

PRIME MINISTER ODVAR NORDLI'S STATEMENT DURING THE
FOREIGN POLICY DEBATE IN THE STORTING THURSDAY
7 FEBRUARY 1980

The beginning of 1980 and the new decade is marked by an international situation which is more tense than for a long time.

In Afghanistan we have witnessed a clear breach of time-honoured precepts and rules for intercourse between nations. An armed intervention cannot be accepted as an instrument in international politics. As the Foreign Minister emphasized in his foreign policy statement, the invasion of Afghanistan represented such a clear case of the use of force that other nations could not fail to protest. The Norwegian Government ^{has} pointed out in particular how unacceptable it is that a great power intervene with armed force in the internal affairs of a small country and that such conduct can in no way be excused. The reactions which Norway has put into effect following the invasion in Afghanistan have had as their objective to emphasize that such use of force cannot be accepted. We have also wished to stress that we are prepared to make our contribution to ensure that the further use of force will be made impossible

In the proceedings on the Afghanistan issue in the UN we have been party to the condemnation by the international community of the invasion. The national measures we have introduced, for example the cancellation or postponement of all visits and exchanges of a military nature between the Soviet Union and Norway, represent a national follow-up of this international pattern of

reaction.

In difficult international situations as the one we are now experiencing it is important that firmness be combined with realism. In our indignation at the events in Afghanistan and in our choice of suitable means of reaction we must not make the mistake of over-reacting. We must not reduce the international temperature to such an extent that the situation becomes frozen. There are vital channels which must not be allowed to freeze up.

In our own part of the world there has been, and continue to be, a fundamental state of low tension and stability. To conserve this state of low tension and stability, even in a colder international climate, is very important, not only for our country, but also for the Alliance of which we are a member.

We are concerned to maintain a correct and in objective terms a good neighbour relationship with the Soviet Union. We have not registered anything indicating that the Government of the Soviet Union does not share this opinion. It is important to realize that in this nuclear age there is no alternative to détente, arms control and disarmament. The reversals which have taken place can certainly make a number of us realize the weakness in what we believed and hoped represented the commencement of a long-lasting period of détente and international understanding. Nevertheless, we must not lose sight of the objectives. We cannot allow pessimism to get the upper hand. Nor is there any question of naive optimism.

Norway's geographic and strategic location is such that we must pursue a policy based on "Realpolitik" and not on appeasement.

As far as we are concerned, the policy of détente

represents the only form of "Realpolitik".

We will continue to make every effort to see that the planned meeting in Madrid as a follow-up of the Final

Act from Helsinki furthers the détente line to a marked extent. In addition, active endeavours are being made

to create a basis for negotiations on limiting the

nuclear weapons in Europe within the framework

of SALT III. We must be permitted to expect that the

Soviet Union too will assume its share of responsibility

so that negotiations may commence with a view to establishing equilibrium at the lowest possible level of strength.

Even if the proceedings on ^{the} SALT II agreement have not

been concluded by the American Senate, we must be able

to demand that both great powers in practice observe the

provisions of the agreement in accordance with international

law. Hopefully, the agreement will be ratified when the

international climate takes a turn for the better.

In the tense international situation which arose after Afghanistan it was unavoidable that the other super-

power, the USA, immediately effected counter-

measures. The purpose here was to counteract increased

Soviet influence in the area. The measures introduced

by the US were necessary. However, it is necessary to

request both great powers to do their utmost to prevent

the situation from getting out of control. But the main

responsibility for this continues to rest with the Soviet

Union. It cannot be in anyone's interest that an open

conflict between the great powers should arise in the

sensitive region of the Persian Gulf or in the adjacent

areas.

∟ We will still put our endeavours to ensuring that the negotiations in Vienna on force reductions get going again.

In the wake of the invasion of Afghanistan came the news of the exile of Andrei Sakharov. Once again a form of abuse of power was demonstrated before our eyes, this time against an individual person. Assessed on the basis of the way of thinking and pattern of values that prevails in our own society, this is an attack on free thought and freedom of expression which is frightening in its effect.

Norwegian public opinion has reacted strongly and singlemindedly to the attack on Andrei Sakharov and his family. The Norwegian government understands these feelings. The Government regards the exile of Sakharov as a clear breach of fundamental human rights and of the principles in the Final Act from Helsinki.

The invasion of Afghanistan and the subsequent exile of Sakharov have raised the question of a boycott of the Olympic Games in Mescow. In Norway this is a question which in the Government's view must be decided by the sports organizations. And this is the Government's view, regardless of what decision these organizations, on the basis of their own deliberations, arrive at. The Government cannot and will not determine what independent organizations are to think.

In this connection I would draw your attention to what was said today by Lord Killanin, the chairman of the International Olympic Committee on the relationship between governments and the national Olympic committees in this matter:

"In certain fields governments can make proposals to Olympic committees, but I think it is very important that we do not allow ourselves to be dictated to by

governments in the question of what we are to do."

In my reply to the letter President Carter sent me on the matter, I referred to the statement made by the Norwegian Olympic Committee. I also expressed understanding for the view which was voiced by the Committee and which it has arrived at on an independent basis. This is a natural consequence of the Government's view on the principles involved regarding independent organizations' right to take such decisions themselves.

The Government has not been asked to give any advice to the sports organizations in this matter. Should there be such a need, the Government is prepared to give advice. But there too it is the organizations in the field of sport which must themselves make the final decision as to whether or not Norway will participate.

The events in Afghanistan and their effects have illustrated how important it is for a small country to be part of a united and binding system of cooperation within an alliance. Norway's freedom of action, independence and security depend upon her membership of NATO. This membership enjoys broad and solid support among the Norwegian people. This fact gives strength and credibility to Norway's membership of the Alliance. Cooperation in NATO is based on both security through a credible defence system and active efforts towards détente. We will continue to build on both these premises.