

STATSMINISTERENS TALE FOR FN'S GENERALSEKRETÆR PÅ AKERSHUS  
SLOTT 19. APRIL 1983

It is a great honour and indeed a pleasure for me to wish you, Mr. Secretary General and Mrs. Perez de Cuellar, a most hearty welcome to our country and to this Government dinner.

We are gathered tonight at Akershus Castle, a home of kings and a fortress built centuries ago to guard our safety and security. These objectives are still the overriding concern of the Norwegian Government, but developments over the years have proved the inadequacies of castles, and instead the need for broader international efforts to secure our peace in freedom.

The United Nations is a new institution compared to these historic surroundings. At the same time, we should bear in mind that our World Organization has been in existence for almost half of the period that Norway has had an independent foreign policy. During this latter period, the United Nations has constituted one of the cornerstones of this policy. Norway was greatly honoured when one of our countrymen, Mr. Trygve Lie, became the first Secretary General of the United Nations. I am happy to tell you that one of his daughters is present here tonight.

When the United Nations Charter was drawn up at the end of World War II, it was in an atmosphere of hope that in the future mankind could be spared the scourge of war. Safeguarding international peace and security became the prime objective for the new world organization. A system of collective security was established within the framework of the Charter. The Security Council and the Secretary General were given important responsibilities to this end.

However, our experience shows that over the years the Charter has been taken less seriously than its authors sincerely hoped and indeed expected, living as they did in the wake of a world tragedy. Thus, the process of peaceful settlement of disputes prescribed in the Charter, has often been brushed aside. Many member states seemed to have lacked the vision to differentiate between short-term advantage and long-term progress, between politically expedient positions and the indispensable objective of creating a civilized and peaceful world order. In short, the World Organization has proved to be only as effective and as strong as its member states are in reality willing to let it be.

In your report to the last General Assembly, you made, Mr. Secretary General, some admirably clear and frank comments in regard to this situation. You also pointed out that peace-keeping operations have generally been considered to be one of the most successful innovations of the United Nations and certainly a most useful instrument. But you also added that the limitation of such operations

are less well understood. Any peacekeeping operation can only function properly with the full cooperation of all the parties concerned.

On the basis of your straightforward observations, you have advocated several steps to strengthen the United Nations organization and to translate into action our commitment to the Charter. I can assure you, Mr. Secretary General, of the full support of the Norwegian Government in your endeavours to achieve these objectives.

The admission since 1945 of more than one hundred newly independent countries as members has added new dimensions to the United Nations work. Thus, the concept of human solidarity by means of development assistance was brought up by our organization, which has also given life and birth to daughter-institutions which over the years have provided such large-scale humanitarian and other assistance to millions of people all over the world. The support of the United Nations' funds and programmes has a high priority in Norwegian development aid.

Furthermore, through the establishment of several United Nations bodies and conferences, the member states have built a whole new fabric of international relations. We have defined goals and objectives for a wide spectrum of international cooperation in the political, economic, social, cultural and human rights fields. But we realize that in many instances we are just at the beginning of a long and up-hill road towards their implementation.

Mr. Secretary General, I have briefly touched upon some of the general problems facing the United Nations. I wish to express our deep confidence in - and sincere gratitude for - your untiring efforts to solve these problems, and to fulfill all the heavy tasks with which your high office does indeed confront you.

Let me conclude by proposing a toast to the Secretary General of the United Nations, and, on behalf of all of us present to-night, wish you all the best of luck in your very important task in a stormy and uncertain world. We also wish you and your wife, and your delegation, a pleasant stay in Norway.