition.

The second pillar of Norwegian security and defence policy consists of efforts to safeguard the present state of low tension. The main elements of this policy are Norway's self-imposed restraints which comprise the policy of not permitting the stationing of foreign troops on Norwegian territory in peacetime and a prohibition on the deployment and

stationing of nuclear and chemical weapons in Norway. These are self-imposed restraints in the sense that they are not based upon agreements with other states.

Our policy with regard to the basing of foreign troops constitutes a conditional restraint in that it will be observed only so long as Norway is not attacked or threatened with attack. It is up to the Norwegian authorities to decide when and to what extent Allied reinforcements are necessary. It goes without saying, however, that the absence of Allied troops on Norwegian territory in peacetime necessitates reinforcement earlier and more rapidly in a crisis than would otherwise have been the case.

Norwegian policy on nuclear weapons comprises a number of restrictions, the most important of which is the ban on production, testing, storage and stationing of such weapons in Norway.

A major objective of this policy is to raise the nuclear threshold and reduce the risk of nuclear weapons being used in an armed conflict in the Northern areas. In strategically sensitive areas it is, in our view, imperative to reduce pressures for and expectations of early use of nuclear weapons in order to prevent unintended escalation. Our policy is predicated on the existence of a credible and strong conventional defence.

It is the conviction of the Norwegian Government that these self-imposed restraints contribute to promoting detente and keeping tension low in the Northern areas. They are based on a careful assessment of the complex nature of our security environment. Stability in the High North is of considerable importance to the Alliance at large. Hence, we are convinced that our self-imposed restraints are in the interest of the Alliance as a whole.

In a broader European context we endorse and participate in consultations within NATO concerning efforts to promote detente and arms control. We attach significance to dialogue and negotiations between East and West, as called for in the Harmel

Report. This perspective seems particularly relevant today, when General Secretary Gorbachev seems committed to bringing about a larger degree of openness both as regards the internal processes in Soviet society and with regard to the Soviet Union's relations with Western countries.

My Government sees encouraging signs in the new political winds blowing from Moscow. There seems to be a new recognition by the Soviet leadership of the fact that a continued arms race would not only delay, but also hamper and prevent necessary domestic modernization efforts. We therefore welcome the new openness in the foreign and domestic policies of the Soviet Union, and our Alliance must respond positively to the new signals.

We could well be on the threshold of a new and more constructive era in East-West relations - an era which our Alliance can and must enter with self-confidence and initiative. There must be no shadow of a doubt about our sincere commitment to the pursuit of detente and disarmament.

A Soviet policy of openness towards the West will present new and perhaps difficult challenges for the Alliance. We face such challenges already in the context of the Soviet Union's arms control initiatives. Those initiatives have changed the scene and put the Soviet Union on the offensive in a public relations perspective as well. We recognize that a number of the Soviet proposals constitute in fact adjustment to or adoption of Western positions. The double-zero INF solution is a case in point. Deep reductions in START and a total and global ban on chemical weapons are other examples. Our Alliance should seize the initiative and test the Soviet will to achieve equitable and verifiable solutions.

With regard to the on-going efforts to prevent an arms race in space and to curb the arms race on Earth, my Government has consistently emphasized the importance of compliance with

existing arms control agreements such as the SALT agreements and the ABM Treaty in its strictest interpretation.

Since it was formally adopted in 1967, NATO's strategy of forward defence and flexible response has been the subject of public debate within the Alliance. This applies to the role of nuclear weapons in particular. The Norwegian Government shares the public's concern about the large number of nuclear weapons in the present arsenals and their enormous destructive power. Norway will therefore contribute to efforts within the Alliance to reduce reliance on nuclear weapons, particularly those which create pressures for early and massive use, and to strengthen conventional forces instead.

Turning to political developments within our Alliance, I should like to emphasize that my Government welcomes endeavours to strengthen the European component of Western security and foreign policy cooperation. It is important that European cooperation in security and defence policy - the emergence of a European pillar of NATO of greater political consequence - be developed within an Atlantic framework and in a manner which can further promote successful Atlantic cooperation. We are confident that the fundamental community of interests and the mutual interdependence of North America and Western Europe will long endure. Strong ties and extensive cooperation across the Atlantic are of vital importance to my country.

Norway's proximity to the Soviet Union is an important factor in our foreign and security policy. Following a period in which political exchanges between Norway and the Soviet Union had been at a low, during my talks last year with General Secretary Gorbachev and Prime Minister Ryzjkov, they conveyed a definite impression of willingness to increase and deepen political contacts with Norway. We are looking forward to hosting a visit from the Soviet Prime Minister in January next year.

Norway seeks to maintain correct, constructive and good relations with the Soviet Union. This is especially important in the context of increasing petroleum activity in the Barents Sea,

where both Norway and the Soviet Union are stepping up exploration activities in their quest for oil. Exploitation of possible petroleum resources in the Barents Sea will entail increased activity and traffic in an area of considerable strategic and military importance to our Alliance as well as to the Soviet Union.

It is in Norway's national interests that the exploitation of resources in this area takes place in an orderly manner. This is also a declared policy objective. We welcome the commercial interest shown by international oil companies in participation in the development of petroleum resources on this northern part of our continental shelf as well.

Thus far Norway and the Soviet Union have not agreed on the delimitation of the continental shelf in the Barents Sea. A mutually recognized, respected and agreed delimitation line would be important to the exploitation of resources in the area. A solution to the boundary question in the sea and continental shelf areas in the Barents Sea would also significantly promote the further development of good neighbourly relations with the Soviet Union. It would have positive implications for the situation in the High North in general. We hope that the forthcoming visit by the Soviet Prime Minister to Norway will bring progress to the solution of this outstanding issue in our bilateral relations.

With regard to our position as a petroleum producer, let me underline Norway's commitment to active participation in the IEA. Norway has the resources necessary to bring substantial amounts of oil and natural gas to the market on a stable and long-term basis. We have the political desire to continue to contribute to the security of the energy supplies of our allies in NATO and other trading partners.

The North Atlantic alliance is a regional alliance. Our area is at the core of East-West relations and the state of East-West relations will continue to influence world events in a most fundamental manner. On the other hand, the security

interests of our countries can be affected negatively by developments not only within but also outside our region which increase tension in the relations between the super powers. My Government recognizes that a relevant concept of security in the present day world must be expanded to encompass global threats that are not confined to geographical regions. World poverty and economic imbalance, social injustice, environmental destruction, ecological imbalance and pollution, mismanagement of natural resources - these are all non-military issues that threaten to jeopardize our long-term security interests.

The World Commission on Environment and Development, which I have had the privilege to chair, has dealt with such broader issues, and has also underlined the importance of tighter control over the proliferation and testing of weapons of mass destruction - nuclear and non-nuclear - including those that have environmental implications. The report of the Commission - "Our Common Future" - will be presented to the General Assembly of the United Nations next month.

It is the strong feeling of the Norwegian Government that national governments and international organizations must address and take appropriate action to deal also with such non-military global issues and challenges as threaten our security and defy national boundaries and military might. This calls for a new awareness of the need for global cooperation, within and across traditional economic and political affiliations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have behind us almost 40 years of successful cooperation in NATO. Our alliance has made an important contribution to peace and security in the vital East-West perspective. Although there have been differences in the political emphases and approaches of member countries, as may be expected and encouraged in such a broad alliance of democratic states, we are committed to the same basic values and recognize the need for cooperation in protecting these values. NATO has proved to be a viable organization through which we will continue to act and meet the challenges of the future in concert.