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ved

Ambassador Benson K. Whitney

USAs ambassadør til Norge



Foto: Stig Morten Karlsen Oslo Militære Samfund

US AND NORWAY — LEADING A 21st CENTURY NATO?

Introduction

Det er en ære for meg å få tale til dere i kveld. Jeg takker Oslo Militære Samfund for invitasjonen, som jeg setter stor pris på. Imidlertid minner listen over fremragende personer, som har snakket i denne salen om sikkerhetspolitikk de seneste måneder, meg om det norske ordspråket "å hoppe etter Wirkola". Jeg vil gjøre mitt beste for å følge deres gode eksempler. Nå må jeg gå over til engelsk, før jeg har brukt opp de norske ordene jeg kan.

(English translation) I am much honored to be speaking to you tonight. I thank the Military Society for the invitation and I appreciate this opportunity very much. However the list of distinguished people who have spoken in this hall on security policy just in the last few months reminds me of the Norwegian caution of the danger "å hoppe etter Wirkola." I will do my best to uphold their fine examples. Now I will switch over to English before I run out of Norwegian words I know.

People sometimes ask me what I have learned in my first year about the relationship between Norway and the United States. Two related points immediately come to mind. The first is that our nations have enjoyed a truly unique and special relationship for the past 60 years. The second is that we cannot merely assume that the US and Norway will maintain that special relationship in the 21st Century. To do so will require more and harder work. I believe strongly that it is important to our mutual interests and the world's interest that we make that investment. And that means we must carefully attend to the true pillars of our relationship.

One essential pillar has been our common devotion to NATO and that is what I want to talk about tonight. Would it be too presumptuous to call our meeting tonight the unofficial opening of the Riga Summit? Of course, the official summit begins tomorrow with the gathering of the 26 NATO heads of state in Riga, and even as I speak, President Bush is in Tallinn, conferring with our mutual friends and allies. But for us here, I can think of no better way to kick off the summit than to take a closer look at the U.S.-Norwegian relationship to NATO. In doing so, I admit to taking my prerogative as speaker to alter the subject of my speech somewhat. The revised title of my remarks is “US and Norway—Leading a 21st Century NATO?”

Norway's History in NATO

I was gratified to hear Foreign Minister Store, in his excellent speech in this hall, confirm that Norway is just as committed as the United States to continuing our special partnership.

He went on to say that our continued cooperation is “a partnership that draws on the experience of the past but that is driven by the challenges of the future.” He is so very right, most especially with respect to our common relations to NATO.

The “experience of the past” brings to mind the recent commemorations of Jens Christian Hauge’s remarkable life. Mr. Hauge’s contribution to bringing Norway into NATO was an important turning point in Norway’s history. Norway’s rejection of neutrality and its choice to tie its security to NATO and the U.S. was not assured, as might be assumed today. Strong voices argued that Norway should play a non-aligned role and rely on the UN for guarantees of security. No doubt many of you in this room engaged in that debate. But in the end, Norway took a hard look at the realities of the world and took the necessary steps to ensure its security. Of course, the US too made a deep commitment to the trans-Atlantic alliance from the very start.

Any honest assessment of history shows clearly that both nations greatly benefited from their NATO commitment. Our close security cooperation, both within our NATO alliance and bilaterally, was crucial for the defense of Norway and Europe during the Cold War. U.S. pre-positioned equipment here in Norway was just one demonstrable sign of how quickly we could respond to a threat to the alliance. This equipment is just as relevant today as during the Cold War—it is now a demonstrable sign of how quickly we can respond to threats *worldwide*. Norway has historically been one of the United State’s closest and most dependable NATO allies and one of the most vigorous advocates of the alliance’s value.

NATO has always worked to guarantee the security and independence of its member states. Of course, the methods used to ensure security have varied greatly over the years and continue to evolve. One of the remarkable things about NATO is that it has adjusted to meet each challenge, becoming a stronger institution each time. Today Norway and the U.S. have an important opportunity to provide essential leadership - to lead NATO through a critical transition period necessary to enable the alliance to address the challenges of the 21st century.

A 21st Century NATO

Minister Store’s speech was also right on target that the US – Norway relationship is, and should be, “driven by the challenges of the future.” This is especially true with regards to NATO and defense policy. The very point of the Riga Summit is to continue NATO’s efforts to prepare – “to transform” -- for these 21st century challenges. Let me emphasize that the *goal* of NATO remains exactly the same -- to guarantee the security and independence of its member states. NATO cannot remain viable unless its collective members continued to find it in their individual security interest to belong.

The trickier part is that the nature of national security has profoundly changed. Of course, the threat of national armies clashing in Europe has greatly diminished. But globalization in all its forms has so shrunk the world that genuine threats come not from our neighbors, but from across the globe. We face not a common enemy but common threats. And these threats may not come from Europe, but they most certainly threaten Europe.

Global terrorism and proliferating weapons of mass destruction top the list, but in an ever shrinking world the threats of HIV/AIDS, poverty, energy security and what might in the past have been just regional conflicts, all pose meaningful dangers. The fact that any and all of these threats will usually arise from failed states far from our shores makes the dangers far more complex to contend with. The alliance that helped bring down the Berlin Wall, reunite a divided Europe, and bring peace to the war-torn Balkans, is today on the frontlines of a struggle every bit as important: defeating a resurgent Taliban and supporting the development of a free, democratic, and economically viable Afghanistan. The history of the conflict in Afghanistan provides a clear example of the existence, the dangers, and the nature, of these new global threats.

The very nature of these 21st century threats demand very different tools. Global threats demand global – and thus collective -- solutions. These challenges have diplomatic, military and non-governmental aspects and require the broadest scope of international cooperation. These threats demand longer and deeper commitments, which require more patience and discipline. They require projecting power and resources far further from home than ever before. Afghanistan again provides a real example of the new tools we will need in the 21st century. And that is precisely what will be discussed tomorrow at Riga.

These are profound challenges. Successfully addressing them will require many complex changes in our national and multilateral institutions. The US believes that a transformed NATO should remain the foundation of our collective security arrangements. NATO is the only institution among transatlantic democracies which has the military capacity to be effective in addressing global challenges. We strongly agree with Defense Minister Støre-Erichsen who has emphasized Norway's firm belief in a transformed NATO.

The Demands of Change and Leadership

But we must recognize that understanding 21st century threats and believing in a transformed NATO is really the easy part. Making it happen requires change. Change is hard –very hard, and history shows that change does not happen without leaders willing to drive that change through. My central point here tonight is that successfully developing a “new” NATO will demand leadership and that Norway and the US should be partners in providing it.

Why us? For one, the tradition of a strong NATO has always been important in our nations. We closely share the set of core values that form the heart of this alliance of democracies – freedom, justice, and human rights. We hold these values not merely as a matter of principle but as an agenda for action. These values have driven both nations to actively project our influence far from home to try to change the world for the better. We are also nations with the financial resources to implement the necessary changes in our institutions to make transformation a reality. Both the US and Norway share the same vision of what a 21st century NATO should look like. Not least, we should lead because we have led before. We understand the need for that leadership and have the skills and influence necessary to the task.

Let's look at what some of the things the US and Norway could do to provide this much needed leadership.

Creating the will

My first point is that NATO cannot succeed in the 21st century without a strong will for NATO's mission among the people of the NATO countries. Without popular support, change is flat out impossible. Beyond change itself, the likely protracted nature of future actions means that NATO countries need to have the will to stick with its commitments for longer periods. Abraham Lincoln rightly said "Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any one thing." Thus, political leaders of all the NATO partners must actively and aggressively explain to their citizens about these new threats, why NATO is needed, and what changes need to occur to make NATO work.

This may be harder in Europe, including Norway, because of NATO's primary role as the Cold War deterrent. The end of the Cold War naturally invites the average person to wonder what NATO's purpose is today. I was disturbed to read the results of a recent poll which showed a five percent drop in Norwegians who support NATO membership. I hear some voices in Norway suggesting the nation should look to primarily the EU or even the United Nations for its security needs. Other voices question the need for a robust security posture at all, suggesting Norway needs to have just good enough security— whatever that means -- and no more.

It is certainly not my business to engage in Norway's debate about what the nation's defense policy should be. That is for Norwegians. But as a representative of a NATO partner whose security is directly tied to Norway, I can fairly hope that the government, political leaders and leading intellectuals take the time and energy to really explain to the Norwegian people the new threats and why a commitment to a NATO really matters to Norway after the Cold War. The same goes for US political leadership which must continually confront isolationism and explain why we should devote so much effort and commitment across the ocean.

In particular, I believe the Norwegian people need to better appreciate the reality of international terrorism -- to see how this threat poses deep and direct dangers to all the free countries of the world, including Norway, and to see that NATO has a crucial role in fighting it. Norway is not exempt from terrorism, as we have seen in this very year. Popular reluctance to admit threats is natural, but it is up to leaders in the US and Norway to overcome it.

One of the clearest expressions of this need for can be seen in countries' participation in NATO operations. Of course, this is where the rubber really hits the road. Both Norway and the US have strong records in NATO operations, from northern Afghanistan to the Balkans to Active Endeavor in the Mediterranean, and possibly soon to Darfur. We have stood with, and in fact often led, our NATO partners. The decision by Norway to withdraw from the NATO mission in Iraq and, for now, not to send Special Operations Forces to southern Afghanistan are exceptions to this leadership. But, I hope, they are limited exceptions. To demonstrate political will for other alliance partners means showing a complete commitment to these important NATO operations.

It is only by building the will for a transformed NATO at home and engaging in operations abroad that Norway and the US can truly be models for other alliance partners.

Bridging the cultural divide on force

NATO also needs our leadership in addressing what I believe is a genuine cultural divide between the US and Europe in how to solve problems, specifically how to balance between diplomacy and dialogue on the one hand, and the use of harder force like sanctions, isolation, and military action on the other. Please excuse these gross generalizations – but speaking in broad terms, Europeans tend to believe deeply in the process of diplomacy and dialogue as a goal and are more reluctant to think in terms of power. Americans want to solve problems peacefully through negotiation and dialogue, but do not see the process of dialogue itself as a goal and therefore are less reluctant to use power when necessary.

This difference can be characterized as impatience and patience, action and dithering, or operating out of positions of strength or weakness, depending on your perspective. There are quite legitimate reasons for the American and European approach to problems and both can, and do, play an important role in solving international conflicts.

Let us not debate which is right or wrong, but let us not ignore this difference. It is also important to note that this divide is fundamentally a genuine part of the European and American outlooks. As such, it will not change with political shifts on either side of the Atlantic.

So, how do we merge our two approaches to problem solving? Here, I think Norway can help play a constructive bridging role to harmonize these differences. This is because, although Norway has always prized dialogue, it also, as demonstrated in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, has understood there is a time and place for exercising power.

It is essential that we work on this issue. The U.S. cannot solve the world's problems alone. Europe has significant power but, as Foreign Minister Store correctly stated, the United States must be a part of the solution for the world's efforts to be successful. We must work effectively together if we hope to have success in facing the new global security challenges.

Ultimately, this is a core reason why NATO remains important for the 21st Century. NATO is where transatlantic democracies gather, consult and forge strategic consensus. And, when necessary, NATO is where they take decisions on joint action. NATO is the one organization which binds transatlantic democracies together. And it should be Norway and the US, in constructive engagement, who help reconcile some of the natural differences in outlook between the allies to create a more effective and coherent NATO.

Leading in Transformation

Turning now to the subject of transformation, leadership for the new NATO also demands that both the US and Norway stand as strong forces for military transformation. Today's forces need to be deployable, inter-operable, and supportable. Why? Simply put, to support our foreign policy. This is as Clausewitzian as it gets. Indeed Norway and the U.S. share almost exactly same vision for NATO. Norway has been an excellent example of a NATO ally which has seriously addressed the difficult transition from a static territorial defense to an expeditionary military able to respond to global needs and the complexity of modern conflict.

I wish more Norwegians knew about the great work being done in Stavanger at the NATO Joint Warfare Center. I visited the center the very last day that General Richards completed the training of his staff in preparation for leading the NATO troops in Afghanistan. They were learning to deal with the multi-faceted nature of modern military operations, including

coordinating armed forces from multiple countries with multiple roles, working with the media, implementing development projects, and communicating with local populations. This is the future and Norway is helping make it happen in Stavanger.

Another place the US and Norway can lead the way at NATO is the purposeful coordination of development assistance and security. Again, Afghanistan is the model where the generals have clearly said that to win they must fight the Taliban, but equally importantly we must build roads and schools. Both Norway and the US have worked internally to ensure their development assistance supports their nations foreign and security policy. Again, this leadership experience should be proactively shared with other NATO partners.

Financing Change

Transformation has many obstacles but one of the biggest is cost. Change requires investment. In this regard far too many NATO countries are falling short of the NATO benchmark to spend 2% of gross national product for defense. Some NATO countries are as low as a little over 1%. European allies collectively have economies comparable to the US, yet spend only half as much on defense. Norway stands in 14th place among the partners, in the lower half, at about 1.6%. This is a place, I hope, where Norway, the wealthiest country per capita among NATO members, could assert greater leadership and increase its spending to the 2% standard, thereby providing a strong positive example. This would also give Norway the potential to provide more support to NATO operations and show leadership in that way as well.

Of course, spending on security can be hard to prioritize in a national budget. It can be difficult for the public to understand why serious investments are necessary to ensure future security. It is up to political leaders to recognize and explain this. In the U.S., for example, we had a strong debate over the “peace dividend.” In the immediate days following the Cold War, people expected the “peace dividend” would be permanent. Armed forces were cut, and intelligence agencies greatly diminished as we celebrated our new-found threat-free world. Unfortunately, this did not prove to be the case and it took the tragic events of 9/11 to fully end this debate in the U.S. I hope and pray that other nations don’t have to experience such tragedies to realize the very real dangers of today’s world.

One might ask what business is it of the US what another country spends on defense. The answer is that the failure to meet defense spending needs makes it harder for countries to contribute effectively to NATO operations. That undermines the effectiveness of the partnership. In turn, an ineffective NATO will have no future.

Purchasing modern technology and capability is essential. Airlift capacity is one clear example where investment is not being made in a very critical area. NATO cannot be expeditionary if its troops cannot be moved. The international consortium to acquire C 17s is a hopeful example of how countries can finance needed upgrades to their capability. We welcome Norway’s positive indications on joining the consortium and believe it indicates Norway’s desire to prepare for future needs.

Forward leaning Norway

In summary, let me say that the future I want to see is Norway and the United States working shoulder to shoulder to build a vigorous NATO ready to meet the challenges of the 21st century. This means leading, not following. It means not doing just enough, but all we can. It means both countries must be the most forward leaning with respect to NATO transformation

and supporting the costs to make it happen. It means building a NATO with global reach and perspective, and supporting NATO operations with all the capacity that we have to share. Norway and the US have historically been leaders in NATO, holding NATO as the cornerstone of our defense policies. Now is the time to renew our commitment to leading in NATO. Leadership at NATO is right for our nations, for our relationship, and right for the world.

Thank you.