

Statsminister
Odvar Nordli

STATSMINISTERENS BORDTALE VED SHAIKH AL-SUBAH'S MIDDAG
PA GRAND HOTELL 28. SEPTEMBER 1978

Dear Shaikh Al-Subah, dear friends,

According to tradisjonal customs in this country, the person who is sitting next to the host or the hostess, is supposed to thank for the meal on behalf of his fellow guests. According to this customs this is not only considered an obligation, but also a privilege.

I certainly do feel it as a privilege to enjoy your hospitality here to night.

As this country always has had few natural resources,

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we have always been strongly dependent on foreign trade. We do export about one half of our national product and the volume of the import is correspondingly high. We import raw materials, manufactured goods and food. We do only produce about two thirds of the food we eat.

This heavy dependence on foreign trade has made us to believe strongly in economic co-operation with other countries. It is an important policy objective of the government to expand ^{the} geographical distribution of our economic partners. The opening of the oil industry as a new activity in our economy has made it natural to look to the Middle East countries for finding new partners in our economic international co-operation.

The names of geographical regions can some times be ironical. Whenever I refer to the countries in the East and Mediterranean and the ^{Arab} Peninsula as the Mid-East countries, I have a strange feeling that may be you do not refer to this concept of Mid-East yourself, the natives of that area. For you it may perhaps be as logical to refer to Scandinavia as the far north. It depends on the angle from where you regard the world.

In the 19th-century it was in conformity with political realities to look at the world from the angle of major European countries. To day the world is different. And I am happy to say that I think it is a great gain in our striving for human equality that the traditional dominance

from one small part of the world is not longer of the same reality as in the past.

I am pleased to have the joined OAPEC Scandinavian oil seminar to have taken place in our country. It is an honour for us to see that the member countries of the OAPEC find the countries in the high north to be an attractive and appropriate location for a seminar like this.

As I started to say it is my privilege to thank you the host for the hospitality of to night and for the delicious meal which you have offered us.

I propose that my fellow guests joine me in a toast to Shaikh Al-Subah and your colleagues, wishing you prosperity and happiness in your further endeavours.