

Atlantic Alliance and German Unity

Speech by Secretary General, Manfred Wörner at the Uberseclub

The question of European security is one that must now be looked at afresh. The rigid military confrontation of past decades is increasingly giving way to a concern for enhanced security and to the active pursuit of peace using a combination of military and political elements.

Two tasks have to be faced in the coming years:

- the development of a new security structure, and
- the creation of a new political order in Europe.

Both tasks are equally indispensable for the preservation and strengthening of peace in the long run.

The Alliance therefore faces a dual challenge. It must be a driving and guiding force in the dynamic process of change from the status quo, helping to establish a new continental order of peace and freedom. In the second place, it must be a source of stability, guaranteeing security in Europe, especially in the face of erratic developments in the Soviet Union and a difficult transitional period in Central and Eastern Europe.

The task of working out a new European security equation for the 21st century offers a historic opportunity. Under pressure for comprehensive change in its system the Soviet Union favours a new security order. The basic premises of Western security and stability - the presence of US troops on the European continent, the continuation of the Atlantic Alliance and an ultimate nuclear deterrent to uphold peace - are today increasingly acknowledged by the Soviet Union as being prerequisites for stability and fundamentals of a future security structure.

I believe the following points to be important:

- Only the transatlantic link, the continued integration of America in our security structures, can guarantee stability in the long term. The US commitment to European security is the cornerstone of the Western system that was created after the Second World War, and which has given us peace. Without the active participation of North America it will not be possible to balance the Germans' interest in unity, their neighbours' concerns and the Soviet Union's legitimate security interests, and to reach a common position.
- The Alliance, which is the concrete expression of this transatlantic link, remains indispensable for a future security scheme. At the same time, the Alliance will still have the function of guiding the ongoing arms control process.
- The starting point for the future European security structure is provided by the Vienna negotiations. Initial results must lead to yet further reductions in force levels and new defensive structures. The latest US proposal to reduce American and Soviet troops in Central

Europe to less than 200,000 shows the way. Future conventional disarmament in Europe must not remain a matter of mere bean-counting, however. It must not merely cover force levels, but also build-up capability, logistics, infra-structure, modes of deployment, force structures and exercise patterns, under conditions of increased transparency.

- A new European security equation must also comprise a residual nuclear deterrent as an ultimate guarantee of peace, with agreement on a minimum level of nuclear armament. On this point, the most recent pronouncements of Soviet spokesmen, including even Gorbachev, are encouraging.
- It is necessary to develop co-operative mechanisms to promote understanding with the East - for instance more exchanges between military academies, reciprocal troop visits, seminars to enhance shared learning.
- Comparison of NATO with the Warsaw Pact is only conceivable or useful if the latter changes fundamentally to become a voluntary alliance of free and equal partners. Until this happens the two cannot properly be equated, although they often are, through thoughtlessness or for transparent reasons. Even to refer to both these alliances as military blocs is grossly misleading. The Warsaw Pact itself is no longer a bloc, let alone NATO. The Atlantic Alliance is a free association of democratic, self-determining nations of the free world, and is purely defensive in nature. Up till now the Warsaw Pact has been a military alliance lacking the legitimisation of a free expression of will by the peoples involved. We hope for a change, which would decisively improve the prospects for fruitful co-operation.
- Nevertheless we cannot and will not become guarantors of the Warsaw Pact. We are arguing neither for its dissolution nor for its continuation. Its fate will be determined by its members alone exercising free choice. This must also be allowed for in the arms control process.
- Even if the Warsaw Pact does dissolve itself that is no reason for disbanding NATO. On the contrary there is every reason to argue that our role as an agent of stability would then become even more important.
- To equate the stationing of Soviet troops in Central and Eastern Europe with the presence of American troops in Western Europe is neither acceptable nor helpful. The American and Canadian troops are here with the agreement of free parliaments and governments. The same is not true of the Soviet forces in Central and Eastern Europe - on the contrary, the free governments of Czechoslovakia and Hungary have demanded their withdrawal. Once again, the removal of Soviet troops can and indeed will lead to the reduction of American force levels, but not to a complete US withdrawal. There are also geostrategic reasons for that. The current arms control negotiations should not be used to legitimise the presence of Soviet troops in Central and Eastern Europe against the will of the stationing countries, nor to make their withdrawal conditional on that of the North American forces.

A future European political order must build on the right of free self-determination of peoples. From the debate in the West the outlines of a European architecture for peace are already visible. It is based on existing institutions which represent the outstanding accomplishment of the post-war period:

1. The process of European integration with its goal of political union;
2. The Atlantic Alliance;
3. The CSCE process.

In this context the CSCE framework for a pan-European peace system assumes special significance. The CSCE system must be extended and deepened. Such an overarching structure, however, cannot replace but only complement the Atlantic Alliance. How should a body of 35 states, which still can exercise veto rights, really guarantee security. Only the Atlantic Alliance is able to supply the structural base for the growing European architecture, to overcome crises and conflicts which can never be excluded, even with the current changes in the European landscape. The Alliance is the umbrella under which European integration is able to grow dynamically and continually. EC and CSCE would be overburdened if they had to carry out the task of guaranteeing peace in the foreseeable time. They do not dispose of the necessary structure nor the corresponding instruments in their present and foreseeable state of evolution.

Whether we are concerned with security arrangements or a peaceful political order in Europe, we inevitably find the German question to be central.

German unity will come. We, who have striven for the triumph of democracy and for an end to the division of Europe and of Germany, must accept the crucial role of the peoples who are shaping the new order in the revolution in the East. The timetable for the achievement of German unity will not so much be determined by planners and governments as by the course of events in the GDR, as part of the tremendous restructuring of Europe, and by the free choice of the people there and in the Federal Republic. What politicians and diplomats can do is to recognise these facts and develop a framework so that the process is smooth and harmonious and avoids crises or erratic developments with the attendant risks for all of Europe.

The Alliance has been pledged to German unity since the entry of the Federal Republic in 1954/55. This is true of the three Western powers as well as of all the other Allies. The Alliance is not an obstacle to German unity, any more than it is to European integration. It helped to bring more democracy and freedom. It seeks to overcome the division of Germany and Europe. It is promoting reform in the East.

The continued existence of NATO and progress towards German unity are perfectly compatible. Indeed I would say they were mutually dependent. Now I hear sometimes that it is not realistic to assume that a reunified Germany could exist in the Atlantic Alliance. I would confront these voices with the insight drawn from our historic experience : To make the dissolution of the Alliance a sine qua non of German unity would deprive both Germany and Europe of a basic force for stability. Only firm anchoring in the West can provide the fundamental stability for the difficult process in which we are engaged.

A drifting, neutral Germany cannot be a solution, given the country's geostrategic position and its political, economic and military potential, and this is the view of all the Allies. It would not even be in the enlightened self-interest of the Soviets. The history of the last two centuries demonstrates this.

Thus there is no acceptable alternative to Germany remaining anchored in the Atlantic Alliance - and belonging to the European Community. Please understand that it would be a mistake to consider the German question in terms of a dynamically unfolding future while, at the same time, viewing the role and function of the Atlantic Alliance as merely static. The latter is another part of the same series of rapid, interdependent developments.

The Soviet Union is adapting to this movement towards German unity. Foreign Minister Shevardnadze's speech in Brussels and General Secretary Gorbachev's latest pronouncements show this. Soviet security interests and their definition have changed dramatically in the past four years. The Soviets' forward deployment in Europe since 1945 sprang partly from an expansionist drive for world power, but also from deep-seated need for security. That need has lost its justification with the now unequivocal recognition that there is no threat from the West.

As a result, the Soviet perception of their security has changed. They no longer need a Western glacis. The Soviet Union will have to accept - and is probably already on the way to doing so - that its security will be enhanced rather than impaired by the loss of its Central and East European buffer zone. New, stable structures and increased prosperity as well as new and closer forms of international co-operation in Central and Western Europe will above all benefit Soviet reform process.

The Soviet Union's security interests - in stability, freedom from threat and co-operation along the borders of the Soviet state - will be better served in the long term by the intensification of the disarmament process and the further reduction of military forces, by taking advantage of the Alliance as a co-operative partner in the management of peace, and by the extension of the CSCE system and the resulting reduction of confrontation.

In addition, special arrangements could be devised to take account of Soviet security interests with a united Germany as a member of the Atlantic Alliance.

A component of such an arrangement could be a special military status for the territory of the GDR, or perhaps an agreement not to extend military integration to that territory. These are just two possibilities out of many which could be conceived. German unity and membership of the Atlantic Alliance are perfectly compatible within a security architecture which would preserve European stability in the interest of the Soviet Union as well as of other states.

The members of the Alliance must as a matter of urgency incorporate such considerations into a common concept for progress towards German unity.

The important sign is that the European Community, the Atlantic Alliance and the CSCE should be developed as a framework for German and European unity. Omission of any of these structural elements would disrupt the balance which is so vital for the future of Germany and Europe. The Soviet Union can be sure that we take their ideas seriously, and more we will respect their legitimate security interests.