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A D D R E S S

by the Federal Chancellor of Austria

Bruno KREISKY

to the General Assembly of the United Nations

on October 29, 1979

Mr. President,

It gives me great pleasure to address this General Assembly which meets under the distinguished leadership of President Salim Ahmed Salim. I would like to take this opportunity to convey, through you Mr. President, my greetings and the expression of my highest esteem to President Nyerere, one of the most eminent statesman of Africa.

It has been five years since I last spoke before the General Assembly of the United Nations. The problems I brought up then are still the problems which are on our agenda today. Among the issues I dealt with were the oil problem, the situation in the Middle East, and the relations between the industrialized countries and the developing nations. At that occasion I expressed the opinion that the intricate problem of bringing peace to the Middle East cannot be solved without taking into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people. I asked you to consider the Middle East problem as intimately linked with the overall world-wide process of detente.

There have been significant developments in world affairs during this five year period. Permit me to refer to some of them:

On 1 August, 1975, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe has been concluded in Helsinki. Thoroughly prepared, the Conference confirmed and was the culmination of detente which I believe had started with the conclusion of the Austrian State Treaty 25 years ago. This process has not been without setbacks.

There have been deadlocks and crises. There were periods of pessimism and optimism. Finally it was possible to bring about the conference in Helsinki and the Final Act was signed by the representatives of 35 nations. Although the provisions of the Helsinki Act do not have the force of a treaty, they nevertheless include a broad range of declarations of intent, concessions and norms of conduct, and the very fact of their formulation in the Act gives them an important role in our international relations.

Even though not all of the Act's provisions are being complied with to the letter, the document does provide signatory states with legal authorization, so to speak, to seek recourse to the Helsinki Act without having to fear accusations of intervention in the domestic affairs of another state.

A second reason for the importance of the Helsinki Act is, in our view, the fact that it has established human rights as an international political issue. Finally, we also consider the Helsinki Act to be the essential beginning of a dynamic process, a process which is necessary to develop detente and normalization between people in the West and the East of Europe.

However, this dynamic process will only take place if economic cooperation between the States in Eastern and Western Europe will continue, and if new, constructive forms of cooperation are found which go beyond the limits of a mere exchange of commodities and financial transactions.

The process of detente in Europe will be promoted if substantial disarmament will be achieved. Therefore we hope that the statements made by the Soviet President and Secretary General, Leonid Brezhnev, will open new prospects in this area. The efforts of President Carter

to create the necessary conditions for the ratification of SALT II, are of extreme importance.

When the next conference of the Helsinki states will take place in Madrid in November 1980, it should be held on a level of representation which will ensure that important decisions can be taken which will give further impetus to the process of detente in Europe.

It is true that there are no military conflicts, and no civil wars either, in Europe today, - something which has not often been the case in the history of this blood-drenched continent. However, we know all too well that, given the interdependence of world politics today, this detente in Europe will remain precarious as long as, close to our continent, there are areas of tensions which, again and again, lead to warfare. The region which causes us this particular concern, is the Middle East.

I am among those who have been trying for more than twenty years to grasp the complexity of issues of this area. I admit very frankly that for many reasons - reasons of my convictions and reasons of realpolitik, I constantly search for possible solutions. On the basis of the interest accorded to me by the media from time to time, and the criticism and support I sometimes meet, I feel justified, and, I would almost say, obligated to say a few more words on these issues.

I would like to speak as clearly as the situation requires in order, if at all possible, to prevent misunderstandings. The peace process is now a reality for the Arab Republic of Egypt and Israel, and it has a value of its own, which should not be underestimated. This peace remains a historic achievement of President Anwar El Sadat.

Important as it is, it did not solve the substantial problem of the area: the problem of the Palestinian people. This problem is so difficult and so tragic, because two peoples confront one another in a very small area, to which both are laying claim. Both peoples, the Palestinians and the Israelis, are communities shaped by fate. No one else but these two peoples themselves can solve their problem. It cannot be solved by any mediator. No state, however, powerful, can accomplish this task, nor can the brother peoples of the Palestinians. Only negotiations and agreements between the Palestinians and the Israelis, on the basis of their mutual recognition will lead to results. Without this readiness to negotiate and the will to achieve agreement, there will be no peace in this region.

For such negotiations, it is necessary for each side to concede to the other, the decision who is to speak on its behalf.

It seems to me that it is high time to be absolutely clear on this issue. Since all the Arab peoples, including Egypt, recognize the PLO, the Palestine Liberation Organization, as the legitimate representative of the Palestinians, since the group of non-aligned countries clearly demonstrated the same and since the representative of the PLO has his place here in this Assembly with the consent of practically all of us, the time must soon come when all states in this great community of nations recognize that the PLO today simply is the representative of the Palestinian people.

For its part, the Austrian Federal Government will take this fact fully into account and will advocate this position with all due clearness in its relations with other states. One, and not the least important reason why, among the European democracies, we Austrians are

taking such a clearly defined position here is that many of us know very well how much we would have been spared, including perhaps even a 10-year occupation after our liberation in 1945, had such representation of our national interests existed after 1938.

I am deeply convinced that this recognition of the PLO as the representative of the Palestinians, will eventually be granted by most, if not all, governments.

Once the question of representation has been solved it will be necessary, as a further precondition for negotiations between the parties concerned, to recognize the national rights of both peoples in conformity with the spirit and the letter of the Charter of the United Nations.

To put it in clear and precise terms: the Palestinian side would have to acknowledge as a reality the existence of the state of Israel and Israel would have to recognize as legitimate the national rights of the Palestinians. Any resolution presented to this Assembly and reflecting this view will find the support of the Austrian Government. It is only at that stage that in my opinion the moment for first exploratory talks will have come.

Having had a quarter century of experience in negotiations, and often with very difficult negotiating partners, I can certainly imagine such exploratory talks taking place prior to genuine negotiations along the following lines; even if one party would declare that the idea of a Palestinian state would appear unacceptable to them, and even if the other declares that only such a state could be regarded as satisfactory solution, they nevertheless could discuss soberly all of the aspects which would result from a state-solution, such as, for instance, the common border, questions of

security, economic cooperation, and many similar issues.

Only after these questions have been clarified can it be determined as I see it whether the idea of having one's own state is an impossible one, or whether it cannot, after all, be conceived through cooperation with the neighbouring states, including Israel, of course. But in all fairness one would have to discuss in this context also the question of autonomy in all its aspects.

Not until these exploratory talks have taken place and produced guidelines as to possible solutions could one resume negotiations such as those held in Geneva. Then, a decision could be taken to begin negotiations in the proper forum; with the United Nations serving as an "umbrella".

Let me finally say, how much I hope that it will be possible for the two peoples, the Israeli people and the Palestinian people, not only to coexist, but to live together, as well. Both peoples, without great material resources, without oil, are rich in great intellectual resources. Both have numbers of intellectuals and university graduates quite exceeding those of many other peoples.

With the intellectual and human resources of the Israelis and the Palestinians, a region of prosperity could be created, less rich perhaps than other countries, but certainly more productive and more creative.

What is most important is that talks begin, because, whatever view you may take, "in the beginning was the Word", and if good will, intelligence, and the feeling of responsibility for suffering human beings and peoples triumph once again in this painful process, there will be peace, and the word of the Holy Script will be fulfilled:

"And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Both peoples and their peacemakers will truly gain the respect and admiration of the entire world, and they will put an end to much of the hatred and enmity which has persisted for thousands of years.

Permit me now to state our position on a third question, which concerns us in Europe as much as it does those who come from other continents.

I am referring to the North-South dialogue. It would be an oversimplification to believe, although this impression is often created, that this issue is simply one of a confrontation between the industrialized states and the developing countries. The industrialized nations also have differing positions in this dialogue depending upon the political positions of their governments. It may well be that on this issue the industrialized states give too strong an impression of a firm, unified position on this entire complex of issues, but we do see the problems in very different ways, depending on our political perspectives. I feel that something is lacking in this dialogue; namely, a "grand design" based upon strong feelings of responsibility and international solidarity, from which everything else should flow.

In this forum, proposals on economic cooperation have repeatedly been made. There can be no doubt that economic questions cannot be considered independently from fundamental political questions. They meet with approval to the extent to which they are in line with the respective political philosophy of the countries concerned. Certainly, many of these proposals appear attractive and - from the vantage

point of economically developing countries - are not only useful but also urgently needed. On the other hand, the reality of the international situation with which we are confronted will have to be taken into account. Economic thinking can only rarely be influenced by considerations of international solidarity. This conclusion may not be to the liking of many of us, and certainly not of myself, but this is how the world is.

Recently my esteemed friend, the President of Mexico, Lopez Portillo, submitted specific proposals to this Assembly. Likewise, the President of Cuba, Fidel Castro, proposed a global development programme. And we still recall the proposals on a new economic order put forward by the late President of Algeria, Boumedienne.

A few months ago a commission established outside this forum and composed of eminent persons from the South and the North headed by the former Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Willy Brandt, has concluded its work and submitted a series of very important and valuable proposals.

In order to approach these problems in the most realistic manner, one should try to arrive at a synthesis of all these plans and ideas taking into account everything that has already been accomplished. In this context we also should not forget that considerable means have already been made available by the Western industrialized countries. Over the past two decades the net-flow of resources from OECD donor countries to the developing world has amounted to more than 350 billion dollar.

It will not be easy, to bridge the gap between the various more or less ideologically motivated programmes. It is not my intension to propose any new UN-body or institution since I believe that this immense task could best be accomplished by existing mechanisms.

Mr. President,

Permit me to refer here to the ideas which I have begun to develop decades ago under the impression of the outstanding contribution made by the people of the United States to the reconstruction of the totally destroyed Continent of Europe. This was indeed a major act of solidarity on the part of the American People with nations of Europe which were all invited to participate irrespective of their social systems. I am a personal witness to the fact that this assistance was granted without any political strings. Obviously such a model cannot be applied without adaptation to a very different situation, but some of its underlying concepts are certainly still valid.

An example in case is the provision of assistance in the form of credits in a manner which would allow the proceeds to remain in the recipient country for reinvestment. This exactly was done in Austria and is one of the reasons why the Austrian Federal Government was able to pursue a successful investment policy in recent years.

What I have in mind is the great historic example of the Marshall Plan through which the United States made it possible for the European countries to recover after the war from economic ruin and to build new industries.

My view is that global economic and political cooperation is only possible if the modern industrialized states are able, through large-scale, joint action, to build up the infrastructure of the developing states, and what we mean here is infrastructure in the broadest sense of the word, ranging from the building of a sub-continental railway-system to the development of a telecommunication system. Although I am fully aware that

such a plan would have to be financed mainly by the industrialized countries, I would also envisage a financial participation on the part of those countries which are receiving large revenues from the sale of oil. Let me make it clear that this would not only mean financing but participation as well.

Since I know that such ideas are not easy to put into effect - and I am saying this from painful experience - the Austrian Federal Government is trying to involve some European countries, together with some African countries in the preparation and subsequent implementation of a smaller model, which could serve as an example for a more global solution.

The Austrian Federal Government will always continue to give the greatest possible attention to concepts such as this, and to promote their implementation.

Mr. President,

On 23rd August of this year the Vienna International Center was handed over to the United Nations. The constructions of the Center by the Austrian Government and the City of Vienna should be regarded as a sign of our dedication to the principles of the United Nations.

We are happy that the United Nations and some specialized organizations have now found a new home on the Danube. A large Congress Center will be added to the complex and will be at the disposal of the world community as of 1983.

In conclusion I would like to assure the United Nations assembled here, this Organization and its Secretary-General how greatly we in Austria appreciate the activities of the United Nations. I also would like to express my conviction that to date no better alternative has been found to this institution in which big and small nations have one voice.

In any event, the growing trend in world politics to submit important issues more and more to new summit conferences has yielded no convincing results.

Mr. President,

Once again my optimism might be held against me. But why should I not be optimistic, since I can use the Austrian example to demonstrate convincingly what a great contribution to detente was made through the agreement achieved by the allied powers on a Treaty of State with Austria 25 years ago. A contribution not only to detente in Europe, but also to prosperity and social peace hardly known before to Austria.

Mr. President, distinguished delegates,

I wish to thank you once more for giving me this opportunity to put forward to this Assembly some ideas on current issues.

The increasing degree to which some of this is gaining recognition makes me certain that better order in international life can be achieved.