

The Prime Minister of Norway  
Gro Harlem Brundtland

Statement to the Meeting of NATO Heads of State and Government  
Brussels, 10 January 1994

Mr. Chairman,

Norway shares a 194 km long border with Russia in the north of Europe. For a thousand years we have had peace between us across that border, but there have been many changes and many challenges.

Over the past couple of years the border has become more open, allowing people, goods and services, news and cultural influences to flow more freely. Such is the commonality of our perspective in the High North and that of the general European desire to bridge the gap between East and West from the Cold War.

We in Norway have the deepest sympathy for the Russian people, who are currently going through a very difficult period and who may have lost many of their illusions since the fall of the communist dictatorship and the breakup of the Soviet Union. This is why we, more than ever, must reach out to Russia and demonstrate that we are partners and friends who have no intention of exploiting Russia's temporary weakness during a time of great hardship.

We knew that the process of reform in Russia would be painful and difficult. Still I believe we were all surprised by the strong showing of parties opposed to reform, and in particular by the apparent popularity of extreme nationalism and the ominous nostalgia for the past. I do not propose that we brush aside such concerns. However, we must not let the results of the recent elections, and the support for reactionary and anti-democratic forces, interfere with our support for reform in Russia or write off our hopes that it will succeed.

We must remain firm in our commitment to a future that is promising for the security of Russia and the well-being of the Russian people, as well as to the rest of Europe.

As a northern European contribution in this regard Norway initiated a new form of regional cooperation in the North last year, comprising northwestern Russia as well as other countries with interests in the region. Our aim is to accelerate the normalization of relations between the people who live in the High North and

to contribute to the general effort to integrate Russia more closely into the family of democratic countries in Europe. These efforts were flanked by separate confidence-building measures such as joint naval maneuvers between Russian and allied navies. The genetic relationship between that project and today's "Partnership-for-Peace" is obvious.

Thus, our NATO membership allows us to act with confidence in our relations with Russia, which remains the single most important military power in Europe, and which still has considerable military assets close to its Nordic neighbours. This military situation is not likely to change in the foreseeable future, but today, like all of you here, we do not view Russia as posing a concrete threat. We do, however, see a mixture of widespread discontent and uncertainty. We are neighbour to 100 operational nuclear submarines, and some 60 obsolete ones and there are practically no storage or handling facilities for nuclear warheads and fuels. The problem of nuclear dumping, to say nothing of proliferation of warheads and nuclear material, is alarming and may affect a number of the countries of this Alliance.

These salient facts deserve NATO's attention as we move towards a more substantive partnership with our great neighbour. We need the continued backing of our North American and European Allies and partners, both as a hedge against future uncertainties and in order to counterbalance both the military disequilibrium in Northern Europe and to work effectively together with Russia to find solutions to the problems I have outlined.

This adds to the overriding political reasons why we are eager to work with all of you to link Russia more firmly to Europe as a whole. Our application for membership of the European Union is based not least on our desire to cooperate fully in its foreign and security policy cooperation.

Our ambition is to play a full and active role in that process and to contribute to the shaping of a new security order in Europe. We are prepared to assume our share of the burdens and responsibilities. In our view, the WEU is essential as a means of building a complementary European security and defense identity and to strengthening the Atlantic Alliance. We are convinced that this is the right course to take - and the most efficient means - to preserve and reinforce the vital transatlantic relationship. The continued, substantial presence of United States forces in Europe is a fundamentally important aspect of that link.

Our overriding objective must be to help to establish a new, viable security order for the whole of Europe, based on the notion of common security, collective responsibilities, equitable burdensharing, and mutual advantages. The new security environment of Europe is such that it requires the collective efforts of NATO and the European Union as well as its defense component. We must use the whole range of political and economic means available to us to create and strengthen the kind of mutual interdependence and benefits for the whole of

Europe that have rendered war between Western European countries impossible for almost half a century.

When we now open NATO to extensive cooperation with our partners in Central and Eastern Europe, we are embarking upon an evolutionary process towards a future expansion of NATO.

The US "Partnership for Peace" proposal provides a brilliant answer that has been largely underestimated by many in the public debate.

"Partnership-for-Peace" has been underestimated and described as merely military cooperation as opposed to an Article V-style security guarantee. Its potential should be recognized since it is really up to the partner country itself how close it wants to be involved in the military cooperation in NATO.

PFP membership could function as preparation for NATO membership as part of an evolutionary process. The programmes should be funded separately and adequately.

Mr. Chairman,

The increasing risk of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, of nuclear and chemical material, associated technology and means of delivery, pose a major global security challenge. This danger has increased over the last few years, and is cause for deep concern. Safe and secure storage of nuclear material is an issue of prime importance.

We should, as an alliance, consult more, share information and coordinate our efforts towards solving these problems. We must prevent the spread of nuclear expertise, especially from Russia and the Ukraine, and assist our partners in developing effective export controls. In both a NATO and a NACC context we must prevent such proliferation in all its aspects and counter it when necessary.

Peace-keeping operations are becoming increasingly complex and resource intensive. With our assistance, our NACC or PFP partners could provide extra resources for such operations. Thus we would strengthen our common efforts and enhance our ability to respond to the need for peace-keeping. The situation in the former Yugoslavia illustrates the need for such joint efforts. Establishing Combined Joint Task Forces addresses an important part of this issue.

As can be seen from Yugoslavia, lasting peace can only be achieved by political means, through negotiation. We must continue to give our full support to the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia and its co-chairmen. When an agreement has been reached on a peace plan, between all parties concerned, NATO must be prepared, at the request of the UN, to play a major role in ensuring its implementation. Meanwhile, we must make every possible effort to

ensure continued humanitarian assistance and to alleviate the suffering of the civilian population.

We must increase our efforts to ensure access for humanitarian relief operations and the safety of relief workers. And we must continue the efforts to register, investigate and bring to justice those responsible for war crimes and human rights violations.

A strong Alliance provides the point of departure for all our efforts. We recognize that North American and European security are indivisible, that the transatlantic links are vital, and that substantial North American presence in Europe must be maintained. There shall be no political continental drift moving us apart.

It is in our interest, as well as that of our new partners to ensure that the Alliance remains able to carry out its core functions: guaranteeing the territorial integrity of its members. Therefore, in assuming and solving new tasks and responsibilities, we must ensure the continued and proper funding of NATO's core functions. The credibility of NATO's capacity is at the core of NATO's attractiveness to our partners in the East.

Frank and regular consultations on security issues have been a hallmark of the alliance and must continue. Regular summits will serve this purpose.

When NATO reaffirmed its purpose and actively started to adapt to the new Europe, critics predicted that NATO would soon become a petrified relic of the past. They were all wrong. The past few years have proven that NATO remains vital, adaptable and crucial for peace and stability in Europe.

NATO has once again demonstrated its vital role as a source of stability and predictability, facilitating far-reaching and necessary political, economic and social change in Europe. NATO is a voluntary alliance of free states. Nationalism, racial and religious hatred, regional conflicts, and insecurity and instability in several parts of this Continent will make us more, not less dependent on our commonality of values. I am confident that these our shared values will keep us united and committed to change and renewal, freedom and democracy.