

STATSMINISTERENS KONTOR

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SPERREFRIST Mandag 15 april kl 1930

DATO 15 april 1985

STATSMINISTERENS TALE PÅ AKERSHUS 15.APRIL 1985, I
ANLEDNING AV NATO'S GENERALSEKRETER, LORD
CARRINGTONS OFFISIELLE BESØK I NORGE.

Mr. Secretary General,

Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Tonight I have the great honour and pleasure here at Akershus Castle to extend a heartfelt welcome to our most honoured guest, Lord Carrington, and to his colleagues.

Although this is your first visit to Norway in your capacity as Secretary General of NATO, we have already had the pleasure and benefit of a visit from you one year ago, almost to the day, on an information tour before you assumed your present high office.

We are all aware of the combination of extreme complexity and heavy responsibility which characterize your task. You have taken over in a situation in which the Alliance continues to be confronted with formidable challenges with regard to both of its two main objectives - to maintain adequate military strength for deterrence and

defence, and to work towards a more stable relationship in which underlying political issues between East and West can be solved.

Mr. Secretary General, even though you are now a highly international civil servant, you will allow a Norwegian Prime Minister to pay tribute to you as a very British figure as well - as a representative of what we throughout history have learned to admire as the best qualities and traditions of British statemanship: Determination, wisdom and pragmatism, combined with a friendliness and disarming sense of humor, which certainly also makes achievement easier.

I find it particularly pleasant to be able to receive you here at Akershus Castle, as it represents the oldest integral defence fortifications of Norway, dating back to the year 1299. In the course of its long history this castle has never been forced to surrender as a consequence of direct attack. Norwegians have always cherished this fact with pride, and attach to it a symbolic value for the nation. Thus, we consider Akershus the best place for us to entertain friends with whom we cooperate so closely to preserve peace and freedom.

Today, it is reassuring to us that popular support in Norway for national defence is undiminished and that support for the Atlantic Alliance is continuing at a very high level and is, in fact, increasing - independently, it seems, of the disputes taking place over certain aspects of security policy. I interpret this as an expression of

deep-seated sentiments in the Norwegian population in favour of defending ourselves, our country and the democratic way of life - and of a realization of the fact that Norway's exposed geographical and strategic location makes us strongly dependent on support from friends and allies. Thus the real growth of Norwegian defence spending has been at an annual average of close to 3.5 percent for the last three years.

Personally, I welcome the re-emphasis on the political function of the Alliance, which we saw signs of soon after you assumed office in Brussels. Not only do we need a resumption of the East-West dialogue, but also further efforts towards a consolidation of a long-term bipartisanship on security policy within the individual NATO-countries - including my own - and within the Alliance as a whole.

There will be no progress in our relations with the Soviet Union as long as Moscow thinks it can wait out the next election in some member country - there will always be an election coming up somewhere - which could bring about changes in the substance or doctrine of parts of NATO's security policy. In order to convince the leaders in Moscow that Soviet wedge-driving is no substitute for the give and take leading up to honest political agreements, we must strive to reach a fundamental consensus within the Alliance - including the majority of public opinion - about the nature of the Soviet system and the challenge confronting us. To reach that consensus it is, in my opinion, necessary that there also be a better balance between European and American input into the policy-making process of the

Alliance. For that reason, - even though we are not a member of the European Community - Norway politically supports the efforts being made in Western Europe to develop the European identity in the area of foreign policy, within the framework of the Alliance.

In your lecture, "In Defence of Politics", at the Belgian Higher Institute for Defence last September, you spoke very appropriately of the need for NATO "to keep the peace and to improve its quality". Such an improvement in the quality of peace is, in my opinion, urgently needed in two areas: Firstly, the arms race has to be brought to an agreed standstill. I am, however, not too pessimistic with regard to the East-West negotiations, when you consider the general political environment and long-term trends. The dialogue has now been resumed after strong and persistent prodding from the Western side, and we detect signs that the Russians might be prepared for serious negotiations, supported by more realistic views on what can and what cannot be attained. My recent conversation with Prime Minister Nikolai Tikhonov in Moscow did not weaken that impression. However, the process may be brought to a new standstill if the Soviets are once again given the impression that there are elements in the West which will force the Western governments to give the Soviet Union what they want without the latter making real concessions.

At the crucial talks in Geneva, Norway fully supports the U.S. negotiating objectives, which are to reduce or eliminate the most destabilizing strategic and INF-weapons, to cut the nuclear arsenals substantially in order to reach

optimum security for all at the lowest level of armament and to avoid an arms race in space. In the light of comprehensive Soviet research, efforts Norway recognizes the need for the U.S. research program in defensive systems. We note with approval that possible testing or deployment on the part of the U.S. will be subject to negotiations. I am happy that our U.S. allies have so clearly expressed their commitment to the important ABM Treaty.

Secondly, improving the quality of peace should also serve to make the unnatural and unhistorical division of Europe less painful - to promote real détente. There is a need for wider contacts and a broader dialogue with the East - and to include those questions which are of greatest interest to those nations, such as trade and economic cooperation. I have thus noted with great satisfaction that U.S.-Soviet trade talks are being resumed at a high political level. It is of great importance to establish first-hand contacts with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union on all levels, and in particular with the Soviet leadership which is now establishing itself. The message we should convey is that of a hand stretched out, offering balanced and equitable agreements on the pressing arms issues and honest, broad cooperation on economic and other questions.

In approaching the Soviet Union, with - as you have said - today's "Pravda" open on the desk and volumes of Russian history on the table at home - we could do worse than remember the words of Count Metternich from 1822:

"Policy does not rest on novelty, but on history; not on beliefs, but on knowledge".

Mr. Secretary General, this mention of one of the classic names in European diplomacy implies that our expectations for you and your efforts in your present position, during such a crucial period in the history of the Alliance, are not modest ones. And I would like to take this opportunity to assure you that you have the fullest support of the Norwegian Government in your present efforts. We wish you every success in the future.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in proposing a toast to the Secretary General of NATO, Lord Carrington.