

MIDDAGSTALE AV STATSMINISTEREN I FORBINDELSE MED NATO'S  
GENERALSEKRETER, LUNS', BESØK, 25. APRIL 1984

Mr. Secretary General,  
Mrs. Luns,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I have the great honour and pleasure to bid heartily welcome here tonight at Akershus Castle our honoured guests Dr. Joseph Luns and Mrs. Luns. During your long tenure as Secretary General of the NATO alliance you have paid several visits to our country and you have always shown a vivid interest in our defense problems. We have come to know you as a well informed and true friend of Norway.

For more than twelve years you have served the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The task of serving fifteen and later sixteen nations has indeed not always been an easy one. However, you had the very best qualifications for discharging your duties. As Foreign Minister for some twenty years in the Government of the Netherlands and with your long experience in the intricacies of international affairs, you brought with you to NATO the capabilities so well suited and needed for the high office of Secretary General; a task which you have performed in such an admirable and dedicated manner.

Our organization is an Alliance of free, independent nations. The open and frank exchange of views and ideas which is so fundamental to our societies, is certainly reflected in the very important and continuous consultations between the member countries in our Alliance. This open dialogue allows for a high degree of diversity, but is essential to our solidarity.

At times you may have felt like a pater familias trying to keep an unruly family in order. On more than one occasion you have served as the go-between, made the useful non-statement, or created the right atmosphere by cracking one of your famous jokes. But the most important thing is that under your direction and guidance, Mr. Secretary General, the consultative process in NATO has proved its worth as a most valuable instrument in adjusting aims and interests for our common best.

You have certainly been the central figure in urging vigilance and the maintenance of our defence posture and your untiring efforts in this regard has always been highly appreciated by all of us. Under your guardianship the Alliance has resisted attempts to undercut agreed Allied defence decisions and to sow dissension, and NATO has emerged united behind its twin objectives to deter aggression by an adequate defence and to preserve peace through a constructive dialogue.

The international situation certainly confirms the continued validity of this policy. The Alliance has repeatedly called on the East to act with restraint and

to co-operate in promoting a more constructive dialogue aimed at reducing international tension. In particular, the Alliance has urged the Soviet Union to resume negotiations on mutual limitations and reductions of nuclear arms.

The East/West dialogue we strive for must be based on realism. The dialogue must be balanced and broad and should not be limited to military security only. The human aspects of East/West contacts as well as economic questions rightly have their place in the dialogue we are searching for.

We all agree that the management of East-West-relations is and will always be a central task for the Alliance. Our Foreign Ministers will discuss these matters under your chairmanship at their meeting in Washington D.C. next month on the basis of a study currently being completed. This meeting will be the last with you in the chair, and I am quite sure that it will aptly sum up your contribution to the Alliance as well as underline the relevance of the Alliance's security policy. You presided over the process of steering through the implementation of NATO's dual track decision, a decision of the greatest importance to the Alliance.

Although you shall soon resign from the office you have held with such extraordinary skill and dedication, I am certain that in the years to come we shall not only hear about you, but also from you.

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Mr. Secretary-General, you have earned the highest reputation and esteem for your untiring work for the Alliance. You have made a lasting imprint on the organization. You have earned gratitude and respect from all of us and not the least from those who shall carry on the work in the future.

In concluding, I would like to thank you on behalf of the Norwegian Government, Mr. Secretary-General, for the great and devoted service you have rendered our Alliance during all these years.

Ladies and Gentlemen, please join me in proposing a toast to Dr. Joseph Luns and Mrs. Luns.