

Akershus Slott, Oslo

Med forbehold om endringer
SPERRET til 11/9-86 kl.19.30

Gro Harlem Brundtland

STATSMINISTER GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLANDS TALE VED MIDDAGEN PÅ AKERSHUS
SLOTT 11. SEPTEMBER 1986 VED STATSMINISTER MARGARET THATCHERS
OFFISIELLE BESØK I NORGE.

Prime Minister and Mr. Thatcher,
Your Excellencies,
Honoured Guests

Tonight here at Akershus Castle I have the great honour and pleasure to extend a heartfelt welcome to our most esteemed guests, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Mr. Denis Thatcher.

We feel especially pleased and privileged to greet the Prime Minister of a country with which we have enjoyed such long-standing and close relations. Our shared values are many, and we feel a close bond of friendship between our countries.

Together we have been through the tests of war and peace. Norway's Queen came from Britain in 1905. His Majesty King Olav V was born in Norfolk. London provided sanctuary for our King and Government during the last world war. Our common experiences have fostered a deep and close relationship between our peoples and countries. On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of Liberation Day last year, new generations had the opportunity through the media to witness the endurance and commitment exhibited by the people of Britain throughout the war years.

Ever since the Vikings arrived on your shores some 1200 years ago, the North Sea has acted as a busy two-way street for contacts and exchanges between our two countries. Cultural and

linguistic influences, goods and services, oil and gas, soldiers and seamen, salmon fishing lords, Oxford Street shoppers and Christmas trees bound for Trafalgar Square have crossed this sea, enriching and cross-fertilizing our bilateral relations.

Today the United Kingdom, like our Scandinavian neighbours, is a country with which Norwegians most readily identify. This identification rests on a combination of respect for the British people and their achievements, historical togetherness and similarity of mind and character.

Through the ages Norway has benefited greatly from her special relationship with Britain. For a variety of reasons, Britain became our major stepping stone to the outside world.

Recently the ties between us have been further strengthened by the emergence of the North Sea petroleum industry. Cooperation in the oil and gas sector represents the biggest joint venture our two countries have ever undertaken. Cooperation of such a highly complex nature can only function between partners who trust each other, partners who share the same level of industry and technology, partners who know that they will be able to sort out differences and benefit from working together.

But certainly our economic interaction covers a much broader spectrum than petroleum alone. The importance that the Norwegian business community attaches to the multiplicity of the British market today is reflected in the increasing number of Norwegian industries, banks, financial institutions and shipping companies that have established subsidiaries in the United Kingdom.

Although we are like-minded in many ways, it cannot be denied that there are international questions on which our governments do not see eye-to-eye. I mentioned South-Africa earlier today. We express the same view of the apartheid regime in South Africa, but we have different views as to what means should be applied. You know that the Norwegian Government

is working for binding economic sanctions in the United Nations.

As Prime Minister of the United Kingdom you are also at present acting in the capacity of President of the Council of Europe, and I would like to address you briefly also in this connection. The cooperation between the 12 member states of the Community represents an expanding centre of political and economic gravity in Europe. This development poses a challenge to Norway. We must thoroughly examine our relationship to Europe in a broad perspective and within the framework of the prevailing conditions.

The creation of an internal market by 1992 and the establishment of a technological community are among the major goals the 12 member states have set for themselves. Norway, along with her EFTA partners, wishes to cooperate as closely as possible with the Community in these fields, and thereby to enhance Europe's competitiveness in research and technology.

We highly appreciate the open attitude with which the Community meets European countries outside the 12, and I am convinced that this attitude of cooperation will actively contribute to strengthening Europe's position in the world.

Prime Minister,

Today, Tromsø has afforded you a look at a unique part of Europe; a Europe for which we all share a mutual responsibility. Through your trip to this northernmost part of Europe today, you have also demonstrated political willingness to observe that common responsibility.

On June 7th 1940, the cruiser HMS Devonshire steamed out of the Tromsø harbour. Under the protection of the Royal Navy, Norway's King Haakon, Crown Prince Olav and members of government sailed towards the United Kingdom, where they continued running the affairs of State until the very same HMS Devonshire brought them safely back to a liberated Norway 5 years later. During those five years the Royal Navy, units

from the Norwegian navy and our merchant marine joined forces, conveying indispensable support to the Soviet Union through the waters to the west and north of us.

We are all aware of the traditionally close defence ties between our two countries. These are ties based on mutual interests. Norway is important to the defence of Britain. Britain is vital to the defence of Norway.

As countries adjacent to the Norwegian Sea, the United Kingdom and Norway have a common interest in maintaining a credible defence while preserving peace, stability and low tension in the North.

We assure you that we attach the greatest importance to the UK/Netherlands amphibious force that trains here in Norway every winter. We appreciate the earmarking of the air squadrons, and the solidarity and unity symbolized by these dispositions, and we will do our utmost to support the British forces that come here to participate in exercises. We have great faith in the troops' ability to perform their tasks - not least in the light of George Bernard Shaw's remark that "No Englishman is ever fairly beaten".

Madam Prime Minister, you have been expecting me to touch upon environmental issues, haven't you? Ecology - the preservation of our habitat - represents an important area for international cooperation where our interdependency was recently demonstrated most clearly. Chernobyl was an abrupt reminder that pollution knows no boundaries. We are indeed truly dependent on one another when it comes to the preservation of all of our resources, be the issue clean air or clean water; be it the resources of our fields or forests or those of our seas or lakes. We must exercise prudence and ensure that the benefits of modern science and technology are used to enrich rather than to destroy our societies. We must promote economic growth and development, but not at any cost. We must work together to solve the problems facing mankind for the sake of today and tomorrow.

If we are to succeed in reducing the nuclear threat we must all work urgently for improved East/West relations and for global political and economic stability. Security in the broadest sense of the word is the concern and responsibility of each and every one of us. Our safety rests indeed on common security. In this connection the nations of Europe have a special role, and Europe must not hesitate to play an active part in determining the destiny of this increasingly interdependent world.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, please join me in proposing a toast to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Mr. Denis Thatcher and to enduring friendship between the United Kingdom and Norway.