

Speech by Mr. Odvar Nordli, Prime Minister  
of Norway, at the official dinner offered  
by Vice President Walter F. Mondale,  
Washington D.C., June 12, 1979.

Mr. Vice-President, Mrs. Mondale, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of my wife and myself and the rest of my party, I would like to express our deep appreciation of the warm reception given us in Washington.

Our two countries have a long history of friendly association. In Norway, there are very few families indeed without relatives, remote or close, in the United States. Four years ago we celebrated the memory of the 150th anniversary of organized Norwegian emigration to the

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United States. Many prominent Americans of Norwegian descent, including our distinguished host tonight, came to Norway and joined us on that occasion.

Not more than two months ago, we again had the pleasure of seeing you, Mr. Vice-President, and your wife in Norway. I regret, however, that the local fish in the fjord seemed to be enjoying their Easter Holiday somewhere else, while you tried your luck in those ancestral waters.

I assume that the American Government receives a large number of official visitors. I also assume that many visitors bring with them bags of problems to Washington.

I am happy to state that the background of my visit is not related to any problem at all. The reason for this is simple

straight forward - we do not have any problems in our relationship to the United States.

But why did I come to the United States then?

I came here to renew and deepen the close contacts between the United States and the Norwegian Government. When friends live far apart, there is always a good thing from time to time to meet person to person.

Moreover, I came here to meet representatives of Americans with Norwegian family background. In our country we feel a very personal relationship to this community. Therefore I look forward to my visit to Brooklyn, Minnesota and Washington. I hope that these visits will be interpreted as a handshake from the people in the old country to those who settled in the new.

Furthermore, I came here to meet segments of your shipping industry and business community. America is a very important trading partner for us. We are eager to expand this trade. If I somehow can make a contribution to this, I shall be happy.

Active support to the United Nations, an organization of which both our countries are founding members, is a cornerstone in Norwegian foreign policy. As a newly elected member of the Security Council, Norway is prepared to do her share in the efforts to meet the many challenges before us, challenges calling for binding and trusting cooperation in a world of increasing interdependence of nations.

As we were allied during the Second World War, to-day we are allied in peace.

As members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the United States and Norway contribute to the military and political stability that marks the situation in Europe to-day. Norway attaches the greatest importance to the efforts of our Alliance to consolidate its defences, to preserve peace and security and to further pursue the process of détente. We deeply appreciate the continued American commitment to the defence of Western Europe, a commitment which represents the backbone of our Alliance. Of fundamental significance to détente and east/west relations is the SALT agreement, which is about to be

signed by President Carter and President Brezhnev. Norway has all along given full support to the successful conclusion of these important negotiations.

Norway's economy is outward-looking and heavily dependent on foreign trade and maritime transport. Therefore, any setback in Western economy also affects and concerns us. In the present situation, we discern signs of increasing protectionism in international trade and shipping. There has been an alarming rise in unemployment in the industrialized world. The situation calls for further cooperation. It is an illusion to assume that longterm solutions can be found in isolation.

Against this background of coinciding interests and our strong traditions in cooperation, I found my talks here in

Washington with you Mr. Vice-President and members of the Cabinet extremely valuable. We touched upon many topical issues of international concern. We continued the fruitful dialogue that we had in Oslo two months ago.

Tomorrow, we leave Washington for a tour that will bring us to the far corners of the United States. We shall visit New York, Houston, Minneapolis, San Francisco and Seattle. I am looking forward to meeting some of the many Sons and Daughters of Norway, and the many friends of Norway in the American business community.

Mr. Vice-President and Mrs. Mondale, the dinner you have offered us here tonight is a clear expression of classical American warm hospitality.

Let me propose a toast to you both, to the great American people and to a further strengthening of the close relations between Norway and the United States. Since you are so familiar with Norwegian traditions, let me add "takk for maten" and "skål".