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"Europe in Transition - A Norwegian View"

We have a Norwegian proverbial saying that goes: When the wind is still, even the weathercock has a steady character.

The winds are not still in international politics. The more demand there is for a steady character, the more we must display steadfastness.

Allow me then to express my feelings of gratitude and of admiration. Gratitude for this opportunity to speak to a very knowledgeable audience about my Government's views on the changes in Europe. Admiration for your selflessness in putting the pleasures of a good meal at risk by subjecting yourselves to the mercies of a visiting speaker. Hopefully this speaker has learnt his lesson from a fellow politician, about whom it was said: The only one who ever slept with him was his audience.

For forty years our challenge was to demonstrate patience and perseverance in dealing with a stagnant Soviet super-power. Today, our task is to manage a constantly quickening pace of change. During his visit to Bonn last summer, President Gorbachev referred the question of German unification to future history - from 50 to a 100 years ahead. That part of history is taking place right now.

Few have illustrated this contrast better than the Czechoslovak president, Vaclav Havel, who this week

has been visiting your country. He said; "In my office at the Prague Castle, I haven't found a single clock. I sense something symbolic in this: For long years, there was no reason to look at the clock, because time stood still. History had come to a stop."

But now the power monopoly of the communist parties has been broken. The countries of Eastern Europe have declared their desire to step onto the stage of democratic Europe. They are heading for free elections and for economic reform. For decades the old regimes had behaved as if running an economy was like regulating a river. But it is not. It is rather to understand why the river flows; to understand the driving forces. All these efforts must be given our full support.

In periods of dramatic change there will inevitably be the temptation to do away with everything which formed part of the old order. There will be the unavoidable calls in some European quarters for the dissolution of both alliances; and there will be the calls on this side of the Atlantic for bringing the troops home - not some, but all of them.

Both views are equally dangerous. An American journalist once said: "In politics, a straight line is the shortest distance to disaster". The reality is complex. It doesn't call for simplistic answers.

Today, when so much is unpredictable, the transatlantic partnership represents stability.

Of course, we need a vision of where we want to go. But we also need the instruments with which to get there safely. NATO constitutes such an instrument. We should use it fully.

Sir Winston Churchill said: "We must beware of needless innovation". With this I fully agree. But I agree less with another famous European politician, president de Gaulle, who claimed that "treaties wither, like roses and young girls". It is my experience that proper care really makes a difference.

Proper care means what President Bush at the December NATO summit called "A new Atlanticism". I have given the President my strong support for that today.

In his speech in Berlin on December 12, Secretary of State Baker outlined new missions for NATO, in which we must now engage. The first - and most important - will be to construct a new security architecture. The challenge goes beyond overcoming 40 years of division of Europe. Our continent has, over the centuries, been a quarrelsome place. Today, our task is to link the countries of Europe - all of them - and North America so closely together that a return to the quarrels of the past can never take place.

We welcome the process towards the unification of Germany. It represents the fulfilment of the right of self-determination of the citizens of the two German states. It forms part of the building of a new order of security and cooperation.

These questions cannot - as President Bush has made so clear - be dealt with by the United States and the Soviet Union over the heads of the Europeans. But nor can they be dealt with without the full participation of our North American allies.

The two German states and the four Berlin powers carry a special responsibility in the question of German unification. They must assume that responsibility. But the security of all other European states - including Norway - is also directly involved. The need

for openness and for wider European involvement is evident. It is of vital importance that NATO's consultative machinery be fully used. The interests of all allies must be considered. This would in fact add strength to our efforts at securing the continued German membership in our alliance.

The new democracies of Eastern Europe are coming out of Soviet domination. They seek a new role and demand that their voices be heard. Can they then be told that they have to remain spectators to the construction of a new security order? Of course not. A summit of the 35 countries of the CSCE would contribute significantly to meeting the concerns of all Europeans.

Another immediate task is to conclude an agreement at the Vienna negotiations, leading towards the elimination of the Soviet conventional superiority in Europe. Not only from the Urals to the Atlantic, but from the Barents Sea to the Mediterranean. Such an agreement - as well as a START-treaty on nuclear reductions - will enhance the security of my country.

Soviet units cannot merely be withdrawn from Eastern Europe to be transferred to other areas, such as the Northern flank. Enhanced security requires a genuine and verified build-down of forces. This can only be achieved at the negotiating table in Vienna.

My country occupies a special position within the Atlantic Alliance. Our long coast faces lines of reinforcement that are vital to the security of the entire Alliance. The world's largest concentration of naval military power is located in our immediate vicinity. The main parts of these forces are elements of the global competition. But they do affect and complicate Norway's position.

Norway cannot solve its defence problems solely by national efforts. We will continue to contribute our share to a credible common defence. But we will also continue to depend on firm links across the Atlantic and to our Western European allies. The security of the Alliance as such is linked to our ability - together - to keep open the vital lines across the Atlantic.

The reduction of US troops in Europe could make the Alliance more - and not less - dependent on these transatlantic lines - if a crisis should occur. The Norwegian government is prepared - as in the past - to take its part of ensuring that the transatlantic links remain credible and in accordance with the security requirements of the 1990's.

The Warsaw Pact has changed. The Soviet military threat has diminished. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union will remain by far the largest military power located on the European continent. The Soviets may move towards democracy and pluralism. But there will still be a potential for conflicts of interests. A policy of equilibrium will continue to be required. The United States will have to play an important part. We welcome the assurances given by President Bush that the United States will remain engaged in the security of Europe as long as the European allies so desire. And we must ensure that the Atlantic does not - politically and psychologically - grow wider as a result of the reductions now proposed.

Our security partnership cannot be isolated from trade and economic developments. The creation of a single European market will mean a mobilization of economic resources in Europe. We must - on both sides of the Atlantic - focus on the real opportunities of such a single market, and not on the unreal dangers of a "fortress Europe".

Norway and the five other countries of the European Free Trade Association are entering into new negotiations with the European Community. Our objective is to set up a European Economic Space, embracing 18 countries of Western Europe. It will form part of a new European order, and provide a possible model for the future economic relationship between East and West on our continent. A European Economic Space could also serve as a "waiting room" for countries aiming at membership in the European Community.

Today, it is our economic and political system that inspires the Eastern European countries' struggle to reinvigorate their stagnant economies. It is important - more than ever before - that we resist protectionist pressures. As I said to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee today: We should have learnt that lesson earlier, that if we are only battening the hatches against each other, we do not only protect ourselves against the competence and skill of others, we also cement our own weaknesses. Let us take Bertrand Russel's maxim in earnest: That you should never make the same mistake twice in life when there are so many to choose from. So let us stay away from protectionism. And always remember that markets are like parachutes; they only function when open.

It is with these considerations in mind that I find Secretary Baker's initiative - to establish new institutional and consultative links between the U.S. and the European Community - to be the right approach.

However, the European Community is not synonymous with NATO Europe. Two of the most "Atlantic" countries of Western Europe - Norway and Iceland - are not members of the Community. The only two European allies sharing borders with the Soviet Union - Norway and Turkey - do not belong to the Group of Twelve. The concept of "new

Atlanticism" has to embrace all European allies - whether or not they form part of the Community.

The policy of "Glasnost" in the Soviet Union and the new openness in central Europe have revealed a mismanagement of natural resources and environment of tremendous proportions. Large areas have been defined as unmitigated ecological disaster areas. The Kola Peninsula on our Northern border is not only the home of a military threat. It represents a dramatic ecological threat to the fragile Northern and Arctic environment. Photos now released present an alarming picture of the devastation which has already taken place.

As the military threat recedes we have to come to grips with the environmental threat as well. This May, Norway will host a regional conference - encompassing 34 countries of Europe and North America. Its aim will be to agree on a programme of action which can set us on a different course.

There is a new readiness in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe to attack these problems in a serious manner. But the road will be far from easy. The pressures for rapid economic growth are strong. A broader strategy will be required, which unites the concern of environment, energy and growth.

You will forgive me - I hope - if I also use this opportunity to say a few words more particularly about my own country.

Modern Norway regained its full independence in 1905, in the middle of a culturally golden age, which brought us Edvard Grieg, Edvard Munch and Henrik Ibsen among many others. But economically the prospects for the 20th century looked gloomy. Thousands of young and creative minds crossed the Atlantic to the land of new

opportunities. They were wrong. Not in choosing America - that was a decision very few of them regretted. But they were wrong in their evaluation of what the 20th century would bring to Norway. Those who stayed behind managed to make use of the two resources they had at their disposal, natural and human resources. They succeeded in making Norway one of the richer countries in the world.

Regardless of a rough climate, nature has been on our side. Fish was from the beginning a source that contributed to the nation's wealth. Forestry and cheap hydro-electric power were driving forces in the Norwegian industrialization process that began a little more than a hundred years ago. They still are, in fact.

The progress of modern Norway is the result of an advanced combination of nature and man. Since the early 1970s we have made use of the vast petroleum resources hidden under the rough North Sea. It has required competence, creativity and courage. New technological frontiers had to be crossed. Today our sales of gas and oil amount to nearly 30% of our total exports, contributing to more than 10% of our GNP.

Norway has, since the Vikings, been a nation of seafarers. Our commercial fleet has in the last years been the fastest growing fleet in the world. It has regained its position from before the shipping crises of the 1970s. Today, it holds the fifth rank among the world's shipping nations. 10% of the commercial ships crossing the seas are operated by Norwegian companies. One third of them are engaged in traffic to and from the United States.

Thus, openness is a vital requirement for continued growth. We export and import half our GNP. We are -

per definition - committed to open markets and free trade.

But we do - of course - have our fair share of problems. This brings me back to the question of resources. It is an important objective of any Norwegian government to safeguard the basis for livelihood and population along our Northern coast. Important not only to us - I may add. The communities of Northern Norway constitute a critical element in our security policy - and our common defence. It is in the interest of all of us that these settlements and communities be maintained.

Today, however, they face a serious crisis. The stock of codfish - the most important part of our fisheries - have been dramatically reduced. The reasons are not yet fully understood. At present, my Government is implementing a series of emergency steps - to ease the present problems and to promote new growth. But no such step can bring the cod back. We need knowledge which can form the basis for sensible future decisions on the management of resources.

Norway has, therefore, initiated a unique research programme. We seek insight into the interaction between minke whales, other marine mammals, fish stocks and the marine ecosystem as such. No country - with the exception of Iceland - is more dependent on the preservation of these stocks and species than we are. Human settlement on our Northern coast depends on a restoration of stocks to a level which allows sustainable fisheries. Our efforts are based on Norway's firm commitment to work for a rational and responsible management, based on ecological criteria and the highest ethical standards.

In dealing with our problems we should not let ourselves be drowned by them. As Mark Twain put it:

"Luckily, most of my problems never occurred". Norway has possibilities and advantages.

The Winter Olympics in 1994 will give us an opportunity to market these forcefully. You will indeed be welcome. We will make the olympics as sophisticated as you need them, as prudent as you want them, as friendly as you like them. I think I can say with some of the more exclusive car makers, when asked how many horsepowers they have put under the hood. The answer is: "Enough".

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The challenges we face - together and each of us separately - are indeed tremendous and exciting.

Of course, we shall never be able to escape that ultimate dilemma, that all our knowledge is about the past and all our decisions about the future. Back in 1926 Averell Harriman asked a Texan friend, who had just returned from Moscow what was going to happen in the Soviet Union. The friend replied that predicting the future development in the Soviet Union was like predicting the weather in Texas; "Anyone who tries to predict the weather in Texas is a newcomer". One thing is certain: There will not only be calm seas. We will have to formulate a stable policy in an unstable environment. Success will depend on our ability to make full use of the knowledge we possess and on our ability to proceed and act together. My talks in Washington have convinced me - again - of the determination of the United States to play a leading role in this endeavour; to build a common European/Atlantic home - a new Atlanticism.