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Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland

SPEECH AT LUNCH ON THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT TO NORWAY BY  
SECRETARY GENERAL OF NATO MANFRED WÖRNER, 6 JULY 1988

Mr. Secretary General and Mrs. Wörner,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great privilege to welcome you, Mr Secretary General and Mrs Wörner to Norway and to this lunch in your honour. It is indeed a compliment to us that Norway is the first country you chose to visit officially after having assumed your important office only a few days ago. We greatly appreciate the opportunity we have had today to discuss Alliance affairs and East-West relations.

With your profound knowledge of NATO cooperation and your vast experience in defence matters, NATO has a pilot who is eminently suited to serve our common defence interests.

Still active as an aviator, with an impressive 1200 flying hours to your credit, you, Mr. Secretary General, have entered the "cockpit" of NATO at a time when the United States and the Soviet Union are engaged in a new and indeed more meaningful political communication. We may well be on the threshold of an era of progressing dialogue and detente, a new era which our Alliance can and must enter into with self-confidence and initiative.

The Harmel Report underlined that security must be sought through defence, detente and disarmament. We must continue to do what is necessary for defence and what is possible for detente and dialogue. Credible deterrence is indispensable for security, as is the communication of good will.

Therefore, western democracies should actively explore the potential of new Soviet policy approaches and constructively counter those that fail to meet our own goals and intentions. We should not hesitate to enter into a broader dialogue and a deeper economic and political cooperation which can also help lessen the significance of the divide in Europe. In this perspective we welcome the normalization of relations between the EC and COMECON.

Our parallell efforts to maintain an adequate defence capability place a heavy burden on the national economies of all NATO members. Equal security must be matched by equal assumption of responsibility. All relevant factors in the overall defence contributions of member countries must be considered in our internal deliberations on reasonable burden-sharing.

Norway will continue to shoulder her share of the burden. And we will continue our policy for stability and low tension in our

region. For this policy to be successful, we will also need active Alliance support and participation in the future. We therefore welcome the recent agreement to establish the NATO Composite Force to replace the Canadian CAST Brigade as a reinforcement to Norway. Initially made up of units from the Federal Republic, the USA and Canada, the Composite Force underlines in a tangible way both the commitment of the Alliance to reinforce Norway and the importance attached to Norway in the collective defence of the Alliance.

Cooperation in NATO has contributed to the preservation of peace and secured the basis for a constructive development of our democracies. But peace in post-war Europe has been a precarious one in the shadow of nuclear armaments, with the most powerful military alliances in the world facing each other in a state of constant readiness.

Our next destination must be peace on a less precarious basis. At our successful meeting in March of this year, NATO Heads of Government confirmed transatlantic solidarity and voiced support of our endeavours to intensify the dialogue with the East on arms control. Adequate military strength and political solidarity form the basis for NATO's efforts to develop a more constructive East-West relationship.

Reverting back to aviation terminology, we may say that we have already taken off, with our safety-belts securely fastened, to seek new agreements for arms control and reductions of the nuclear arsenals in an earnest dialogue with the East. We seek a stable conventional balance at lower levels of forces and the elimination of chemical weapons. Norway would like to see the efforts within NATO to develop a comprehensive concept of security and arms control result in a gradual reduction of our dependence on nuclear arms.

In these efforts, let us also recognize that a viable concept of security in our age will be inadequate unless it encompasses global threats as well. World poverty and economic imbalance, environmental destruction, and mismanagement of natural resources - these are all non-military issues which threaten to undermine our long-term security. These challenges call for a new awareness of the need for global cooperation.

Mr Secretary General, it is your mission to pilot NATO at a time of challenge and opportunity. Let me on behalf of the Norwegian government wish you every success and pledge our continued commitment to the efforts and purpose of the North Atlantic Alliance.

Ladies and gentlemen, I propose a toast to the Secretary General of NATO and to Mrs Wörner.

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