

STATSMINISTERENS TALE VED REGJERINGENS MIDDAG FOR
VISEPRESIDENT WALTER F. MONDALE PA AKERSHUS TIRSDAG 17.4.1979

Mr. Vice President, Mrs. Mondale, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me, Mr. Vice President,
to wish you ^{your wife} and your party welcome to Norway and to this
dinner in our ancient castle of Akershus.

Throughout history America has had a changing, but
always a significant meaning to Norway and the Norwegians.

I shall not elaborate into the early adventures of
Leif Erikson. I must also admit that we have a dispute
with the Icelanders who feel that Leif was theirs, not ours.

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In the history of political ideology the American
Constitution of 1776 represents a turning point for democracy
and human rights. We are proud that our own constitution,
only 38 years younger, is founded on the same principles.

In a joint feeling of pride, Mr. Vice President,
we can point at the fact that the American and the Norwegian
constitution are ^{among} the eldest written constitutions in the world
to-day, based on the same high ideals of the people's right
to govern themselves and the personal and political freedom
for every citizen.

America got a special meaning and importance in this
country in the long period of the emigration to North-America.
North-America was the promised land with fertile soil and

opportunities. But I do not think that people left their home-district only because a promised land was within sight. I believe that the lack of opportunities at home, shortage of land, and the general state of poverty, were the most important driving forces.

To-day we are happy to see that the large majority of Norwegians who went across the Atlantic, and their successors, have managed to establish themselves well in their new country. We are happy to see that the communities they established, have developed soundly. We are of course also proud whenever we see any of our relatives doing well in the American community. We share with the American people the satisfaction of seeing the excellent way in which you, Mr. Vice President execute your high official functions. We do share in this joy, not only because your performance

adds to the well-being and the goodwill of the United States in a difficult world, but also because we feel that you are our man as well.

In our welfare society we place the highest priority on offering a job to every man. We feel that it is inconsistent with the dignity of man not to be allowed to earn one's income through one's own work. To-day we would have felt it a defeat if large numbers of Norwegians had found it necessary to emigrate to a foreign continent to find a safe job.

I think it is sad that the country one hundred years ago was not able to live up to present standards. If so,

we would probably have been lucky enough to have You, Mr. Vice President as a member of our own society. I am sorry that we have missed the opportunity to retain you as a local citizen. If so, maybe we would have found you as the mayor of Balestrand and in other important local and national functions. That would certainly have been to the advantage of our society. But I am afraid it would not have been enough to justify the hospitality which we are very happy to offer you here tonight.

The large number of United States citizens with roots in Norway are the main basis for the deep and very personal relationship between the two countries. In this century

however, fundamental political developments have given further strength to this relationship.

What I have in mind is in particular the role of the United States during the Second World War, and in the almost 35 years which have passed since. In this period we have felt strongly that the United States of America is a fundamental support and guarantee for the existence of the political system on which our society is founded.

Norwegians find America an attractive country to visit and to live in. We find it easy and natural to communicate with Americans, and gain their friendship. I am happy to

say that it is my impression that these feelings are mutual. I do think that the many Americans who have visited Norway, or live in Norway, either on official duty, or in family relationship, find our way of living, our way of thinking and behaving, to be very close to their own.

I propose a toast to the well-being of the American people, and to a further development of the close and warm friendship that binds our two countries so closely together. I wish to include in this toast my best personal wishes for you Mr. Vice President and your family.