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Kåre Willoch, Prime Minister of Norway:

East-West-relations. Introduction to discussions

Mr. Chairman, fellow delegates,

As it happens, we are gathered for this discussion on East-West-relations at a time when new developments may be under way in that decisive field of international policy. We also meet in a year in which we commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, a conflict which largely determined the general geopolitical pattern. The de facto postwar settlement has proved to be remarkably stable. However, this stability has been paid for by the isolation and lack of freedom that occur in a number of countries which were and are part of Europe - culturally, politically, economically, religiously.

The challenge presented by Soviet power to the areas surrounding her has in no way diminished since the early postwar period, though it has been contained in most areas and we have gradually been able - through cohesion and sensible policies on the part of the alliances between democracies - to develop a more stable relationship with the Soviet Union, the successor state of the Russia that both Europeans and Asians know so well as an expansionary

historical entity. The task facing us today is to continue to encourage the positive development of those relations, building on treaties and agreements which have already been achieved - while preserving the military strength and political cohesion which is so vital in any relationship with the Soviet Union. In pursuing that relationship we could do worse than to keep in mind the dictum of that well-known European diplomat, Count Metternich, who emphasized in 1822: "Policy does not rest on novelty, but on history; not on beliefs, but on knowledge".

As conservatives, I would think that a reflective pragmatism, support for basic human rights, a willingness for dialogue, and a non-ideological approach to the dangerous business of international affairs should be what distinguish our conduct of foreign policy. Personally I sincerely welcome the decision of President Ronald Reagan to meet with the Soviet leader, Mr. Mikail Gorbachev, in Geneva in November, to resume the summit-level dialogue which has been suspended for more than six years. I see that decision as an expression of the pragmatism and search for practical solutions which we need today.

In the field of East-West-relations, it seems to me that we, in the West, are facing a very important period leading up to and immediately following the new Soviet leader's first party-

conference next February. We will certainly see - as can already be discerned - a renewed and more sophisticated effort on the part of the Kremlin to split the Western alliance. On the other hand we can also see the tremendous economic, social and foreign policy problems confronting Mr. Gorbachev - and he himself speaks publicly and frequently about the first two of these problems. Mr. Gorbachev will undoubtedly pursue Soviet interests as relentlessly as did his predecessors, and there is no reason to believe that he will ever turn out to be a "liberal" with a predilection for democratic forms of government. Still, he seems to be trying to impose a greater element of rationality upon the heavy machinery of Soviet government - and this rationality is one of the prerequisites for a Soviet willingness to reach balanced agreements with the West.

We should welcome such a tendency, which could point towards a Soviet limitation of her arms build-up, in order to solve some of its very grave internal social and economic problems.

In addition we ought to take note of the fact that the Soviet Union has also, over a considerable period of time, consistently lost political ground in the third world. The West should not underestimate the importance of political support from the neutral and non-aligned countries and - most importantly - we must in no way condone the serious

violation of basic and internationally agreed human rights which the apartheid system of South Africa represents. On the contrary, it is our obligation to urge the South African Government to implement the necessary reforms without delay and urge the international community to exert effective pressure upon the Government in order to bring apartheid to an end by peaceful means.

Lord Peter Carrington, who we are fortunate to have in the position of Secretary General of NATO, has very aptly spoken of the need of the Western Alliance "to keep the peace and improve its quality". In order to attain that double aim we need to reach a broad consensus in the Alliance with regard to the assessment of the Soviet threat - all too often the Russians are portrayed as "ten foot tall" - and an agreed political strategy with broad enough political backing to safeguard its consistent implementation.

The basic strategy for the conduct of our relations with the East has been laid down in NATO's Harmel-report from 1967, as well as in later documents, and still remains valid:

The Alliance has two main functions: to maintain adequate military strength and political solidarity for deterrence and defence; and to pursue the search for progress towards a more stable

relationship in which underlying political issues between East and West can be solved.

Bringing the arms race to an agreed standstill must be the main goal of that strategy. I am not pessimistic with regard to the Geneva talks now going on, due to the convincing effort on the part of the United States to pursue agreements in close consultation with its allies, due to the contacts on lower levels which are being maintained and developed between Washington and Moscow, and due - in the longer perspective - to the Soviet need for arms control agreements.

We must not, though, underestimate the danger that dissension between and within the nations of the West may tempt the Soviets to try to achieve more through intransigence than through give and take.

Bringing offensive as well as defensive weapons into the negotiations will increase the chances of reaching a comprehensive agreement. A non-verifiable ban on SDI research would, however, not be in the Western interest; we recognize the need for the United States to carry on research on SDI, not least in view of the persistent Soviet activities in the field of space-weapons. Still, the solutions to our security problems will always have to be sought in the field of politics and not technology.

Neither should we forget that arms control negotiations cannot bear the entire burden alone: Other aspects of East-West relations, such as personal visits on all levels, cultural exchanges, political dialogue and - most decisively - economic relations - should be given their due. We have a historical duty and a political responsibility to uphold the all nations' right to freedom and self-determination. However, our policy in Eastern Europe, as elsewhere, must be to encourage reform rather than revolution. Because human rights are important to us, and they always will be, the practical results for the people concerned are the real moral standards by which to measure our policies.

We should try to harvest much greater political benefits from the economic strength of the most developed democratic societies, at a time when the economic performance of the socialist countries remains extremely dismal. Increased trade and integration into the international economic system of those socialist countries which so choose, would contribute towards normalizing and stabilizing relations. The economic well-being of our neighbours within the Soviet bloc serves our long-term political interests - thus only the export of equipment of military consequence should be prevented.

The need for consistency in pursuing a Western strategy towards the East brings me to the all-important question of political backing for the policies of the alliances created to preserve the peace and freedom of the democracies.

I very much welcome the re-emphasis placed by the new Secretary General on the political function of NATO. Not only do we need a resumption of the East-West dialogue, but also further efforts towards a consolidation of long-term bipartisanship on security policy within the individual member-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 western country - there will always be an election coming up somewhere - which could bring about changes in the substance or doctrine of the security policies of the democracies. 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 our alliances - 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 NATO. For that reason, we should support the efforts being made in Western Europe to develop the European identity in the area of foreign policy, within the framework of the NATO Alliance. However, in pursuing our own policies and responding to those of the Soviet Union, we should always keep in mind global inter-relationships, watching the developments along the Soviet periphery and never succumbing to the temptation to see only the regional aspects of East-West relations.

Before concluding, I would like to repeat and stress the conviction that the existing alliances between democratic nations remain, for the foreseeable future, the indispensable instruments of a great number of societies - many of them outside formal military alliances - to safeguard and promote the values which we share and cherish: free societies, democratic rule and the inviolability of fundamental human rights.
