

Akershus Slott

Med forbehold om endringer  
SPERRET til 14. mars  
kl.19.30

Gro Harlem Brundtland

TALE VED REGJERINGENS OFFISIELLE MIDDAG PÅ AKERSHUS SLOTT  
MANDAG 14. MARS 1988 I ANLEDNING LORD CARRINGTONS AVSKJEDSBESØK I  
OSLO 14.-15. MARS 1988.

Mr. Secretary General,  
Lady Carrington,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour and privilege to welcome you, Mr. Secretary General and Lady Carrington, to this dinner tonight. As always, you are most welcome as guests in Norway. This time it is with a special sense of gratitude that we receive you as your term of office as Secretary General of NATO is nearing an end. You have won the respect and friendship of many Norwegians, and we are very impressed with what you have achieved for the Alliance.

When you took up your duties as Secretary General of NATO the world situation and East-West relations were under considerable strain. You were uniquely well-qualified and prepared for responding to these challenges. Your long and distinguished political career and your achievements in the field of international diplomacy testify to your exceptional personal and professional qualities. As our late Foreign Minister of Norway, Knut Frydenlund, put it: If there is one thing we need now, it is problem-solvers like Peter Carrington!

The office of Secretary General of NATO is not an easy one. Even the staunchest supporter of the Alliance might flinch at the prospect of leading an organization of sixteen nations, which, of course, at times have markedly differing interests.

This challenge has been most eloquently expressed by yourself. Allow me to remind you of what you said some three years ago at the Savoy Hotel in London: " I have never felt quite as mid-Atlantic as I do now. It can be cold, wet and lonely; but it's never only that. It's an attempt to bridge an immense geographic range - from Iceland to Sicily, and from Eastern Turkey to the Pacific Coast; and a kaleidoscope of government and opposition parties in 16 countries. And to ensure that what they have in common - and what they face in common - is not lost under the pressure to differentiate which is no doubt an inevitable, but not wholly admirable, part of political life in parliamentary democracies."

Your predecessor once aired some of the same feelings in a slightly different manner following an extensive debate in the Council when he said that we can say about the Alliance what

Mark Twain once said about the music of Wagner: "It is much better than it sounds".

The core of NATO is - after all - our defence of the right to disagree. Despite occasional internal disagreements, all the member countries continue to consider the Alliance their vehicle for moving in the same direction and towards the same goals.

Our sense of a common mission is dependent upon the fabric of common understanding of the problems we are facing. During your term in office as Secretary General of NATO, you have demonstrated your great ability to tailor this fabric to fit the various nations and interests united in NATO. The NATO partnership is strong, and public support of the Alliance is growing in this country among young people in particular, as shown by recent polls.

This is of particular value in an international situation which calls for continued support of the twin objectives of NATO, to do what is necessary for defence, and what is possible for detente and dialogue. This approach has confirmed its validity over the twenty years since the adoption of the Harmel Report. Less than two weeks ago when the heads of state and government met in Brussels under your chairmanship we again confirmed these basic aims of the Alliance.

Looking back at the years you have served at the helm of NATO, we have witnessed a positive development in East-West relations and in the field of arms control and disarmament. The historic signing of the INF Treaty in Washington in December last year is a milestone and carries the potential for further arms reductions in a European as well as a global context.

The INF Treaty is a concrete result of the active and constructive dialogue over the past few years.

The momentum created by the INF Treaty should now be actively exploited. We welcome the decisions taken at Reykjavik and confirmed in Brussels to develop a comprehensive concept of arms control and disarmament, taking into account the interrelationship between nuclear and conventional force components. We believe that the Alliance should work towards making our defence less dependent on nuclear weapons.

Mr. Secretary General, you are disembarking the NATO ship at a time when the winds of change are blowing over East-West relations. We may well be on the threshold of a new and more constructive era in East-West relations - an era which our Alliance can and must enter with self-confidence and initiative. This dialogue must include economic, ecological, cultural and humanitarian issues.

The East-West dialogue has global perspectives as well. Human rights, social justice and economic progress are needed in the South as well as the North. We should be clearly aware that the East-West dialogue has a direct bearing on the lives of many people around the world, due to the potential for global

progress, also outside the areas of the two alliances. We, the members of NATO must not only actively promote our values, but also demonstrate them through our policies and concerns for the needs of countries who are weaker and less fortunate than we are.

We have behind us almost 40 years of successful cooperation in NATO. Our Alliance has secured peace in Europe during these years, one of the longest periods of peace in this part of the world since the reign of Pax Romana. However, records of this kind can and must be broken. During your term of office, you have managed to leave a lasting imprint on the cooperative spirit of the Alliance by protecting and advancing the basic values shared by the NATO partnership. The Alliance will no doubt continue to pursue the objectives which you have so aptly phrased: to keep the peace and improve its quality.

Mr. Secretary General, we have come to know you as a well-informed and true friend of Norway. Both as Secretary General of the NATO Alliance and earlier in your political career, you have made several visits to our country, including to the High North, and you have always shown a keen interest in and deep commitment to the defence of Norway.

As you know, the Norwegian contribution to the equitable burden-sharing of the Alliance is not only of a military nature. It is certainly political as well, as we pursue a policy of stability and low tension in Northern Europe. We have certainly learnt to restrain ourselves since Hippocrates more than 2000 years ago wrote the following: "Inhabitants of mountainous, rocky country at high altitude will tend to have large built bodies constitutionally adapted for courage and endurance." This far most Norwegians will nod approvingly at his remarks. But most people, and you I know, Mr. Secretary General, will agree that his conclusion was a gross exaggeration. He said that "In such nature there will be a considerable element of ferocity and brutality."

Ladies and Gentlemen, I propose a toast to the Secretary General of NATO and to Lady Carrington.