

London School of Economics
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Mr Jonas Gahr Støre,
Foreign Minister of Norway

Your Royal Highness
Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you very much, Professor Worthington, for your generous hospitality, and thank you, Professor Buzan, for your warm words of welcome.

It gives me special pleasure to address you here today at the LSE. Twenty years ago I myself was enrolled in a PhD programme at this school with a special focus on Norway and European integration. This is, as you know, no obvious matter. It is indeed an ideal subject for in-depth academic reflection that is not only challenging in terms of international relations, but also – and perhaps equally – as regards the intricacies of psychology.

Professor Christopher Coker was assigned as my tutor. Before I started, we had some lively discussions on the state of the world and its challenges and not least on the solutions to the challenges. At the end of one of our discussions Professor Coker took me discretely aside and asked me to consider whether an academic career was the right choice for me. I took the hint and changed my mind at the last minute.

Today, coming here as Foreign Minister, I still feel grateful for having personally benefited from the insights I gained from LSE faculty.

Luckily there are other doorways to this fine institution. It makes me particularly happy speak here knowing that more than one hundred Norwegians are among the students here. And I am honoured that Crown Prince Haakon, himself an LSE graduate, is here with us. Those of our students who choose to go abroad for parts of their studies will never regret it. Neither will Norway. We invest in these students. I can hardly see any investment that yields more result for the individual as well as for the nation.

Norway and Britain have been allies in times of war, we are allies in times of peace and we are allies when new threats loom. The brutal attacks on the London tube and buses shocked us all. Half a million Norwegians visit Britain every year. The majority passes through London. Your London underground is also our way of transportation. On that July morning your pain came near to us.

We must stand firm. We must be steadfast in our resolve to combat international terrorism and its roots. And we must relentlessly pursue our combined efforts to bring the perpetrators to justice.

Norway and Britain are allies in NATO and partners in Europe, even though Norwegians have decided to remain outside the European Union. We are partners in the United Nations and we are working closely on new approaches to development and the fight against poverty.

The newly formed Norwegian Government will build on this extraordinary relationship in the years to come. Having the opportunity to visit London one week after taking office just underlines the significance of our partnership as well as its potential.

Let me take this opportunity to share with you the main foundations of our foreign policy – let me comment on how we make our contribution to the fight against terror – let me expand on our efforts to seize new opportunities to halt conflicts and fight poverty and let me finally share with you our reading of developments in our immediate neighbourhood – the High North.

Norwegian foreign policy will seek to safeguard Norwegian interests by relying on some key pillars:

Firstly, a strong support for the United Nations system and the promotion of international law and rules that frame the rights and obligations of all states;

Secondly, a firm basis in the NATO alliance and a close relationship with the European Union, our Nordic neighbours and our key partners on both sides of the Atlantic, as well as with like minded nations across the world;

Thirdly an active quest for opportunities to promote peace and reconciliation, to combat poverty and to stand up for human rights and human dignity.

The third pillar is largely dependent on the first two. Well anchored in the UN, in NATO and in concert with our EU partners we will seek to add value to global efforts to promote peace and development. Norway can only thrive internationally through close cooperation and partnerships.

Since its inception the United Nations has been key to us. Norway will always work for a world order where conflicts of interests are not transformed into a confrontation of muscles, be they military, political or economic. Much needs to be reformed and improved at the United Nations. But the UN will never be better than the sum of the efforts that we the member states put into it. We will support every effort to strengthen the UN as our global, common tool to promote peace, development and justice. We will stand ready to push important UN initiatives forward, such as the critical agenda of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Then there is our relationship with the European Union. The ties are close. Few EU member states have more extensive trade relations with the EU area than Norway. The agreement on the European Economic Area includes Norway into the internal market with equal rights and obligations. We support the new member states with transition programmes. We are Schengen members. Our dialogue on foreign and security policy is close.

The obvious question for many of our friends is then: why not become a member?

That question has been put to Norwegians at two occasions, in 1972 and in 1994. With a narrow margin a majority voted against. No stable majority has been mobilized in favour of a third bid. This is the reality. Thus, this government, as the previous one, will not apply for EU membership.

The fundamentals may change. But here and now we will do the utmost of our present European relationships. We will structure our foreign policy with an anchor in the EEA agreement while seeking every opportunity to cooperate with the EU and EU members where that may be in mutual interest. And where interests may differ we will do what we can to safeguard Norwegian interests, like all European states do.

Beyond Europe there is an obvious focus on the challenges facing Iraq and Afghanistan. Norway opposed the war against Iraq. Based on UN resolutions we support the efforts to build a stable and democratic Iraq. Ours is not a military contribution. We support the training of Iraqi policemen and officers, including in Norway. Beyond this, our focus will also be on support to the strengthening of the democratic process and the reconstruction of the petroleum sector.

Then we have a mission to accomplish in Afghanistan. We are present with more than 400 troops. We have signalled a readiness to increase Norwegian participation in ISAF. But our efforts must go further. We are engaged in an extensive development programmes focused on education, public administration and improved living conditions. Afghans must feel secure. And they must experience that democracy leads to a better life.

When it comes to the contribution of troops we need to focus. In the last decade we have been active in the Balkans. We now concentrate on Afghanistan. And then we will stand ready to pay greater attention to the needs of UN operations, especially in Africa.

Norway stands ready to shoulder its part of the burden when military contributions are required and the mandate is clearly anchored in international law. But we also have a role to play to prevent conflict or help them come to an end.

Unique circumstances and the extraordinary efforts of a few individuals offered Norway the opportunity to assist the Israelis and Palestinians in the early 1990s, leading to the Oslo agreements in 1993. The process was owned by the parties. Sacrifices had to be made by the parties. The benefits would first and foremost be reaped by the parties, but also by the world at large.

The same approach has helped bring forward the peace process in Sri Lanka. In Sudan, Norway has also been able to assist the parties in their painful path towards peace.

We will continue to seek such opportunities. A third party with no direct interest in the outcome of a given conflict can play a role, primarily as a facilitator, at times as a mediator.

Stabilising and rebuilding failed or failing states is a huge and complex task that requires seamless transitions and long-term commitment. More than half of all peace agreements fail and the parties slide back into war. A number of conflicts are contributing to international terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, ethnic hatred, environmental and economic crises or large refugee flows.

This is a struggle to halt conflicts and promote peace. But it is also a contribution to fighting terror and preventing incidents that could affect us at home.

Then there are opportunities for change that we need to seize. Let me give you one example.

Five years ago, when Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg formed his first government, he became aware of the initial efforts to structure a new alliance for immunising all the world's children.

As a father, he appreciated the unacceptable injustice of the fact that all Norwegian infants are immunised, whereas in some African countries only one in ten receives this magic shot.

As an economist, he knew that immunisation was among the most cost-effective means of combating disease, promoting health and helping children to grow up, and that such measures are the key to economic growth and development in poorer countries. Five years ago, there were 30 mil-

lion children who had not been immunised. As a consequence, three million of them were to die from completely preventable diseases.

As a politician he decided to something about it.

Norway seized the opportunity and took the lead among nations to support the alliance financially – as did Britain. Today, the Global Alliance for Vaccination and Immunization stands out as a new kind of partnership that includes the UN family and the pharmaceutical industry and new players on the development scene such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. More than a million lives have been saved by the scaling up of immunisation programmes that resulted from this initiative.

The new Stoltenberg Government will work in the same mode, keeping our focus on emerging opportunities that we can help bring into reality. In doing this we will seek to explore any comparative advantage we may have by working closely with partners such as Britain.

Tony Blair has shown great leadership by bringing forward the focused recommendations of the Commission for Africa. Gordon Brown has made a lasting difference by breaking the debt relief deadlock and put forward new financing mechanisms for development.

Norway will help ensure that the Africa Partnership Forum takes on its role as a forum for discussion on strategic policy issues and for monitoring commitments in support of Africa's development. Here is a real scope for partnership.

Let me end this reflection on development by stressing the need to succeed the ongoing WTO negotiations. This round has been branded the Development round. It represents challenges and opportunities. But we need to find a way to a balanced agreement that can forward the integration of development countries in the world trade system.

I will now take one long step to the North and to a central theme of Norway's foreign policy in the years to come. Join me for a moment in a perspective on the High North, which literally means the area beyond the top of most maps of Europe. Weather reports on European TV put a cap on Europe at around the 60th parallel, thus only including the three Nordic capitals of Oslo, Stockholm and Helsinki, but not much more.

When we pass the 70th parallel, when we pass the Arctic Circle, then we enter the vast Barents region. One third of mainland Norway lies north of the Circle. Norwegian jurisdiction in the Arctic and Barents Seas covers an area six times the size of mainland Norway, that is almost the size of the entire European Union.

For decades this was a frozen region, literally and politically. This is where Norway and Russia meet, on land and in the Barents Sea. During the cold war it was the area where East met West, where NATO met the Warsaw Pact, where the balance of power relied on the number of intercontinental missiles and the operating scope of strategic and tactical submarines.

The military scenarios of confrontation and invasion are now collecting dust in archives. Since the 1990s the focus has shifted from the firing capacity of nuclear missiles inside submarines to the secure dismantling of those submarines' nuclear reactors.

The concept of security is broadening. The strategic position of the area is gradually shifting from a military security perspective to a perspective more marked by energy security and sustainable resource management.

Key nations are rethinking their policies and interests. This is the “near abroad” of both Norway and Britain that is undergoing the most substantive changes at the beginning of the 21st century.

The Barents Sea contains vast natural resources – renewable and non-renewable. It is Europe’s largest fish pond. Norway and Russia have thus far been able to manage the Rolls Royce of fish – the Norwegian Arctic Cod – in a way that preserves its potential for future generations. It is absolutely critical that we are able to continue this policy.

The Barents Sea will also become an important source of energy supply to Europe and North America. Perhaps as much as a quarter of the world’s undiscovered petroleum reserves may be located in the Arctic. Politically this is a stable region. In the years to come Britain, continental Europe and the United States may well be looking to the High North for additional supplies of oil and gas.

Today Norway is the second largest exporter of gas to Europe and produced 25 percent of the total Western European gas in 2003. Only Russia produces and exports more.

In order to meet the growing UK dependency on imported gas, a deal with Norway that could secure up to 20 percent of the UK’s future gas demand from the Ormen Lange field through a new pipeline, was signed in April this year. The grid of pipelines across the North Sea is another vivid illustration of the ties that bind our nations together.

Now the grid may be expanding northwards.

Large deposits have already been discovered in the north. At the Snowwhite field, Statoil is writing a new technological chapter in the production of LNG – liquid natural gas, brought onshore for processing from the field off the coast of Hammerfest, the world’s northernmost town.

Another remarkable chapter will soon be written further east on the Russian shelf. The Shtokman gas field contains more than the world’s annual gas consumption, or 50 per cent of Germany’s gas consumption over the next 50 years.

Thus the issue of energy supply from the Arctic region is replacing the old cold war agenda of military balances. Herein lies a set of challenges and opportunities for Norway, Russia and Europe and the United States.

We will pursue a comprehensive policy for the High North. Key to this policy is the expansion of our good and constructive relations with Russia. Norway and Russia have been at peace for a thousand years. The Red Army liberated the Northernmost county of Finnmark from Nazi occupation in 1944 and then withdrew.

During the frozen years of the cold war we enjoyed correct bilateral relations. It was our role to contribute to the European public order by helping maintain a relative stability even in times of greater East-West tension.

In 1990 less than one thousand people crossed the Norwegian-Russian border. Today the number is close to one hundred thousand.

The potential for cooperation is huge. At the same time there are some real bilateral issues that need to be addressed. One of them is the still unresolved business of defining a mutually agreed line of delimitation between us in the Barents Sea.

During the cold war, our Atlantic allies provided us with the necessary political and military frame-

work for managing our relations with the Soviet Union. Now times are changing. We are experiencing new advances in our relations with Russia. But Russia is a democracy that is still in the making. Not all trends are pointing in the right direction. We will continue to engage close political allies to help back up a regime of peace, stability and predictability.

Climate change in the Arctic is a stark reminder of the need to move the Kyoto agenda one step further. And there are some real environmental issues to be dealt with.

Although the challenges are huge, some of the most positive advances in our cooperation with Russia have been made in the field of nuclear safety. This includes both environmental and non-proliferation concerns. Norway has participated in the G8 Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction.

We are cooperating closely with our British colleagues on a number of projects in this field, including nuclear submarine dismantlement and physical security of nuclear materials.

Opening up the Norwegian part of the Barents Sea for petroleum production will depend on a careful assessment of environmental risks and constraints. Operators on the Norwegian shelf have to abide by the world's most stringent environmental regulations. By engaging in the new chapters to be written in the Barents Sea, Norwegian companies will help to set the standard for activities in this vulnerable region.

In sum, these are the main guidelines of our policy in the High North:

We will continue to make our contribution to cooperation, stability and predictability in the region. We will take seriously the obligations that stem from our sovereignty.

We will engage with Russia and our European and American partners to help secure the High North as a region of stability, prosperity and high environmental awareness.

We will continue to manage the living marine resources in a way that safeguards the interests of our fishing community as well as those of all nations that hold historical rights to fish in the waters under our control.

We will combat any attempt to diminish valuable fish stocks through violations of clearly defined regulations.

We will position ourselves in the technological and industrial forefront in the historic chapter of oil and gas exploration that is being opened in the Barents Sea.

And we will do this in a way that takes due account of the needs of the vulnerable Arctic environment.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As you can see, I finally made it to the LSE.

It is not the first time however. Last April I gave a lecture here in my capacity of Secretary General of the Norwegian Red Cross. The subject was the need to stand up for the Geneva Conventions. I could have given almost the same message as Foreign Minister. All the signatories to the Geneva Conventions need to mobilise support for the rules of war, which have painfully evolved over decades of cruelty caused by armed conflict.

I have also made another indirect contribution to a LSE lecture. Twelve years ago I had the pleasure of assisting then Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland with the research for her address here at the LSE on the intriguing question of "What is a Good Society?"

Dr Brundtland spoke of her vision of a society of shared responsibility, of investment in knowledge so that opportunity becomes available to everyone, not just the few. A society built on solidarity, with a dedication as its core to building public goods in health, education and infrastructure. A society focused not only on the key resources of human capital and financial capital, but also on cultivating social capital.

The central premise of social capital is the value of social networks. Social capital refers to the collective value of all social networks in a society or community and the readiness of the members of these networks to do things for each other. Social capital refers to a wide variety of benefits that flow from the trust, reciprocity, information, and cooperation that accompany social networks.

Today I see more clearly how these ideas are directly relevant to our approach to global security issues. We need to draw lessons from the way we democratically safeguard our societies at home to the way we structure our response in the global arena. Our societies thrive on the presence of national public goods. The international society needs more global public goods. This is especially urgent as we deal with the new security challenges arising from failing states, increasing migration, proliferation of weapons and the spread of communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

When I was working at the World Health Organization I came across the home page of the CIA. The agency had developed a new indicator for spotting potential failing states, states which would in turn pose a threat to everyone's security. That indicator was not numbers of rockets or troops. The indicator was child mortality.

To me this is a hopeful sign. It signals a change in perspective, moving the focus towards the human condition and the urgent need to promote change in a way that secures every human being inalienable human rights and human dignity.

What is a "good global society"? This would be a potential subject for another lecture. Perhaps that will offer me yet another opportunity to speak to you here at the LSE?

Thank you for your attention.