Ladies and gentlemen,

- A great pleasure for me to welcome you here tonight in these historic surroundings. Some six hundred years ago, this castle was the residence of Margaret – “Our Mighty Lady and Sovereign” – Queen of Norway, Denmark and Sweden. She is regarded by many as the mastermind behind the pan-Nordic union of three kingdoms. She is the only ruling female monarch in the history of Norway, and undisputedly one of the most interesting and talented political figures in all of Scandinavian history.

- The Trilateral Commission (Europe) is a very valuable forum – where the most topical issues of the day are discussed at a high level of experience and excellence. We all need this type of discussion covering a range of items. At the conference you are looking into topics such as the financial crisis, Russia’s role in Europe, energy security, and the Arctic with a view to the upcoming climate summit in Copenhagen. You are discussing NATO and Afghanistan, and Nordic cooperation on security policy. These are all questions of central importance to Norway and to my Government’s foreign policy and these topics are also intimately inter-linked. They provide a vivid illustration of what security – human security – is all about in an interdependent or interconnected world.

- Tonight, my perspective on security and interdependence will be the High North. When the Government came into power in 2005, we declared the High North our most important foreign policy priority area. And this was reaffirmed in our renewed political platform following the general elections last month.

> I will very briefly touch upon a few different aspects of the High North:

- My recent trip to the High North can illustrate my first point – about the change that is taking place: Yesterday, I returned from an eventful three-day trip. My first stop was Vardø, where I visited the Globus II radar, which used to be a cause of much apprehension on the Russian side. From there, I proceeded to Kirkenes on the Russian-
Norwegian border, which is host to the International Secretariat of the regional cooperation in the Barents region. There, I was joined by my colleague Carl Bildt, and together we drove to Murmansk, crossing the border with Russia, which 20 years ago was completely closed. Today, there are about 100,000 border crossings every year.

- Whenever Sergey Lavrov – my Russian colleague – and I meet, we discuss ways and means to further facilitate mobility across the border. So did we in Murmansk, where the main event was the Ministerial Meeting of the Barents Council. There were also a number of business events. Forty Norwegian companies are now registered in Murmansk, which is planning to develop an offshore supply industry cluster. This illustrates how the region has changed.

  ➢ My second point is this: progress in the overall international climate is an instrument for change in the regions. Over the past year, the process of integration that began 20 years ago has received new impetus from a renewed focus – not only on the importance of relations with Russia, but also on disarmament and non-proliferation, the urgency of combating climate change, and the need for multilateral, cooperative solutions.

- Since its foundation, NATO has been the guarantor of peace and stability in Europe. Norway, fellow members of NATO and others remain committed to the overriding task of helping the Afghan people to a better future, with elementary human rights also for women, economic development and a democratic agenda. But the commitment in Afghanistan does not mean that the Alliance’s core function of providing equal security for all NATO members throughout the NATO area has changed. This must be duly reflected in the new strategic concept which remains to be worked out.

- Russia is NATO’s natural partner, certainly not its adversary. Therefore, I am very pleased that the NATO-Russia Council is back on track. This is the best way to ensure that collective security in our part of the world remains a multilateral, trans-Atlantic and all-European responsibility. And it is necessary in order to support the new, broad US-Russia agenda, which is moving quickly forward. I am very encouraged by the substantive progress made in the strategic arms limitation talks. And the adoption by the UN Security Council of a resolution envisaging a world without nuclear weapons is a landmark achievement. Further, Russia’s contribution is indispensable in order to achieve the goal of nuclear non-proliferation.

- We have also seen a marked change in US climate policy. – And US leadership is needed if the upcoming climate summit in Copenhagen is to produce the necessary agreement. We also need commitment to this goal by China, India, Russia and other important players. This is – in my view – the most demanding task facing the world community today.
This brings me to my third point – to what I like to call the drivers of developments in the Arctic. Rapid, man-made climate change is the main reason why international interest in the Arctic is growing. Although the consequences will be much more disastrous in warmer and more densely populated areas, it is in the Arctic that climate change is first observed.

- The Arctic ice cap is melting. The area provides an excellent platform for close international scientific cooperation on climate and the environment, in the interest of the whole world community. Largely as a consequence of the ice melting, new prospects for increased human activity are opening up, chiefly in two areas:

- One is commercial shipping, because Arctic sea routes may become attractive in the near future. The other is oil and gas, because deposits in the region are becoming more accessible. Essentially, all Arctic states face the same challenges: dealing with a harsh climate, maintaining population levels, attracting qualified labour, creating new social and economic development, and developing adequate physical infrastructure over immense distances, just to mention some. Naturally, increased activity will also increase the need for government presence and engagement. We need to have the necessary standards, regulations and capabilities in place in areas such as environmental preparedness, search and rescue, surveillance, and enforcement with respect to resource management.

- Now to my fourth point: how states manage the Arctic and its resources. Over the past year or two, all Arctic rim states, as well as the European Commission, have presented policy papers with ideas on how to strengthen their capacity to cope with future tasks in the broader Arctic region. These involve elements such as research stations, border guard and military units, ice-breakers, etc. In my view, nothing more is being planned than what will actually be needed. Nevertheless – and perhaps unavoidably – stories in the press and a few academics claim that a race for the Arctic is underway. – Is this so?

- In my view, this is a misunderstanding. The notion of a “race” would imply a “first come, first serve” situation, or a zero-sum game. But the opposite is the case. For instance, our experience from the exploitation of the Snøhvit field off Finnmark in Northern Norway will enable everyone to better approach the much bigger and more demanding task of developing the Stockman field on the Russian side. - As in the fisheries: if either Norway or Russia improves its capacity for monitoring activities and combating illegal fishing in the Barents Sea, this helps both countries in their common task of managing the joint fish stocks in a responsible, sustainable way. And I could give you many more examples.
• However, *developments in the offshore petroleum sector are progressing slowly*, and of course, all activity is taking place in undisputed areas. The undiscovered resources in the High North may be substantial. We do not know today what the demand for these resources will be in ten years’ time. That depends on the general development of the world economy. It also depends on how fast resources are depleted in other, more accessible provinces where investment costs are much lower, and on how fast the world turns to other, renewable sources.

• But it is reasonable to assume that at least *some of the resources in the High North will be developed*. Our main concern is that this must be done without harm to the environment and traditional economic activity based on living resources. This is the principle behind Norway’s integrated ocean management.

• Let us not forget that *Northern Europe is already a formidable petroleum province*. Norway and Russia alone supply some 43 per cent of all gas consumed in the European Union. We take our responsibility for the *security of supply* very seriously. And our position as a major petroleum exporter makes it natural for us to have the ambition of being a world leader in carbon capture and storage (CCS).

➢ *Fifth*, a few words on the *legal situation in the region*. The outstanding questions of jurisdiction in the Arctic area all concern either the extent of the continental shelf or delimitation between states. All the necessary legal instruments and provisions for settling these questions in an orderly way are in place, and all states concerned comply with these one hundred per cent. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is fundamental in this respect.

• It is important not to forget one simple fact: *whereas the Antarctic is an uninhabited continent surrounded by oceans, the Arctic is an ocean plus the surrounding territories, which are both inhabited and integrated parts of sovereign, long-established states*. This is the simple reason why there is no room for a separate Arctic treaty. Loose ideas about the need for such a treaty are all based on the misunderstanding that in the Arctic, there is some kind of “no man’s land”. In fact, central parts of the Arctic Ocean will remain outside exclusive national zones.

• We have exactly the same situation in the North Atlantic, where international cooperation on the management of living marine resources functions well, through the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC). Should fish stocks migrate far north, and should commercial fishing become possible in the Arctic Ocean, I am convinced that similarly fruitful cooperation will be established for that area.
• And we will need to develop common, binding regulations in other fields of human activity. Arctic shipping and environmental standards for oil and gas activities are cases in point.

> Sixth, institutionalised circumpolar cooperation is important. Over the past few years, the Arctic Council, which, in addition to the rim states, includes Sweden, Finland and Iceland, has significantly strengthened its role with respect to these and other tasks. The organisation is not a decision-making, but a policy-shaping body. To mention two examples, input from numerous studies and projects initiated by the Arctic Council has been important for the work of UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and also for the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in developing Arctic shipping regulations, efforts that are now well advanced.

• Developments in the Arctic are of importance to the whole world. Therefore, the international community has a legitimate interest and an important role in defining the issues. Increasingly, the Arctic Council takes on the role of defining the solutions. It is then the task of states and relevant international organisations to make decisions and ensure enforcement. Internationally, there should only be one common dialogue on Arctic issues. Norway would therefore welcome more interested parties as permanent observers in the Arctic Council.

• The Government’s High North strategy has two main objectives: in addition to ensuring more presence, activity and knowledge in our own northern areas, we seek to encourage closer international cooperation in the region. The conditions for this are good. We have in place one of the world’s most innovative and successful structures of regional cooperation, the Barents Euro-Arctic Region, which involves the Nordic countries, Russia and the European Commission. – And, as I mentioned, the Ministerial Meeting of the Barents Council met last Wednesday and Thursday in Murmansk. In addition, we have in place a well-functioning and ever stronger circumpolar organisation, the Arctic Council.

• But, finally, the main prerequisite for further integration is the general climate of trust and low tension. Low tension is a long-standing characteristic of the High North. Our first priority must be to preserve this advantageous situation through the changes that increased human activity is bound to entail. In this context, it is important to assess developments correctly. We have never made the presence of strategic capabilities in the High North a regional issue, and this has contributed to maintaining low tension. Because their presence is not motivated by a potential for local conflict. This situation remains unchanged.

• Nor must we must make an issue out of the quite normal phenomenon that both civilian and military assets are used to deal with civilian tasks. In such a vast and sparsely
populated area, it doesn’t make sense to build up parallel military and civilian search and rescue capacity. Further, we need to seek ways to pool our resources and reach a common understanding of what is actually needed.

• Ladies and gentlemen, tomorrow you will be discussing the situation in the Arctic and what it takes to prevent it from turning into “a Wild West”, as your programme puts it. You will also discuss Nordic cooperation on foreign and security policy. I can be brief on this last point, because my own thoughts will, to a large degree, be reflected by Mr Thorvald Stoltenberg.

• Not all elements in his report to the Nordic Foreign Ministers can equally easily be realised, and some may not be particularly urgent. But the report reflects a sound ambition. One project – the integrated monitoring and warning system for the Barents Sea – is about to be initiated on a national basis next year. We look forward to discussing it with our Nordic friends, and in due time maybe with others too. It is an excellent example of what all Northern countries need more of in the face of future developments: more knowledge, and an ability to act in the face of threats to life, the environment and sound resource management.

– Thank you.