

Parkveien 45

Med forbehold om endringer
SPERRET til 27.1.kl. 13.00

Statsminister
Gro Harlem Brundtland

TALE UNDER REGJERINGENS LUNSJ FOR NEDERLANDS STATSMINISTER RUUD
LUBBERS, 27. JANUAR 1988 I PARKVEIEN 45

Prime Minister Lubbers,
Excellencies,
dear guests,

It is a great pleasure and privilege to wish Prime Minister Lubbers, Foreign Minister van den Broek and all the members of your party a heartfelt welcome to this luncheon on the occasion of your working visit to Norway today. Our exchange of views this morning has once again confirmed the close relations between our countries, united as they are by strong historical and political ties.

Mr. Prime Minister, the present international situation gives us reason for cautious optimism. The INF Treaty, which represents a historic breakthrough, has created a favourable climate for general progress in East-West relations.

This favourable climate must be maintained and expanded to improve the dialogues on economic and environmental affairs which must run parallell to disarmament negotiations to give peace and security the quality it must have.

In connection with the INF Treaty, the solution to the problem of verification introduced a new set of standards into arms control negotiations, which will have decisive influence in other areas

that need to be addressed. We recognize the significant contribution rendered by the Netherlands in this process.

The combined efforts within our Alliance proved to be a key factor in reaching this first real nuclear disarmament treaty. Further steps must now be taken based on a comprehensive analysis of our security interests as we aim for reductions in strategic arsenals, conventional disarmament and stability in Europe, and a global ban on chemical weapons.

Mr. Prime Minister, our cautious optimism for the year 1988 is mixed with concern regarding the economic outlook. The world economic situation is less stable and less encouraging than it has been for quite some time. In the present state of uncertainty and instability, European countries have become increasingly influenced by economic policies beyond the control of Europeans themselves. I am convinced that Europe has yet to realize its full economic potential. We must make greater efforts to coordinate our economic policies. The OECD offers a forum for such coordination providing a necessary parallel to the ongoing efforts to create a European Economic Space which must become as congruent as possible with the democratic Western European societies.

A dynamic Europe must not waste its strength on internal trade barriers. We must use our collective potential wisely to enable Europe to play the international role and take the international responsibility that will be necessary. European cooperation is going through important changes as we approach the turn of the century. The EC clearly represents the economic and political focal point in this process. Norway is closely tied to the EC, politically, economically and culturally. Therefore we definitely intend to intensify our cooperation with the Twelve. I am confident that the Netherlands will contribute to making that cooperation as close as possible.

Mr. Prime Minister, we in Norway consider the Netherlands to be a like-minded country. This belief is based not only on the fact that we see eye to eye on a wide range of international issues, including development cooperation and many regional issues, and that we are working closely together in different multilateral fora. There is also a true likeness of mind between our people.

Our countries have always been historically united by sea-lanes across and beyond the North Sea. Even if we tend to take a certain pride in the way Norwegian have opened the polar regions to exploration, we still remember, not without a twinge of envy, that it was Willem Barents who rediscovered the Spitzbergen archipelago in the 16th century. Indeed we are reminded of his name when dealing with the Barents Sea.

The traditional economic relations between our countries have largely been based on the maritime sector. It is only natural that these traditions continue and are expanded into offshore petroleum activities. The activities of Shell here in Norway and the role of Norwegian oil companies in the Netherlands are part of the close bonds between our countries

Mr. Prime Minister, may I conclude by thanking you for the opportunity that your brief visit has given for an extensive and rewarding exchange of views. You are always most welcome in Norway.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I propose a toast to Prime Minister Lubbers and his party and to the excellent relations between our two countries.