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PRIME MINISTER'S REMARKS

IN THE DEBATE ON

"THE NEW EUROPEAN SECURITY ORDER"

AT THE

EDU CONFERENCE IN HELSINKI

ON

THURSDAY 30 AUGUST

Are we asking the right question?

Generals are often accused of fighting the last war, or even the one before, rather than the next one. Politicians are just as prone to it. The theme of today's discussion ~~and the paper~~ ~~which goes with it~~ - a New European Security Order - put us in danger of making exactly that mistake.

A new security order for Europe is no longer the main issue. Europe's future security is well in hand. The NATO summit in London charted the way ahead. There are plenty of proposals on the table for the CSCE summit in November. The much more important and compelling question is: how does Europe protect its security and the vital economic interests on which its prosperity depends in a

dangerous world? And how do we, as some of the richest and most advanced democracies in the world, set about protecting those small states who may become prey to the international despot? Because at the very moment Europe is more peaceful, / the rest of the world may become more perilous for us.

The growing dangers out-of-area

A number of us have been warning for some time now that Europe's security cannot depend exclusively on the arrangements we make for defence in Europe and the North Atlantic. When I addressed NATO Foreign Ministers at Turnberry in June I asked:

"Ought NATO to give more thought to possible threats to our security from other directions? There is no guarantee that threats to our security will stop at some imaginary line across the mid-Atlantic."

I went on to recall:

"It is not long since some of us had to go to the Arabian Gulf to keep oil supplies flowing.

We shall be very heavily dependent on Middle-Eastern oil once again in the next century. With the spread of sophisticated weapons and military technology to areas like the Middle East, potential threats to NATO territory may originate more from outside Europe."

That was two months before Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. I recall that I was criticised by some ~~of my own diplomats~~ at the time for being so intemperate as to suggest that NATO should get involved in out-of-area problems. But events since then have driven home the lesson: Europe's security is vitally affected by events outside the NATO area.

Middle Eastern turmoil

Let us reflect for a moment on the particular dangers which Europe faces in the present situation.

First, we cannot conceivably accept that a country can simply march into a neighbour, which is an independent country and a full member of the UN, and annex it. If Iraq were to get away with that, no small state would ever be safe again. Confidence that such an attack and occupation could never happen again in Europe would be gravely undermined, particularly among the East Europeans who have experienced precisely that fate in the past. The implications would be chilling.

Second, there is the risk to oil supplies, on

which not only our prosperity but our capacity to defend democracy depends. [Iraq on its own has about 11 per cent of the world's oil reserves. By invading Kuwait, Saddam Hussein has extended his control to 21 per cent of them.] There is no doubt that, had the United States and the United Kingdom not moved their forces very swiftly, he would have gone on to seize the Saudi oil fields. [That would have given him 49 per cent of the world's oil reserves.) Once he had those under his belt, he would have also extended his control to the smaller Gulf states and even to Oman, [raising the figure to 60 per cent.]

So we faced a danger that a single country, governed by an unscrupulous dictator, could have its hands on ^{a considerable part} ~~60 per cent~~ of the energy

resources on which the whole world depends ~~for~~
~~the energy~~ to run its industries, fuel its
transport and heat its homes. And our
dependence on Middle Eastern oil is actually
going to increase in the coming decades,
Europe's dependence most of all. [Remember also
~~all the indications are that in a few years'~~
~~time Iraq could have nuclear weapons, in~~
~~addition to her existing chemical armoury.]~~

Quite rightly our first recourse was to the
United Nations, and the speed with which the
Security Council moved to impose comprehensive
sanctions against Iraq was very good news. We
now also have a resolution to allow the use of
force to implement the embargo and that is a
further important tightening of the
stranglehold around Iraq. There should be no

misunderstanding: our policy is to secure Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait through UN sanctions vigorously applied.

But we are dealing with someone whose previous behaviour suggests that he is not going to be deterred by the United Nations and its resolutions. That's why enforcing sanctions ~~would not on its own have been enough.~~
had to be accompanied by the
~~Military action to defend~~ Saudi Arabia and the ~~other smaller~~ Gulf States from Iraqi invasion ~~was and remains crucial.~~

Europe's hesitation

These developments are of the most vital concern to Europe's security, even though they are out-of-area. At the political level Europe's response has been very satisfactory. We moved rapidly to impose sanctions. The European Twelve and the EFTA countries have shown excellent solidarity in protecting each other's citizens in Iraq and in trying to keep open our Embassies in Kuwait.

Turkey's action

But in defence terms the European response ^{was} ~~has~~ ^{much} generally ~~been~~ rather ^{er} slow and ^{policy} limited. ~~We had~~ a NATO Ministerial meeting but could not agree to issue a statement, because some members had reservations about NATO involving itself in out-of-area issues. A number of European countries have now agreed to send naval units

to the Gulf, and there has been some useful coordination in the WEU. (Turkey's action in preventing the export of Iraqi oil and enforcing the trade embargo has been outstanding - and absolutely critical.)

~~Some~~
~~Other countries have made no contribution on the defence side, even though their vital interests are just as much affected. The only countries~~ ^{in Europe} ~~which have done significantly more than the minimum are Britain and France: [and in our case we are actually less dependent on Middle Eastern oil than any other European country save Norway.]~~

Not for the first time in Europe's history we have to give thanks for the United States and its President, for giving leadership and moving

rapidly and decisively to defend not only America's own interests but those of Europe as well. We owe a great debt of gratitude to President Bush for his courage and steadiness.

I've said that at this critical time
But ^(Jully) Europe has not measured up to expectations.

First, we have all this rhetoric about a common security policy as part of political union, yet when it comes to something practical which affects us fundamentally, ^{some countries are hesitant -} ~~most of Europe hangs~~ ~~back~~. Its not what you say that counts but what you do.

Second it does not make a great deal of sense to be debating a New European Security Order while neglecting some of the most serious threats to Europe's security which we are

likely to face in future.

Third we cannot expect the United States to go on bearing major military and defence burdens world-wide, acting in effect as the world's policeman, if it does not get a positive and swift response from its Allies when the crunch comes - particularly when fundamental principles as well as their direct interests are just as much at stake.

A Defence Role to Match Europe's Economic
Strength

It will not be enough to say: we have looked after our own defence and security in Europe and what happens in the rest of the world is someone else's business. There is no place in future for an inward-looking NATO, any more than there is for an inward-looking European Community. We are going to need both the will-power and the military forces to defend our interests in the rest of the world, in partnership with the United States. Otherwise we shall be seen as selfish and weak.

This underlines very strongly some of the crucial points on which we agreed at the NATO summit in London:

- first we need to make more political use of NATO to consult about wider world problems;

- second, when we look at the forces we shall need in Europe, we should take into account also the forces we need to meet our responsibilities and the challenges we shall face in the rest of the world. (~~Even if it remains the case that NATO as such cannot act out of area, the main individual members of NATO have the capacity to do so: and they are entitled to the full support and backing, publicly expressed, of the others.~~) Those who do not want to contribute forces can help in other ways - in this case by giving aid to countries like Turkey, Egypt and Jordan whose economies are particularly badly hit as a result of sanctions

This external aspect will be a crucial part of any new security arrangements for Europe, ~~yet~~

~~one which hardly features in the papers before~~

~~although I recognise they were written some time ago.~~

~~us~~ I hope our conclusions will recognise its

importance.

The continuing need for secure defence in
Europe

Let me now make some comments on the issues in the papers produced for this conference.

As leaders of centre-right parties, we have a particular duty to be realistic about defence. The first message we have to get over is that, despite the great changes which have taken place in Europe during the last year, the danger is not over. We have to take the long view: and it would be folly to believe that disarmament could never again become rearmament, or that plough-shares could not be re-fashioned into swords. We must not gloss over the very substantial forces which the Soviet Union still maintains, directed against the United States and Western Europe: nor the

continuing modernization of those forces. And we already see some of the old ethnic problems arising once again in Central Europe.

We have constantly to remind people why Europe is secure: why we have been able to achieve the unification of Germany: why we now have the prospect of reducing the size of our armed forces. It is because we kept up our resolve and our defences throughout the years of danger and Communist expansion. We have to explain to them that, even with reduced tension in Europe, we shall always need a secure defence. Wars are far more likely to come about as a result of perceived weakness or lack of capacity to defend oneself, as we have seen in the Gulf.

So when we talk about a New European Security

Order - ~~if we must use that phrase~~ -- our first task is in reality to preserve the essentials of the ^{present} ~~old~~ order. That means:

the strategy of flexible response backed up by adequate conventional and nuclear forces, kept up to date as necessary;

it means a continuing United States and Canadian presence in Europe;

and it means continuing to station nuclear weapons in Europe, without putting new constraints on them such as "no first use" or "weapons of last resort". If we do that, they would be overrun before they could ever be used and we would just make the area they were supposed to defend safe for conventional war.

We should characterise nuclear weapons for what they are: weapons whose essential purpose is to prevent war.

Secure defence the best basis for cautious change

If we can keep the essentials, then there is scope to reduce weapons and forces. The CFE agreement now seems within reach. We are already looking at what should follow it, and several Governments including Britain have set out the reductions in their own forces which they envisage making. It is very important that there should be effective consultation in NATO about those reductions, so that we keep what is essential for defence in all areas.

We can also cut back the numbers of short-range nuclear weapons, providing we preserve our ability at all times to deter. But there is no case for getting rid of these weapons and having to rely on strategic nuclear weapons alone. That would be going back to a trip-wire strategy. Our public opinion would not accept that.

Strengthening the Helsinki Agreements

I think we have to be careful about referring to the Helsinki Accords and the CSCE as a framework for security in Europe. Certainly they have been immensely valuable, and they played a great part in helping people in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union to ^{win} ~~secure~~ their freedom. They gave the West a locus for raising human rights issues with the former Communist governments. We are all grateful to Finland for having played host and lent the name of its capital city to those Accords.

Looking to the future, there are a lot of ways in which we can build on them to help strengthen democracy and the rule of law throughout Europe. I recently proposed that we should agree a European Magna Carta which would

entrench for the whole of Europe the rights, freedoms and rule of law which we in the west take for granted. I would hope that could be reflected in our communique. We can also make the CSCE the forum where East and West come together to discuss the great world issues.

But we must not make the mistake of thinking that the Helsinki Accords and the CSCE can provide a substitute for NATO. One day it may be possible to think of a single security organisation for Europe. But that day is still long distant. For now we must continue to rely on the basic institutions which have assured our defence and security so successfully for 40 years, above all NATO and WEU which form the great Western Alliance.

Re-uniting Europe

The other great contribution which Western Europe can make to strengthening the security of our continent as a whole is to make sure that no European country, provided it is democratic and has a market economy, is excluded from the possibility of being a member of the European Community. We should be utterly insincere to talk about a Europe whole and free, a much-used phrase, if at the same time we race ahead with turning Europe into a tightly integrated Community, which it would be harder for East Europeans to join. The most effective way to overcome the divisions between East and West in Europe is to give the East European countries the clear prospect of Community membership. Such an arrangement - which would apply just as much to EFTA

countries who wish to join - may have to be at the expense of more central control. And so it should be: we are conservatives and know that democracy is about dispersal of power. It's ^s socialism which wants more and more central control.

Our priority has to be to make Europe as a whole more secure. Not peace at any price, but peace with freedom and justice.

Ali

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MR. WHITTINGDALE

cc Mr. Ingham

EDU MEETING IN HELSINKI: PRIME MINISTER'S
SPEECH

I enclose the text of the Prime Minister's
remarks to the EDU Meeting in Helsinki in the
form in which she has approved them.

C.P.P.

CHARLES POWELL

25 August 1990

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resources on which the whole world depends for the energy to run its industries, fuel its transport and heat its homes. And our dependence on Middle Eastern oil is actually going to increase in the coming decades, Europe's dependence most of all. Remember also all the indications are that in a few years' time Iraq could have nuclear weapons, in addition to her existing chemical armoury.

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