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Prime Minister Odvar Nordli:

NORWAY AND THE ATLANTIC TIES

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The purpose of Norwegian security policy has essentially remained unchanged throughout this century.

The means employed in our security policy have on the other hand varied with the external situation and with the historical experience we have had as a nation.

Simply put, the aim of our security policy has been to live in peace and build up our society in accordance with our own ideals.

Like most small countries we believed in a policy of neutrality. Up to the last world war the nordic countries appeared to be at a safe distance from the political turmoil in Europe. We were in many ways a quiet and peaceful corner of our part of the world.

The second world war showed us that circumstances had changed and altered our situation from the point of view of national security. It demonstrated clearly that the nordic countries were no longer outside the scope of great power strategy and that their territories were not beyond the reach of a modern war machine.

Neutrality and the desire to keep out of the great-power conflict could not prevent us from being drawn into the war.

A policy of neutrality also became the mainstay of our foreign policy during the first post-war years, but it now had a special foundation. Neutrality and active participation in the United Nations now constituted the twin pillars of our security policy. Moreover our defence establishment was strengthened to support this policy.

When Norway joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization we did not thereby take a position on what sort of security arrangements we preferred "per se", like neutrality or nordic collaboration or participation in a broader alliance.

Our choice was made in the light of an assessment of the extent to which the different types of arrangements would serve our security policy goals.

Our neutrality policy had not been, and our NATO membership was not, an end in itself. But postwar developments keeping prewar experience fresh in our minds seemed to indicate that Atlantic defence collaboration was the safest solution to our security problems.

Binding collaboration in the security field in peacetime was something new in Norwegian politics. But our most important partners had been our allies during the war and our bonds to, and community of interest with, western Europe and North America had grown for many generations through our contacts in the political, economic, and cultural fields. The relatively large group of Americans of Norwegian descent has contributed to the close ties over the Atlantic.

To us in Norway the North Atlantic Treaty is not just the basis for our security policy. We also attach the greatest importance to the efforts of member countries in their domestic policy in promoting and developing the fundamental values that the Treaty purports to protect such as democracy, human rights and international law. NATO faces an important challenge in this field. The Alliance must see to it that defence strategy in our external relations and the internal process of democratization do not clash head on in any member country.

NATO's policy builds on two main elements: defence and negotiation. In the world of "realpolitik" a combined strategy is a necessity. The same elements serve as the basis for Norwegian security policy. We work actively for détente, disarmament and for the strengthening of international collaboration whilst striving to maintain an effective and modern defence. The protection that our national defence can provide is only credible when fitted into the framework of western defence collaboration.

Looking into the future, the situation as far as security policy is concerned is much more complicated than it was during the first postwar period. It is true that military developments are still an important feature of our part of the world. The acquisition of modern weaponry is an even more prominent feature of the situation in some parts of the third world. Moreover several countries now have the technical possibility of acquiring their own atomic weapons.

But security policy has at the same time taken on new dimensions. Population growth, scarcity of resources, economic trade, and foreign exchange problems within the countries themselves and in the world economy, stronger nationalistic aspirations of ethnic groups, new developments connected with the law of the sea and the continental shelf etc can have direct consequences in the field of security policy. Or they can, indirectly, sap political and economic strength thus influencing security policy patterns in the world.

NATO's defences and interallied solidarity remain an important pillar of our security policy. They are a significant element in our efforts to negotiate successfully. The many problems of some urgency that give a new dimension to our security policy must be understood and we must have the will to find constructive solutions. This is of decisive importance if Atlantic collaboration is to succeed in the remaining decades of this century.

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