

N A T O —  — **O T A N**

SERVICE DE PRESSE

PRESS SERVICE

OTAN/NATO, 1110 Bruxelles ■ Telephones: 241 00 40 - 241 44 00 - 241 44 90 TELEX: 23-867

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

PA
REGISTRY

"NATO - A PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE"

THE AULA OF THE OSLO UNIVERSITY

OSLO, MONDAY 15TH APRIL, 1985

LECTURE BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF NATO

THE RT. HON. THE LORD CARRINGTON

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Embarço 15.30 - 15th April, 1985

I was last in Oslo just under a year ago, as part of a programme of visits to allow me to listen to member governments before taking over as Secretary General. I am delighted to be back. I am still listening. And I shall go on listening, because the fundamental point about the Atlantic Alliance is that it is built on consensus: NATO is there as the instrument of its member countries, not vice versa.

Norway's voice in the Alliance is a vital one. Which is in a sense hardly surprising, given that NATO is all about East-West relations, and that your forebears can claim to have given a name to Russia and a place on the map to North America. But there is much more to it than history. The fact that you are one of the two members of the Alliance to share a frontier with the Soviet Union gives a particular importance to your military contribution. Just as your political contribution is made the more significant by your position in a Nordic group which forms an integral part of the Europe which we want to see live in peace, prosperity and freedom.

These two elements - the political and the military - are of equal concern to me as Secretary General, because they are each of fundamental importance to the strength of the Alliance and to its ability to do what is expected of it by its member states. If we do not get the politics right, we shall not be able to maintain the consensus we need for a sound defence. And without a sound defence, we shall not be able to establish the more constructive relationship with the East which we would all like to see.

When NATO was founded, more than 35 years ago, there was little doubt in Western Europe that hope for the future rested on partnership with North America. The danger of being overtaken by the same fate as the countries of Eastern Europe was a powerful inducement for Western European countries - politically, economically and militarily weak - to seek to ensure their security through collective endeavour. While for the United States and Canada, who had been sucked twice this century into devastating wars which had begun in Europe, there was an equally clear incentive to play an active part in preserving the post-war peace.

Thus was born a partnership which has done just that since the foundation of the Alliance. During decades when our people have lived not only in peace, but in freedom and in unparalleled prosperity.

There are those on both sides of the Atlantic who would now question whether this partnership remains essential. In the United States, the questioning tends to assume that Western Europe is now rich enough, and potentially strong enough, to contain the Soviet Union in Europe on its own; or with very much less help from the United States and Canada than is now the case. In Europe, the questioning is more likely to assume either that the Soviet Union never presented any threat, or that it now no longer does so.

As Secretary General, I have to sit in mid-Atlantic - cold, wet and sometimes lonely though this may be. From that position, I point out to Americans that the Europeans bear a greater share of the burden of defence than simple measures of financial input may suggest; I point out to Europeans that we must do more in terms of conventional defence if we are not to find ourselves drifting towards a degree of dependence on nuclear weapons which none of us would consciously choose; and I argue to both that transatlantic partnership remains as important as ever.

The argument that Western Europe is now rich enough to go it alone has in it an element of truth which we on this side of the Atlantic would be foolish to ignore. We are quite rich; and we have no excuse for not playing a full part in the defence of our countries and of our way of life. But the job of providing, without help from North America, a sufficient counterweight to Soviet military power in Europe would require of our countries a massive transfer of resources from the civilian to the military sector; a very significant increase in mobilised conventional defences; and some means of compensating in the nuclear field for what had been lost in deterrent effect through the reduction in the American commitment.

These are not decisions which it would be easy for democracies to take in peacetime; or to sustain without changes to the nature of our societies which none of us would welcome. And the Soviet Union which would no doubt view with some alarm such a radical change in the Western European military posture. I do not know how the Soviet leaders would react; but a still greater military effort on their part, and heightened tension all around, might prove the least of it. Western Europe would be unlikely to feel any safer as a result; and I don't think that the United States would either.

So to the extent that there is a Soviet threat - or a job to be done in providing a counterweight to Soviet military power in Europe - that job seems to me to be one which Western Europe and North America must continue to do together. In the interests of both.

But what of the argument that the world has changed since the Alliance was founded; and that we do not need in the 1980s the complex and expensive machinery which we constructed in the 1940s and have been using and developing ever since?

There is a broad consensus in the Alliance on Soviet military capabilities. The Soviet Union has in broad terms achieved strategic nuclear parity with the United States; it is markedly superior in intermediate range nuclear weapons in Europe; and it enjoys a substantial preponderance in conventional forces in Europe.

But when we come to ask the subsequent questions - why have the Soviet leaders built up this formidable arsenal; and what do they intend to do with it - we find in Western countries different opinions of the Soviet Union; and of its leaders' view

of the world and of their place in it. Analysis is made difficult by a shortage of facts; and perhaps even more so by an apparently irresistible urge to fit such facts as we do know into neat and familiar categories.

I have never been comfortable with neat divisions of Soviet leaders into moderate or hard-line; pragmatist or dogmatist; reformer or conservative. Or, for that matter, dove or hawk. The labelling process can never be wholly accurate; and it tends to produce further inaccuracies by encouraging special pleading and a polarisation of Western views. The "moderate-pragmatist-reformer-dove" school will emphasize the Soviet sense of encirclement by hostile powers; its vulnerability faced with a technologically more astute and adaptable Western world; its traditional urge, born of repeated suffering at the hands of invaders, to take out more military insurance than others would think reasonable; its growing interdependence with the rest of the world; and the realisation that economic problems at home are placing constraints on its international freedom of manoeuvre.

From the other extreme, the "hard-line-dogmatic-conservative-hawk" school will recall that the Soviet Union was the only country to emerge from the last war with expanded frontiers; that it has used military force to subjugate Eastern Europe and Afghanistan; that its leaders subscribe to an ideology which teaches that the struggle between two fundamentally antagonistic political systems can never be relaxed, that it will be won by communism, but that this historical inevitability must be helped on its way whenever opportunity offers; and that Soviet military doctrine teaches that the only truly responsible security policy is one which will secure victory in advance.

Proponents of these opposing views will argue until the cows come home. Neither will convince the other; and I doubt whether the advent of Mr. Gorbachev will cause either to change their views very markedly. My own inclination is to believe that neither school has a monopoly of the truth; and that each may have a part of it. Not because I find it particularly comfortable to sit on the fence; but because the Soviet leaders have from time to time displayed all these characteristics, as they have sought not only to respond to the changing world about them but themselves to change that world.

The safest conclusion, it seems to me, is that no-one can be sure which way the Soviet Union will go in a future which is inevitably uncertain, and which will present its challenges to leaders shaped by forces of great complexity. If I am right, then it surely makes sense for the Allies to focus on the one fact that is not in doubt: the Soviet military capability. And to accept, if only on the basis of historical experience, that the intentions behind that capability may not be innocent; and could not in any case be guaranteed to remain so. If there is an

elephant in your neighbour's garden, there is much to be said for studying its intentions. But, however friendly you may think it to be, there is equally much to be said for having a stout fence to protect your flower beds.

The fence is one which we should maintain to the best of our ability and, as I say, in a full and active partnership between Western Europe and North America. Not because we want to cut ourselves off from the Soviet Union or from the countries of Eastern Europe. But because there is much sense in the maxim that good fences make good neighbours. We want to influence the Soviet leaders towards an equitable security policy based on much lower levels of arms and armed forces - a policy as much in their interests as it is in ours; and to do so, we must leave them in no doubt about our continuing determination to do what is necessary for our defence.

The fence analogy has its uses, but it is also in some respects misleading. Partly because building walls along the division of Europe is the opposite of what we want to achieve politically; and also because we face a threat from planes and ballistic missiles, with a nuclear as well as a conventional capacity.

If we had a magic wand and a secure cork, which would allow us to put the nuclear genie back in the bottle and keep it there, the strong temptation would be to use it; and to try to deal as best we could thereafter with the undeniably difficult problems of containing Soviet conventional power by conventional means. But the magic wand does not exist; and, however promising may prove the results of the research, which the Americans are undertaking in the field of strategic defence, we must live now and for many years to come in the world of nuclear weapons. Which means that our defence policy must deal with the nuclear as well as the conventional capabilities of the Soviet Union.

It is here, as you know, that the consensus which is so fundamental to the strength of the Alliance has come under the greatest strain, under the pressure of those who question the value, effectiveness or morality of NATO's reliance on nuclear weapons. We cannot brush these doubts under the carpet. But we can justifiably ask those who hold them to explain, more convincingly than they have so far, how the alternatives they offer would adequately preserve our security.

Those who would have NATO abandon nuclear weapons altogether must say how the Alliance would cope with a Soviet Union enjoying a nuclear monopoly. Why in such circumstances would an aggressive Soviet Union launch a conventional attack which might prove costly, when it could so easily threaten a nuclear strike without fear of retaliation in kind? Dismissing the very possibility of such nuclear blackmail, or arguing that the Soviet Union would automatically follow NATO's example and get rid of its own nuclear weapons - all of them - is not to provide answers. It is merely wishful thinking.

If, on the other hand, the suggestion is that Western Europe, or those parts of it which wished to become nuclear free zones, should themselves relinquish nuclear weapons, leaving it to the United States to hold the nuclear umbrella, then both ethical and practical questions arise. How ethical would it really be for Europeans to rely on the Americans to hold a nuclear umbrella which they themselves felt it immoral or dangerous to carry? And, more practically, would the American people accept such a lonely burden for long; and, even if they did, would anything short of an attack on the United States itself be deterred? There can be no certain answers; but these are questions which should not be ignored.

Nor should the questions which must be asked about nuclear-free zones. Could such areas be sure that their status would be respected by an opponent at times of high tension or war? And how possible is it to verify an opponent's nuclear targeting policy, which can be changed rapidly and in secret?

A problem common to all these ideas is that they assume much more in the way of Soviet goodwill and good faith than is prudent. And prudence seems to me also to require that we should keep the Soviet leaders in a state of uncertainty as to NATO's intentions if we were faced with an attack. It is precisely that uncertainty which is the key to the deterrence. Because it makes it impossible for a potential aggressor to conclude that what it might gain from aggression would outweigh the potential loss.

A large part of that uncertainty would vanish if NATO were to pledge that it would never be the first to use nuclear weapons; and we should thus have increased the risk of another conventional war in Europe. A risk which I sometimes think is taken too lightly by those who place all the emphasis on avoiding the horrors of nuclear war. Conventional war, as those of you of my generation will remember, is horrible too. Our job is to prevent both; and that, of course, is what NATO is in business to do.

We have made it abundantly clear that none of our weapons will ever be used except in response to an attack; and we have, therefore, given a pledge of no first use of force in its broadest possible form. The message to the Soviet Union is clear: leave us alone, and you have nothing to fear from us. That is a message which seems to me entirely moral; and which we as an Alliance have every reason to want to get across as effectively as possible. Which points, once again, to Western Europe and North America working in partnership.

And that partnership, as I said at the beginning, must be a political one as well as a military one. For almost 20 years now - since the Harmel Report on the Future Tasks of the Alliance was written in 1967 - the Allies have recognised that security cannot be ensured by exclusively military means. If we want not only to keep the peace, but to improve its quality, the political and military strands of NATO's policy must go hand in hand; and they must be kept in balance. This approach was

confirmed last May, when Allied Foreign Ministers issued their Washington Statement on East-West relations. And it underlies everything that we have done since then to build a more constructive relationship with the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe. The essence of this common approach can be summarised in five points.

First, we do not seek security at the expense of the Soviet Union - or of anyone else. If the Soviet Union will take the same line, there is business to be done.

Second, arms control and disarmament is an integral part of our security policy, not an alternative to it. We shall keep up our defences while seeking agreements to bring the military balance down to the lowest possible levels. But such agreements must not only be fair at the time they are signed. We have to be able to rely on them to remain so. In other words, they must be verifiable.

Third, we are open to negotiation on all the many specific proposals we have tabled for reductions in strategic and intermediate range nuclear missiles, and in armed forces in Central Europe; for a worldwide ban on chemical weapons; and for practical military measures to build confidence in Europe. We are ready in these negotiations to take into account everything which is necessary to a fair bargain; but, where a fair bargain can be reached in a particular field, we shall be rightly impatient of any attempt to hold up progress by artificial linkages.

Fourth, important as arms control is, it cannot bear the whole burden of East-West relations. We are working to broaden the agenda for dialogue to include political exchanges, trade, more individual contacts and better implementation of the Helsinki Final Act.

Fifth, we now have an opportunity to make a fresh start, through the Geneva talks and through contacts between East and West in other fields. We are determined to do everything possible to make it succeed. Mr. Gorbachev will find ready partners if he is prepared to work seriously for honest agreement.

It is of course relatively easy to set down on paper the broad lines of a political strategy. The hard part is to put it into effect with the necessary degree of consistency and flexibility. Like good scotch, it is getting the blend right which matters. And the right blend at any given time must have regard to Soviet behaviour. Our political strategy must therefore be flexible enough to encompass the right responses to Soviet activities of which we disapprove; and yet not so flexible that it ceases to be possible to talk of a common strategy.

The consultation mechanisms of the Alliance have a vital role to play in all this. Sixteen nations, each with its distinctive history, traditions and perspectives, will inevitably differ to some degree in their analysis of given situations and the right response to make. But partnership is not only a question of military burden-sharing. It is also a matter of political give and take, of adjustment and consensus. And I have no doubt that we shall continue to cope with the differences of perspective inherent in an Alliance which stretches from Eastern Turkey to the West coast of North America, and from Iceland to Sicily.

We shall, that is, if member states continue to play their part in seeking solutions to the problems which arise, and in managing constructively any differences which are not immediately capable of solution. There are centrifugal as well as centripetal forces at work in the Alliance, and we must be careful that the former do not gain the upper hand.

A good example of what I mean is the debate about the Strategic Defence Initiative. I have been asked about the SDI on every possible occasion, and in every country I have visited, since the beginning of the year. No-one has given me any reason to believe that this is going to be an exception, and I should like to reinforce my credentials as a mid-Atlanticist by telling you what I said recently to an audience in Washington.

What I said first of all was that it would be very imprudent of the United States not to be conducting research of its own in the light of what we know of Soviet capabilities and Soviet interests in the field; and that America's allies would have reason to be critical if they woke up one morning to find that the Soviet Union had made a strategically significant breakthrough for which the United States was unprepared.

I then recalled a Punch cartoon of the 1st World War, in which two British soldiers are seen sharing a distinctly uncomfortable shell-hole in the middle of a bombardment. The caption proclaimed: "if you know of a better hole, go to it". And that implies a double test - that there is a better hole, and that it is possible to get safely to it - which is equally relevant to the SDI. As things stand, I am not convinced either by those who claim that it is already clear that the SDI is bound to pass the test; or by those who say that it is bound to fail. So the wisest course, as it seems to me, is to do what the US Administration is doing - which is to establish the facts. And the facts to be established, as Administration spokesmen have made clear, include not only the technical and financial questions of how and how much; but also the implications of any new departure for the security of the Alliance as a whole.

These questions are both complicated and important, as questions of strategy in the nuclear age inevitably are. But I see no reason why we should not be able to answer them successfully. And every reason why we should make a vigorous and determined effort to do so. And I make the point here, as I did in the United States, that to answer successfully must be to answer as an Alliance. That is what partnership is all about.

We cannot afford as an Alliance not to make the best use in our defence policies of what new technologies may have to offer; and that applies just as much to strategic as to conventional defence. But what the best use may prove to be - and the course of the negotiations in Geneva will be one of the factors to be taken into account - is a question which affects us all. And which we should all play a part in deciding. There can be no question of inevitable progress from research to deployment; and the need to maintain what I have called a firebreak seems to be well understood on both sides of the Atlantic.

So the case for change, if it appears well-founded in the light of the research and the other factors I have mentioned, will be considered carefully and collectively. I do not know what the verdict will be. But, whatever else may change in defence policy - and change is certainly no stranger to one of my generation - I am convinced that the partnership between Western Europe and North America must endure. It has been the guarantee of our security, our freedom and our prosperity since the Atlantic Alliance was founded. It will be just as important in the years ahead. And it will be just as important that Norway, as it has done from the beginning, should add its political and military weight to that of its Allies in the common defence of freedom.