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Med forbehold om endringer
SPERRET til 18.1.88

Gro Harlem Brundtland

SPEECH BY PRIME MINISTER GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND AT WELCOMING
BANQUET IN BEIJING - 18. JANUARY 1988

Your Excellency, Acting Prime Minister Li Peng,
(utt.: LI PØNG)

Your Excellency State Councillor and Foreign
Minister Wu Xueqian, (utt.: VO KJØTJEN)
Excellencies,
Chinese and Norwegian friends,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for your kind words of welcome, Mr. Prime Minister, and for the warm reception that I, my husband and my delegation have received here in Beijing. We greatly appreciate this opportunity to visit China. My first visit, which was in 1980 as a parliamentarian, left a deep impression on me. I was struck by the immense size and complexity of your country, by your cultural heritage, and I witnessed the start of your bold reform policy. I am happy to be back in your country and pleased to have the opportunity to renew my acquaintance with China and study your achievements.

Mr. Prime Minister, this morning we had a very stimulating and useful exchange of views on international issues and bilateral questions. Our talks have confirmed that Norway and China have many interests in common today and that we share hopes for a more prosperous and secure global community in the future. Your account of the latest developments in China was highly interesting.

As we have recently seen, relations between the United States and the Soviet Union are improving. This has also had a beneficial effect on the situation in Europe and, indeed, in most parts of the world. We welcome the US-Soviet agreement on INF-medium range missiles and hope that it will be followed by agreements reducing the arsenals of strategic missiles and eliminating chemical weapons. We also hope that a better climate between the superpowers will lead to just political solutions in Kampuchea and Afghanistan and to an improved situation on the Korean peninsula.

The relations between Norway and China are longstanding and excellent. The scope of mutually beneficial cooperation between us is steadily growing. This is reflected in the frequent exchange of delegations at all levels: In 1984 our then prime ministers visited one another; in 1985 the Crown Prince of Norway headed the largest Norwegian delegation ever to visit China; in 1986 our foreign ministers exchanged visits; and last summer

Deputy Foreign Minister Zhou Nan (utt.: DJOU NAN) paid a very successful visit to Norway.

Our common efforts to increase cooperation are also reflected in several important agreements between our governments. In addition, there is closer contact and cooperation between Norway and China in international fora, such as the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

The Norwegian Government and people are increasingly aware of the importance of East Asia and the Pacific area, both in a global strategic sense and because of their economic strength and enormous potential. At the same time we welcome China's growing interest in Europe.

The priority accorded to the areas of energy and transportation in China's economic development is in close keeping with the Norwegian experience. The main impetus behind the industrialization of my country at the beginning of this century was the exploitation of our hydro-electric potential. Similarly, the main factor underlying Norway's economic development during the last decades has been a carefully planned exploitation of our off-shore oil and gas resources. In the field of transportation, our shipping industry has always been a main source of national income.

Norwegian experience and know-how in these areas, coupled with our will to share technological insights, have been and are fundamental factors in our endeavours to further economic cooperation between our two countries. I feel that there is still untapped potential which could help us to reach new levels of cooperation. I am certain that the commercial delegation accompanying my official delegation on this visit to China will carefully explore some of this untapped potential with their Chinese counterparts.

The World Commission on Environment and Development, which I had the honour to chair and in which the Chinese representative Mr. Ma Shijun made extremely valuable contributions, has examined some of the vital problems facing mankind today and the challenges we must meet in the future.

I am deeply grateful for the generous hospitality which you personally, Mr. Prime Minister, and the Government of China extended to the Commission when it presented its report here in Beijing in July last year.

The well-planned preparation and extensive discussions at these meetings indicated that the interaction between the environment and development is of growing importance to China. Since the Eleventh Central Committee Meeting a new strategy for economic and social development has been pursued, based on the recognition that economic growth is not enough. The new path of progress also comprises social and environmental elements and corresponds to central themes of the Commission's report.

The Commission's report, "Our Common Future", contains a message of warning, but also a message of hope. While economic

and social development suffer from severe national and international imbalances, threats to the environment are becoming global in scope and devastating in scale. Important life-support systems may be at stake unless we take corrective action now.

However, the Commission concluded its work equally convinced that the necessary changes are also possible. Never before have we had greater opportunities, but we need stronger a political commitment and a broad mobilization of human resources. We need intensified multilateral cooperation based on recognition of the growing interdependence of nations.

The importance of cultural exchanges between our two countries should not be forgotten. Extensive cultural contacts are not only helpful, but also necessary to the development of international understanding and tolerance. China's ancient, rich culture is much admired and respected in Norway. We feel that we have a lot to learn from China, and I am looking forward to visiting some of the great monuments of Chinese culture during my stay in China.

Mr. Prime Minister, on behalf of my delegation and myself, I would like to express our deep appreciation of this opportunity to get better acquainted with China. I feel certain that we will be able to make good use of this experience in our efforts to strengthen cooperation between our two countries.

- May I propose a toast
- to You, Mr. Prime Minister,
 - to the leaders and people of China,
 - to continuing friendship and cooperation between Norway and China,

Ganbei - Skål!