

Statsminister Kåre Willochs lunsjtale på "IOWA"8. oktober 1985.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the kind words which you have just addressed to my country, to my Government and to myself. I am also very grateful for the guided tour of this impressive ship and the very useful exchange of views before this luncheon and which, I am sure, will continue during this meal.

It is indeed a great pleasure to be able to return your warm feelings and wish you heartily welcome to Norway and to Oslo.

Your visit here reminds us of the fundamental importance of the US naval presence in the Norwegian and the North Atlantic waters, to preserve a military balance which is vital to our national interests and to the defence of the NATO area. A free and secure movement of allied ships across the Atlantic has earlier been - and will remain to be - the cornerstone of any defence of those western values which we cherish and which are so closely connected with what I would like to call "the Atlantic Community".

Your ship saw active service during The Second World War. It is thus a fitting reminder of the American engagement in Europe in two world wars and of American support for European recovery after the devastation of the last war. Since then the presence of US troops in Europe and their participation in Allied exercises serve as a visible proof of the continued American commitment to a balance of power in Europe.

Democracy and the rights and freedom of the individual are among the fundamental Western values which we have promised each other to defend. You may have noticed some manifestations of Norwegian democracy and freedom of expression here on the quay recently. As I see it, your stay here is a contribution to making sure that free expression will remain a fundamental feature of Western societies. The overwhelming majority of the Norwegian people look at your visit from that perspective. Norway wants you to come - not to go - and the Norwegian government wishes all of you and your men an interesting and enjoyable stay in our capital.

Allow me finally, Admiral, to reiterate the importance which Norway attaches to its membership in NATO and to the solidarity of the Western Alliance. We are now entering a period of crucial exchanges between East and West, a period in which mutual solidarity will be tested by ourselves and by others. I feel confident that we shall pass that test. We hear a lot of talk these days about dual purposes, and we should then remind

ourselves of the fact that our Alliance is based on dual purposes - on defence and dialogue, on deterrence and negotiations.

On this note, I would like to propose a toast both to the Alliance and to the Commander and crew of the IOWA.