

STATEMENT

BY

THE PRIME MINISTER OF NORWAY

H.E. MRS. GRO HARLEM BRUNOTLAND

THE MEETING OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

BRUSSELS, 29 MAY 1989

Statement at the Meeting of Heads of State and Government of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Brussels, 29 May 1989

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Mr. Secretary General,

This meeting is first of all an excellent opportunity to look ahead - to help us shape the future course of the Alliance in a rapidly changing environment, to establish an overall perspective and to look beyond the confines of any single issue. The initiative by President Bush today was indeed a most welcome inspiration to that vital process.

Forty years of peace is no small achievement on a continent so often torn by conflict and war. Our Alliance has provided a basis of security which has allowed our economies to prosper and greater individual freedom to develop. It has made a decisive impact on the development of East-West relations.

Our strategy and the twin-track approach of defence and dialogue have served us well and produced impressive results. These elements will remain the basis for our efforts, not in order to preserve the status quo, but to provide flexible tools for the promotion of peaceful change.

Having maintained our unity in difficult times we should surely be able to do so when prospects are brighter. We shall succeed only if we maintain a broader perspective. Our fundamental challenge is not if or when to decide on the modernization of specific weapons, but whether we manage to develop a political strategy for East-West relations and act in support of desirable change.

The consultation process in our Alliance has been strengthened considerably over the last years. We strongly welcome this development. The East-West dialogue could now change further in scope and intensity. Thus, the 1990's will require a deepening and extension of our consultations.

Arms control and disarmament will continue to form a centrepiece of our East-West agenda. We therefore welcome the decision to resume the US-Soviet negotiations in Geneva next month. We hope for an early agreement which would cut strategic nuclear forces by 50 per cent. Progress in this direction would have a favourable impact on other negotiations about arms control.

We believe that President Bush' personal resolve to give high priority to a global ban on chemical weapons will push negotiations forward to an agreement which is now long overdue.

By maintaining the initiative we can ensure a decisive impact on the future shape of Europe and we shall be able to mobilize the broad public support which is essential for democracies to conduct their foreign policy with authority and vigour.

The common ground which has emerged in the negotiations on conventional forces in Europe and the new political will which seems to invigorate these talks give reason to hope for early progress.

We welcome the bold initiatives which President Bush has announced here today. It promises to capitalize on the very hopeful beginning of the Vienna talks and it provides new momentum. The initiative is innovative, forward looking and vigorous.

The American proposal is designed in consonance with the strategic unity of the Alliance. The Soviet cuts should spread throughout the Atlantic to the Ural zone, and the forces to be removed will have to be deactivated. In that way they cannot shift to the flanks. A stabilization of the military relations in Europe at lower levels will enhance security in all of Europe.

No issue and no weapons system, including SNF, should be excluded from the agenda of East-West negotiations. Such negotiations, including the question as to how early they should start, must be viewed in conjunction with recognizable progress in reducing the Soviet superiority in conventional forces. On this basis our meeting should state our clear determination to negotiate and initiate preparations within the Alliance.



We have no reason to fear negotiations. We can and shall be confident about our own ability to decide and to handle the issues in accordance with our comprehensive concept. It would be logical to match lower levels of conventional forces with equal and lower levels also in other categories of weapons.

Our approach to the SNF problem must be viewed as part of a wider effort to develop our comprehensive concept for arms control and disarmament. An implementation of the comprehensive concept would result in reduced reliance on nuclear weapons for our security. Such a change would correspond to a view long held by the Norwegian Government.

Furthermore, the comprehensive concept clearly demonstrates the relation between our defence efforts and our work in the field of arms control. The Norwegian Government will continue to do what is required to maintain strong and effective defence. We are determined to make sustained efforts to carry our fair share of the common defence burden.

The document from Vienna revitalized the CSCE-process and gave us a remarkable progress in the human dimension. The momentum which has been created should be exploited to the utmost in order to identify further steps towards overcoming the political division of Europe.

The East-West relationship can not develop in isolation from global developments. The East-West confrontation ties up and diverts resources from the real global challenges, which include the persistent, increasing mass poverty and threats to the global environment. But we now have a greater possibility than ever of promoting a global peace economy.

In the years ahead, international cooperation, of which the NATO Alliance is a vital part, must make it possible for the West, East, North and South to begin to deal more earnestly with the immense global challenges facing us. Only if the East and West succeed in achieving greater security and safety by working together will we be able to give

our full attention to the immense unresolved problems which seem insoluble at the present time. Towards the year 2000 and beyond, the members of the Alliance must pursue sustainable development. This means more equitable economic cooperation, preserving and enhancing the environment, improving health, creating employment opportunities and prospects for self-realization for all individuals; in short, creating a more secure future for an increasing world population.

NATO can look back on 40 successful years. Differences in political emphasis and approach are a natural feature of an alliance of democratic states. Our present unresolved differences, which we should resolve sooner rather than later, can not alter the fact that the Alliance is entering its fifth decade with a position of strength in international relations.