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Mr. Jan P. Syse
Chairman of the Norwegian Conservative Party

13th Party Leaders' Conference

A NEW EUROPEAN ARCHITECTURE

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year's EDU conference takes place in the lovely time of August. But it also takes place in august times, with clear link to European and world security. The Middle East situation may explode into open war.

What are we up against? Let there be no mistake about it, as the British Prime Minister said in her excellent speech. We are up against an unprovoked and unlawful military invasion. We are witnessing an armed occupation and a plundering of all assets the aggressor has been able to lay his hands on.

There are no legal niceties to the Iraqi invasion, occupation and annexation; it breaks every rule there is in the book of international law.

We all know from recent history that yielding to aggression gave no such thing as peace in our time. It gave nothing but surrender. Surrender and sorrow. We shall not repeat that mistake.

This time we are almost unanimously in, and let me say in this European gathering. As so many times before,

the US carry the heaviest burden and provide the clearest leadership, together with Great Britain and France. But we are with them. And we stay together. Dr. Mock quoted Edmund Burke earlier to-day. May I add some other of Edmund Burke's words of wisdom: "When bad men combine, the good must associate. Else they will fall, one by one."

Victor Hugo said that nothing is stronger than an idea whose time has come.

The peaceful revolution in Central and Eastern Europe has demonstrated the irresistible strength of our ideas. One year ago, they were abstract ideas for millions of Europeans. Today, their ambitions and hopes are becoming reality.

Yesterday, I came directly from another important conference, - in Oslo. A conference on the "anatomy of hate" - arranged by the Elie Wiesel Foundation and the Nobel Peace Prize Committee. It assembled a group of people, which would have been unthinkable only a few months ago; President Havel, President Landsbergis, President Mitterand, Nelson Mandela, Chai Ling and many, many others. They all concluded that the individual has a role to play - to supplement the efforts of governments.

And so must the political parties. This meeting is - in many ways - as unique as the Conference in Oslo. It brings together Conservative and Christian Democratic parties from East and West - for the first time.

It demonstrates our determination to be a driving force in European politics - in all of Europe, as we have been in the West for so long.

This meeting marks the beginning of a new era in the EDU, and in shaping the political future of our continent. Our countries belong to different organizations, to different alliances. That is a characteristic of Europe's multiplicity. The European revolution has made it possible for that multiplicity to flourish. We must make sure that we have the institutions required to secure that we do not fall into the dangerous traps and quarrels of our past, but keep Europe together - whole and free for all of us.

The CSCE will be an important framework for a new European order. Security is essentially a matter of politics. A European architecture in which free, democratic and prosperous countries find a place together is the most vital prerequisite for security.

A number of structures of European cooperation are in place; the CSCE, the European Community, the Council of Europe, NATO - to mention a few. They are at our disposal. Thus, we hold a trumpcard over previous attempts to organize Europe's political landscape.

The European Community is a driving force, whether we belong to it or not. It's a sad fact, but Norway is not.

I had breakfast with President Havel yesterday. He asked me; " How is it possible that your country has chosen not to join the Community? How is it possible that you rejected what all the new democracies of Eastern and Central Europe so strongly want to obtain?" I had no other reply than that Norwegians are a particularly stubborn race.

But I can assure you - as I assured him - that we, the Conservative Party, have not given up our struggle to convince Norwegians to join - and to join as soon as possible.

Within the end of this year, we will see the outlines of another new treaty creating a European Economic Space of the 18 EFTA and EC states. Negotiations are well under way. An EES treaty should - as a next step - serve as an instrument for the participation of the new democracies in the European economic integration.

To us NATO will remain another fundamental pillar. The alliance has demonstrated its success. It kept the United States away from isolationism. It brought us a lasting American commitment to European security. We will continue to need that commitment - to our common stability in the future. NATO will remain a basic element of European equilibrium and stability - not only for its 16 members, but for Europe as a whole.

We must ensure that NATO and the European Community do not act as competitors, but as partners supplementing each other. The focus over the last year has been on the positive changes in East and Central Europe. But let us not forget the broader European perspective. The military developments have not been equally positive in all parts of Europe. Of course, my country's security is also improved. But the accumulation of forces in the North remains basically unchanged. As the number of troops and military material in Central Europe are reduced, we must secure that it is destroyed and not simply withdrawn to other areas, in the North, in the South.

The North of Norway and the East of Turkey are now the only direct points of contact between the NATO countries and Soviet forces. The situation in these areas concerns all of us. It is a matter of our common security.

The military threat has for the time being diminished, the environmental threat is growing. A regional environmental strategy is now required.

I have suggested that the CSCE should start the elaboration of a binding environmental "code of conduct".

Today, our environmental efforts are fragmented and spread across a variety of different bodies and conferences. They must be brought more closely together.

The CSCE would be used for that purpose, in close cooperation with the European Commission for Europe and the Environmental Agency of the European Community.

I take this opportunity to ask for your support - and for your participation - in future elaborating our proposals and in securing that they are brought fully into the CSCE process.

We are here to address the future European architecture. But who are we? We are of course the architects, the ones with the most ambitious visions for the kind of free Europe we want to create. This is the time to be ambitious. Not only for the governments. We - the conservative and christian democratic parties must play the leading role.