

Speech by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the
Federal Republic of Germany, Willy Brandt, to the
United Nations Conference of Non-Nuclear Weapon States

Geneva, 3. September 1968

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This Assembly Hall has been a witness to many hopes and many disappointments of the nations between two world wars. It is the home of a conference which by its nature and purpose can even today be called historic.

On the one hand because an overwhelming majority of states are meeting here to seek their common interests in spite of different social systems, political standpoints, and other shades of orientation. What unites us all is the will to forego the atom as a weapon.

What unites us all is also the conviction that this self-imposed restriction must not lead to any degradation of our nations, but that it must serve the peace and advancement of mankind.

This conference can also be termed historic because it makes us realize that it is not sufficient to prevent atomic chaos in order to ward off the dangers to the independence of states and inviolability of their sovereignty. There is no evading this experience.

The states who do not possess any nuclear weapons wish to know how they can obtain more security. They want to discuss how the arms race can be limited and brought under control in order to make peace more secure.

This is not an academic subject. We cannot solve these problems in thin air but only with our feet firmly on the ground, in the reality of the world we live in.

Without confidence in certain fundamental rules of the common-existence of states there can be no control of the destructive forces inherent in nuclear energy. Unless there is such confidence there can be no international order. Signatures are worth nothing if they are not based on a minimum of reliability.

Whoever possesses power, and especially nuclear power, does not necessarily have morality on his side, nor wisdom. To me the task of this conference is not to organize unproductive resistance against those world powers on whom history has placed a gigantic burden of responsibility, which I do not envy them.

The great dangers to mankind emanate from great powers, not from small ones. In other words, it will also be necessary to define the obligations to which the nuclear-weapon states have to submit themselves.

It would be sheer madness were we to strive to acquire the same destructive potential for all. But it is reasonable and necessary to try to achieve that equality of rights and opportunities for all states without which we cannot face our peoples, nor the younger generation, nor history.

My delegation have not come here for any other purpose than to make a positive contribution. For the cause of the peaceful use of nuclear energy we extend our hand in partnership and cooperation. In the question of security we wish to participate in efforts to come closer to positive results.

Everyone in this Assembly Hall knows that the threat of force and fear of force are not abstract matters. Everyone knows that nations fear for their independence and that there is deep concern for the future of mankind.

The rules of international co-existence and the work of restoring mutual trust that appeared to have been achieved, in spite of setbacks, in the years after the second world war, all that is once again at stake.

No matter what one may understand by the sphere of interests of a great nuclear power, it does not alter the fact that the universal rules of general international law that are also bindingly embodied as principles in the United Nations Charter, and remain unrestrictedly valid, must not be violated. Those principles are sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-violence, the right of self-determination of nations, and human rights.

We shall not be able to discuss security guarantees, disarmament, and the perspectives for the peaceful use of nuclear energy with any prospect of success unless a common will and joint proposals put right the rules or order which the community of nations urgently needs.

The progress and the outcome of this conference will, logically, determine how the states assembled here will continue their work.

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The Federal Government has given an undertaking to its allies not to manufacture nuclear weapons and has subjected itself to appropriate international controls. It does not seek any national control over nuclear weapons nor national possession of such weapons.

It reaffirms that position. Its security lies in an alliance. At the same time, being one of the non-nuclear states, we identify ourselves with the general demand for the exclusion of pressure and of the threat of force.

It is still a long way from the security council resolution of 19 June 1968 and the declarations by the three nuclear-weapon states related to it, as well as from the exclusion of force contained in the last sentence of the preamble to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, to a well-balanced security system.

Let us be realistic. As long as nuclear weapons are not universally abolished they cannot be eliminated as a means of deterrence and collective self-defence.

It is obviously not enough to ban nuclear aggression or the threat of it in order to safeguard the security interests of the non-nuclear states and to comply with their legitimate desire to develop in dignity and independence. There is no doubt that a nuclear state can endanger the security and independence of a non-nuclear state by using conventional weapons; there would not even be any need to threaten to employ its nuclear potential.

Hence the demand that states should mutually undertake not to use force: the non-nuclear to each other and the nuclear powers to the non-nuclear. The only legitimate exception would then be the right to individual and collective self-defence pursuant to Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.

Only a general prohibition of force admitting of no other exception, which is one of the principles contained in the United Nations Charter, can be conducive to peaceful relations between states. It is, therefore, not admissible to confine ~~it~~ the renunciation of force to specific states. As far as we are concerned, I would add that we concede to no one the right of intervention.

Charter || The question arises whether the overriding principle of the renunciation of force is not the indispensable criterion on which this conference could base a resolution or a convention on the security of the non-nuclear-weapon states. The German delegation are prepared to submit their own proposals and to help in the elaboration of pertinent proposals made by others.

We will try to achieve a prohibition of any aggression with nuclear, biological, chemical and conventional weapons, as well as of the direct or indirect threat of such an aggression, as a breach of the generally valid principle of non-violence that is also laid down in the principles of Article 2 of the United Nations Charter. The renunciation of the use and threat of pressure and force, in any form,

which might menace the territorial integrity and political independence of states should be generally renewed. States should reaffirm their obligation to shape their international relations on the basis of sovereign equality and the self-determination of peoples and to settle by peaceful means any differences that may arise. They should agree upon the greatest possible measure of international cooperation with the aim of implementing the principles of the United Nations Charter in the fields of disarmament and arms control, thus taking a step to free mankind from fear.

The Federal Republic of Germany welcomed the treaty on a nuclear-free zone signed by the Latin American countries just as much as the decisions taken by the organization of African Unity which could lead to a nuclear-free zone in that continent, too. Europe is not in the happy position of being free from nuclear weapons. It will be a hard task, and one that cannot be solved quickly, to remove existing nuclear weapons without dangerously changing the overall equilibrium, in other words, by taking into account the security interests of all concerned.

The Federal Government has advocated that Europe should be made into a zone of detente as a preliminary step towards a lasting peace order. It has proposed the elimination of the confrontation, reciprocal renunciations of the use of force, normalization of relations with the countries of Eastern and South Eastern Europe, a modus vivendi in Germany, and facilitated exchanges in the cultural, economic and scientific fields. These efforts have now been dealt a severe blow.

We are nevertheless still prepared to work for a "European zone of peaceful neighbourliness", which would gradually lead to constructive cooperation and in which the dangerous confrontation can be diminished. We, therefore, continue to support a balanced, mutual reduction of troops,

which could go hand in hand with an appropriate settlement of the problem of the nuclear weapons stationed in that region. This, incidentally, has several points of contact with the well-known Polish proposals. In December 1967, in a speech before the German Bundestag, I pointed out that we are prepared to help conclude an agreement which in the course of a balanced reduction of all armed forces would also lead to a step-by-step decrease of nuclear weapons in the whole of Europe. This we are still prepared to do.

I do not wish to hide the fact that in the present world situation my government can look upon security measures in the form of resolutions, declarations or conventions only as supplementary supports for its security. The world must succeed in removing the major causes of the insecurity of the non-nuclears step by step, in other words to press on towards real nuclear disarmament together with the dismantling of the enormous potential of conventional armaments of the nuclear-weapon states as well.

The nuclear weapon states are called upon to take concrete steps. It is up to us non-nuclear-weapon states not to relieve them of their obligations, and to support negotiable proposals for solutions.

We should also turn our attention to the removal of certain means of delivery for nuclear warheads. If it comes to negotiations on intercontinental missiles, which is what the United States and the Soviet Union have been preparing the ground for, they should also include the elimination of other long range missiles in the whole of Europe.

When we speak of the threat of nuclear mass destruction weapons let us not forget that there are ^{also} ~~are~~ other weapons of mass destruction whose effects would perhaps be even more devastating; I am thinking of biological and chemical weapons.

In 1954 the Federal Republic of Germany signed an international treaty by which it renounced the production not only of A- but also of B- and C-weapons. We would appreciate it if other states were to adopt the same attitude.

The Geneva Protocol of 1925 does not define chemical and bacteriological weapons. Should the problem of B- and C-weapons be discussed they should be specifically determined. In this respect the definitions laid down when Germany renounced production in 1954 could be of value. We offer our assistance and support for all efforts aiming - without discrimination - at effectively remodelling the prohibition of B- and C-weapons with the object of banishing man's fear of them.

One of the main talks of this conference is to safeguard and promote the research, development and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Freedom of research and development is the precondition for promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Nobody and nothing must be allowed to impede or prevent research and development in this field. The Federal Government attaches importance to the statement on this question which the United States Government made in the United Nations on 15 May 1968.

Safeguards, too, must be strictly confined to preventing the diversion of fissionable material for nuclear weapon purposes. This could be done by applying the principle of the instrumented safeguarding of the flow of fissionable material at strategic points. We in the Federal Republic of Germany are making considerable efforts to apply this principle. The work we are doing in this field, in which the IAEA is also interested, is being carried out at the nuclear research center at Karlsruhe.

We should like to give you an opportunity of acquainting yourselves with this work on the spot. On behalf of the Federal Government, therefore, I invite interested delegates to visit our research center at Karlsruhe, where also the modern fast-breeder technique is being developed.

Our nuclear activity is carried out within the framework of the European Atomic Energy Community. This Community has a safeguards system that has been effectively applied for over ten years now and which will have to be retained in the event of the conclusion of a verification agreement with the IAEA.

Nuclear energy is one of the great hopes of all those nations who do not have any natural resources of their own. How else will they be able to fight mass starvation, which may develop into a catastrophe for the whole of mankind?

The Federal Republic of Germany does not intend to keep the results of its work to itself but wished to cooperate and share its experience with all nations. We are prepared to intensify this co-operation:

By a wider exchange of information and technical know-how, by allowing others to participate in the programmes carried out by German nuclear research centers and research institutes, by granting scholarships and by sending experts. We wish to strengthen our present numerous contacts in every way possible and to establish new ones.

On 10 September 1926, ~~four~~ forty-two years ago, Gustav Stresemann made here the speech by which he brought Germany into the existing community, the League of Nations. Many of the aims he proposed are still unaccomplished, the tasks unfulfilled. When today a German Foreign Minister refers to that speech he does so conscious of the terrible price many nations and the German nation itself had to pay because Briand's and Stresemann's warning went unheeded.

German foreign policy is exposed to much distortion and even defamation. Nobody can evade distortions entirely, but the defamations I strongly repudiate. I do this as a person whom nobody can associate with the crimes of Hitler and who in spite of this bears his share of the national responsibility.

We have learned from history. The Federal Republic of Germany is consistently pursuing a policy which aims at establishing a peace order on this continent to replace the balance of terror. There is no reasonable alternative to this.

The Germans in the Federal Republic have not sought armaments. Our Federal Armed Forces are not a purely national army, rather are they completely integrated in the Atlantic Defense Alliance. There are nuclear weapons in the Federal Republic of Germany, as you all know, but we do not have any control over them, nor are we ambitious to gain such control.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany is determined to pursue its peace policy unwaveringly and regardless of any setbacks it is not responsible for.

We not only appreciate the wish of all nations to live within secure boundaries but are prepared to take this into account in word and deed - without treaties where they can be dispensed with, with treaties where they may serve the purpose.

Young people in many of our countries do not understand why we, the older ones, cannot cope with the problems of an age dominated by science. Not force, but reason alone, can give them an answer.

This is not a speech that was conceived weeks ago. It has been prepared in the past few days, and in spite of the past few days. In central Europe there exists the largest accumulation of destructive military force there has ever been. This goes against reason. It goes against the interests of our peoples. If others show their strength and thus create new dangerous tensions, it is not for us to reply by increasing tension.

I see it as a chance and a possibility for the non-nuclear states assembled here, and as their duty, to combine their strength of will, their strength of reason, and their strength of morality, to address an appeal to all nations and the responsible statesmen:

Let every nation determine its own course, for only then will states join hands and best serve mankind, which still has so many and such big problems to solve.