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EUROPEAN SECURITY
A View from the North

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Summary

The present paper outlines a Nordic and, primarily, a Norwegian perspective on the changes taking place in the political order in Europe. It opens by outlining the salient features of the cold-war order in Northern Europe. Against this background it explores the implications of the processes of change with respect to the political framework for linking Northern Europe with the rest of Europe as well as the specific mechanisms concerning security arrangements, arms control, institution-building and relations to the United Nations.

EUROPEAN SECURITY: A VIEW FROM THE NORTH

1. Front Lines of the Old Order

Norway has been a frontline state in the cold-war order in Europe, sharing a border with the Soviet Union for some 200 kilometres and alignment with the United States in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. It occupied a strategic position on the North Atlantic and in close proximity to the shortest flight paths for bombers and ballistic missiles between the heartlands of the two superpowers. From the perspective of the central front Norway for a long time constituted a flank area. However, with the increased range of modern fighters the northern flank and the central front tended to merge. That tendency was reinforced by NATO's dependence on the trans-Atlantic sea lines of communication for reinforcement and resupply. If Norwegian airfields should fall into hostile hands the integrity of these sea lines of communication would be threatened. If the integrity of the sea lines of communication could not be maintained NATO would lose its ability to constrain and counter escalation in Central Europe. If NATO should lose the ability to constrain and counter escalation in Central Europe, it would lack credibility as an alliance and lose its ability to extend protection to its flanks. If it should lose the ability to extend protection to the flanks, it could cease to constitute a viable framework for security in a divided Europe.

From the point of view of the Central balance of nuclear deterrence Norway occupied a central position. For the

principal powers Norway and the surrounding areas constituted important platforms for early warning and forward defence against strategic offensive forces. A major portion of the Soviet submarine based strategic missile forces were homeported due east of the Soviet - Norwegian border. Initially they depended on being able to transit through the Norwegian sea and exit through the Iceland - Faeroes - U.K. gaps in order to reach patrol areas from which they could threaten targets in the United States of America. Subsequently the increased range of the missiles enabled the Soviet strategic missile submarines to operate in the Norwegian and Barents Seas and still be within range of their pre-assigned targets in North America. Increasingly they moved north, exploiting the complex environment for anti-submarine warfare of the Arctic. The ocean-going attack submarines could be assigned the role of protecting the strategic bastions of the missile submarines or hunt down those of the adversary. Increased missile range permitted American strategic missile submarines to operate far from the home-ports of the Soviet ocean-going attack submarines.

A fight for control of Norway could be won or lost at sea. Norway depended on reinforcements from allies in an emergency, most of the reinforcements would have to come by sea. A war for control of the North Atlantic could be lost in Norway, and a fight for control of Norway could be lost in the North Atlantic.

Norwegian security policy constituted a compromise or a trade-off between the competing requirements for deterrence and reassurance. Deterrence inhered in the collective defence commitments of the North Atlantic Treaty and their physical demonstration through allied exercises, prepositioning of military equipment, fuel and ammunition, and the construction of military facilities to receive and sustain allied reinforcements. Reassurance inhered in a set unilateral confidence-building measures, the most important of which were the proscription of permanent stationing of allied troops in peacetime and of the deployment or stockpiling of nuclear and chemical munitions. The measures were not treaty commitments, but rather self-denying ordinances; in the case of foreign troops they were conditional commitments valid only so long as Norway was not attacked or threatened by attack. Norwegian constitutional authorities would decide what measures at any time would be needed to safeguard national security. Allied manoeuvres did not take place in the northernmost county of Finnmark, leaving a considerable distance between Soviet territory and the sites for NATO exercises in Norway.

The Nordic states did not form a defence community. The East-West division demolished the options for Nordic unity in the realm of security the Nordic area was woven into the texture of divided Europe. Rather than forming a defence community the Nordic States formed an implicit system of mutual consideration. None of the Nordic states would make major decisions concerning security without taking into account

their impact on the predicament of the other Nordic states. The system of mutual consideration and low tension was characterized by a decreasing integration into the Western system of security along an east-west axis extending from Iceland to Finland. It was, however, never a real question of balance, the Nordic states were not poised against each other, and Iceland, Denmark and Norway were tied to the major Western powers in a much more encompassing manner than was Finland to the Soviet Union through the treaty of mutual assistance and support. The Nordic states belonged to the West politically, economically and culturally. There were some indications that the Soviet Union observed some military restraint in the north. The ground forces on the Kola peninsula were fairly modest compared to the levels maintained in other forward areas. Fighter-bombers were not permanently deployed to operational airfields on the Kola-peninsula. However, the military investments on the Kola-peninsula were formidable, particularly in strategic forces and naval forces. These forces did not constitute direct threats against the Nordic states in general or Norway in particular. However, they could create incentives and impulses for a forward thrust in a tense crisis, or the early phases of a war. Norwegian security policy focused on the maintenance of a state of low tension in spite of the strategic interests which interacted in the area.

Security policy became a key component, and in long periods, the dominant component and perspective in Norwegian foreign policy. In the period of the cold war the "new" states of the

north, Iceland, Norway and Finland, came to occupy the most important strategic positions and areas, while the old states with a tradition of involvement in the game of power politics in Europe, Sweden and Denmark, were in more protected positions.

All of the Nordic states, but particularly Norway, Sweden and Finland played major roles in shaping and developing the confidence-building regime of the Conference on Cooperation and Security in Europe, CSCE. They tended to go beyond minimum obligations, attempting to extend the latter by example and practice. In inter-allied consultations Norway pushed for the inclusion of independent naval and air activity, but did not prevail. She also expressed interest in exploring special confidence-building measures for border areas. However, here Norwegian interests diverged from those of the major Western front-line state in Central Europe, viz. the Federal Republic which was opposed to any measures which could tend to freeze or legitimate the dividing borders between the two German states.

2. The Emerging Political Framework

The momentous events of 1989-90 changed the face of Europe. The cold-war order gave way to a new era the contours of which are still quite vague. Much attention has been devoted to fanciful excursions into architecture. However, the search for blue-prints has tended to ignore the problems and time scale

of actual construction. Furthermore, it has typically confused Central Europe with the rest of Europe. The European house must include also its northern and southern tenants. Rather than looking towards single house solutions they are likely to prefer their own houses linked together in a common European village where life reflects the facts and norms of interdependence.

It is too early to outline the lay-out of the post cold-war village in Europe. However, certain functional requirements and principles emerge when we adopt a northern perspective. Russia must be included in the new order. Exclusion would result in a permanent pressure on the order from the outside. Russia is a direct neighbour of the states of Northern Europe. Their cohabitation and cooperation depend on a multilateral all-European framework for relations to evolve within a psychological equilibrium, to avoid the fear of dominance in the smaller states and temptations to exploit military preponderance in the larger state. From the point of view of the Nordic countries the imperatives are compounded by uncertainties concerning Soviet and Russian futures. The Russian colossus could be in a state of unstable and constant turmoil for a great many years.

The Nordic states are likely to seek inclusion and integration into the structures of European cooperation also in order to cope with the consequences of Russian uncertainties, in order to establish a framework within which Russia's relations with

the Nordic states constitute but one aspect of Russia's relations with the rest of Europe. The growing interest in membership in the European Community in Norway, Sweden and Finland constitutes evidence of this concern and perspective.

The second structural requirement of the new order is the equal participation of Germany. Arrangements which discriminate against Germany would produce an unstable order likely to be challenged by Germany from within. From the point of view of the Nordic states the most unstable arrangement would be an order challenged simultaneously by Russia from the outside and by Germany from within. Were the two giants to coalesce in order to change the framework of the political order, the Nordic states would expect to become increasingly vulnerable and exposed to pressure and external penetration.

From the perspective of Northern Europe the issues involved concern also the north-south balance of the new Europe, "Hansa-Europe" as a counterweight to the Mediterranean pull, association with Britain and France as a counterweight to German political dominance, Protestant Europe as a counterweight to Catholic Europe, larger Europe as a counterweight to smaller Europe. The Nordic perspective is not concerned only, or even primarily, with traditional balance of power relations among state actors, but equally with the balance of economic and cultural trends, with the penetration of the political order by transnational forces, with the balance between political institutions and the forces which

shape political and social choice, with the normative perspective of societal control, with the preservation of the welfare state in the age of the international corporation, with the need for sustainable development in response to environmental degradation. The forces of internationalism and supra-nationalism coexist with the forces of nationalism, the search for a separate Nordic "solution" with the desire to "enter" Europe, the search for exclusive identity with the urge to share in the European diversity, the jealous protection of sovereignty with the sense of sovereignty lost.

The Nordic states have tended to project idealist perspectives on international relations; domestic values onto the international scene. Concern about democracy and human rights reflected the idealist perspective, however, the values of the open society sometimes had to be mediated by the harsh realities and imperatives of the balance of power. The CSCE (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe) provided a framework for the reconciliation and orchestration of idealist and realist impulses and perspectives. The revolutions in Eastern Europe have captured the imagination of the aloof northerners, legitimated their idealist impulses and at the same time broadened their perspectives on the reconstruction of Europe and their role in the construction.

The Nordic states in general and Norway in particular also look beyond Europe. Norway is a maritime nation with a

maritime outlook conscious of an Atlantic connection. A country facing the Atlantic with the back to Europe has been more than a geographic description, it captured also a state of mind. Norway has been conscious of having a triple personality in foreign affairs; the Atlantic, the European and the Nordic. She has doggedly refused to choose between them, but attempted rather to combine and orchestrate, reconcile and mediate the competing perspectives and interests involved. Norway has depended on American protection and containment of Soviet military power in Northern Europe. However, the dependence has been anchored in a multilateral framework linking Western Europe to North America. The small state was concerned about managing dependence in a manner which could preserve equality and found protection in numbers. The Nordic "personality" was preserved and developed through sub-regionalism and the Nordic system of mutual consideration in security policy.

In the new Europe security policy increasingly ceases to be a divisive issue among the Nordic countries; the European reconstruction, on the contrary, is likely to stimulate a common interest perspective among them also in regard to security, the waning of the cold war to render obsolete notions of neutrality and non-alignment in an increasingly cooperative political order encompassing also NATO as a major pillar. As the security dilemma becomes associated increasingly with unspecified dangers rather than definable threats, with uncertainties concerning the domestic evolution

of the Soviet Union rather than a clear and present danger of military attack, the Nordic states are likely to seek concerted integration into the new political order in Europe.

3. Designing the New Mechanisms

The principal "architectural" concern in Norwegian security policy in the years ahead is likely to be that of coupling and linkage to the process of European reconstruction. That interest flows from geopolitical circumstance, from the imperatives of location and position.

The Soviet Union or Russia will remain one of the two principal nuclear weapon states. It will continue to deploy a major portion of its submarine based strategic missile force to bases on the Kola peninsula. It will continue to deploy forward based radars and interceptors to the Kola peninsula as part of the management of the central balance of nuclear deterrence with the United States. The START regime could result in substantially reduced levels of strategic forces. However, the structure of such forces is likely to include a submarine based component.

Furthermore, the Soviet Union or Russia will remain a major naval power. One of the principal Russian fleets will continue to be homeported on the Kola peninsula and to carry out its peacetime training and exercises in the northern waters outside Norway. The size of the Soviet or Russian fleet will

diminish as a result of block obsolescence of several classes of ships. Nevertheless, the Northern fleet will continue to cast shadows onto the shores of the states of Northern Europe, particularly Norway. The strategic investments and deployments on the Kola-peninsula will require protection by ground forces and airforces. Hence, the impact of a CFE (Conventional Forces in Europe) arms control regime is likely to be bounded and circumscribed in the north by enduring strategic interests. For Norway the issue is not so much transfer of Russian military power from the centre to the north, although Norway will seek assurances against such dispositions, but rather a growing imbalance between the residual force levels in the centre and north of Europe. The concern is more about peacetime shadows from military force than about threats of military aggression, the latter seem remote as long as the Soviet or Russian war machine remains largely demolished in Europe at large.

The perspective of coupling has been predominant in the Norwegian and Nordic approach to the CFE regime, in the opposition to regionalization. Hence, Norway has insisted on the need for global rather than regional limits, on the need to avoid separate limits for the concentric zones of the CFE regime, but rather expanding global limits as the area expands outwards from the inner zone of maximum military concentration in the cold-war era. Opposition to regionalization has been combined, however, with support for arrangements designed to control density, or the concentration of forces in specific

forward areas. The complex formula of CFE-1 strikes a reasonable balance between the competing Nordic concerns. However, the tensions between them could become more pronounced in the subsequent process. In the follow-up negotiations Norway could seek reassurance in restructuring of the Soviet or Russian military forces on the Kola-peninsula, recognizing that the levels of these forces will remain substantial. Such restructuring could be designed to reduce the offensive potential of the local ground forces and naval infantry forces.

The Nordic states have played an active role in shaping the confidence-building measures of the CSCE regime. The first generation of such measures was largely symbolic, projecting a notion of shared interests in preventing routine military activities from upsetting peacetime political relations, reducing the shadows from military force rather than constraining its substance. However, attempts to expand the system by example and practice did not stimulate emulation. The parameters in regard to notification time for exercises, notification thresholds and the invitation of observers had to be negotiated. The second generation of confidence and security building measures negotiated in Stockholm was designed to provide reassurance against short-warning attacks in the context of continued confrontation. However, as the confrontation was dismantled by perestroika in the Soviet Union, by the revolutions in the Eastern Europe and negotiations about troop reductions, the value of the CSBM's

was related primarily to the projection of cooperative perspectives through increased transparency (on-site inspection by challenge) and the growing ritualization of military activity in Europe. The Nordic states continue to emphasize this system because it tends to emasculate military force, reduce the political impact of military preponderance. The new confidence and security building measures are mechanisms to assert the principle of the equality of states.

4. Naval Arms Control

Norway, in particular, remains concerned about the decoupling impact of the fact that naval forces remain beyond regulation. Hence, a growing discrepancy is developing between the primary characteristic of the emerging security order in Europe at large and that of Northern Europe which is dominated by naval forces. The issues are wrapped in an intractable dilemma. On the one hand Norway depends on support from the United States, particularly naval support, to contain the local preponderance of the Soviet navy and protect the capacity to reinforce Norway in the event of attack. Furthermore, as a maritime nation Norway has strong interests in maintaining the principle of freedom of navigation and in preventing creeping jurisdiction from expropriating ocean space into exclusive national sovereignties. Similarly, Norway is not interested in conceding to the Soviet Union a preferential position in northern waters as a result of limitations on access enabling Russia or the Soviet Union to capitalize on proximity. On the

other hand Norway has an interest in regulation both as a means of linking the security regime of Northern Europe with that of Europe at large and in order to develop a management regime for competing uses of ocean space. Consequently attention has focused on confidence building measures at sea consistent with the principle of freedom of navigation, Mare Liberum

At sea military forces intermingle in ways which they do not on land suggesting a need for "rules of the road", for behavioural norms which enhance predictability and reduce the chance of inadvertent incidents. A series of bilateral agreements has been concluded between the Soviet Union and Western States, Norway included, for the prevention of incidents at sea. They could possibly be extended to cover also greater openness concerning rules of engagement at the superior command level, particularly with a view to identifying the kind of behaviour which is perceived as threatening by the major naval powers and coastal states affected. Similarly, provisions for notification of major naval exercises and movements as well as for mutual observations could contribute, albeit marginally, to mutual confidence. Structural measures could be linked to the CFE and START regimes aiming for general stabilization, and include reductions of ocean-going attack submarines and nuclear ordnance on surface naval ships. Such linkage could, in addition, serve to alleviate Norwegian concerns about decoupling.

5. Institution-building

The Nordic states favour institutionalizing the CSCE process as a means to preserve the coherence of the security order in Europe, include the Soviet Union in the European construction, provide a framework for the peaceful inclusion also of those republics of the Soviet Union seeking independence, perhaps through confederation, protect the independence of the democratizing states of Central and Eastern Europe, provide a context for German participation on equal terms, keep the United States and Canada engaged and involved in the process of European security, and in order to link and orchestrate cooperation in overlapping and interlocking fields. The steps towards institutionalization at the CSCE Summit in Paris at the end of 1990 are viewed as a mere beginning. It is recognized that the CSCE will not constitute a full fledged collective security organization. It is incapable of replacing or supplanting NATO. It will be supplementary and complementary. However, it will contain elements, or building blocks, of collective security, a down-payment rather than a final construction. The Nordic countries have paid particular attention to future options and requirements for peacekeeping under CSCE auspices in Europe, building on their UN experience in that context. The European order will be dominated by the political role of the European Community and the security role of NATO in providing for collective defence. The Council of Europe, the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), various existing sub-regional organizations and emerging initiatives

will interact with the CSCE in developing an organizational infrastructure for the new Europe. The Nordic states tend to see institutionalization and international organizations as means to protect the notion of the equality of states, the role of the smaller states against the preponderant influence of the great powers.

The restructuring of NATO's forces and the development of a new strategy is followed with keen interest by Norway which remains interested in the principle of defence in forward areas, mobile defenses for rapid reinforcement of threatened areas, systems of national conscription and mobilization for reconstitution of defence capacities in the event of attack, a significant raising of the nuclear threshold and a corresponding reduction in the role and number of theatre nuclear weapons in Europe, elimination of pretargeted theatre nuclear weapons in Europe and a shift to postures and structures with a salient defensive emphasis. In addition to contributing to stability, such restructuring would tend to eradicate the differences between the defence arrangements in Europe at large and those applying to Northern Europe, thereby enhancing coupling between the two.

6. The Wider World

Norway and Denmark have been in strong support of NATO's tradition of eschewing military engagement, qua alliance, beyond the treaty area. However, with the growing role of the

United Nations due to the new political consensus among the major powers in the Security Council, NATO countries individually, and even collectively, could be called on to participate in enforcement action for the United Nations. Such calls would receive Nordic support. The development of multinational forces as a means of preserving the collective defense connections in NATO following German unification, could provide a means also for supporting the United Nations, suggesting new links between the security arrangements in Europe and peacekeeping in the world at large.

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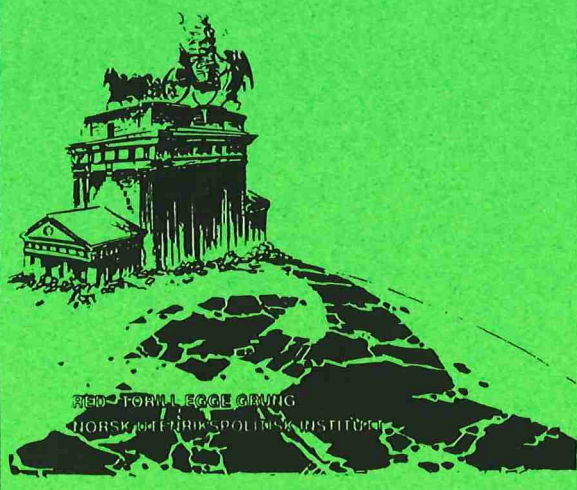
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