



PRIME MINISTER GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND

Commissioning Ceremony of the Skyphone Inmarsat/NERA.

Singapore, 21 September 1995

East is East and West is West. Had Kipling been alive and present here today, we would never have heard his famous words - that "never the two shall meet". We do meet by every means of communication.

Norwegians have been in the business of making the East and West meet for some 200 years now. For a long time, sails and keels was the technology which provided the link. Today we are constantly breaking new ground making it possible for the East and West to meet and communicate, in real time, at any time.

I have been travelling here in Asia a good week now - experiencing the very high quality, punctuality and capacity of modern air travel. Such travel gives time for reading and reflection.

But up until now, the world beyond the check-in-counter has been largely a world of its own, cut off from our 24-hour world of instant communication. What we are seeing here is the beginning of a new era.

My party and I will shortly be leaving for Norway. We have seen, from Beijing to Jakarta to Singapore how Norwegians are increasing their presence in Asia, serving this dynamic region with high quality products and services.

We have seen how determined the Norwegian business community is to establish long-term partnerships in this region. I believe it will happen. Other European countries have comparable ambitions. We Norwegians on our part have taken our decision. We have come to stay in East Asia.

I am proud that a Norwegian company - NERA - has been chosen to manufacture and deliver this aeronautical ground earth station here at Sentosa. NERA is today the largest supplier of equipment to the Inmarsat system. Having delivered all aeronautical ground stations in the world except one, the company will be in a unique position to serve Singapore, East Asia and the aero community in the years to come.

I congratulate the cooperating parties on this latest achievement. And I feel confident that we are heading towards a global coverage of the services here rendered. The systems which have been demonstrated here today will change completely our perception of air travel. It has been fascinating to see the system in operation. I wish you every success in its continued operation and further expansion. Thank you.