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Holland & Knight: An Inside Look At Scandinavia And The Nordic Region
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Interview: Michael J. Student, Holland & Knight LLP; Jesper Vogt Lorentzen, Thommessen Krefthing Greve Lund; Mette Rosholm, Gorrissen Federspiel Kierkegaard; and Niklas Stenberg, Delphi & Co

"... the annual report on global competitiveness of the World Economic Forum has just listed Finland, the United States, Sweden, Denmark and Taiwan, in that order, as the most competitive economies in the world." [Student]

Coudert Brothers' Stockholm Office: Gateway To Scandinavia And Beyond
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Interview: Roland Sundqvist and Anders Hedman, Coudert Brothers LLP

"Globalization is irreversible. It may proceed at different rates in different parts of the world, but overall there is an inevitability to the process itself." [Hedman]

Jones Day: Representing Swedish Clients In The U.S. And Across The Globe Page 53

Interview: R. Mason Cargill, Jones Day

"... globalization is irreversible. There will be times when its pace may decrease; other times when that pace will pick up. But the pace itself will be continuous. The Swedes have been involved in international trade forever. Sweden is a very small country with a small domestic market, and any significant Swedish business exports about 90% of its products."

Corporations

Wilh. Wilhelmsen: Corporate Values In A Global Setting Page 54

Interview: Ingar Skaug, President & Group CEO, Wilh. Wilhelmsen ASA

"I think globalization is an accomplished fact at this point, and that its continued development cannot be halted. ... The shipping industry is totally global today, and in a few years there will be many more industries that operate across all boundaries. The benefits of such an economy – a truly global economy – for everyone in the world are the real answer to terrorism."

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Norway's Place In Scandinavia, Europe And The World

The Editor interviews Johan L. Løvald, Head of the Permanent Mission of Norway to the United Nations.

Editor: Ambassador Løvald, would you provide our readers with something of your background and experience?

Løvald: My working background is limited to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I have been in the Norwegian Foreign Service since 1970 in a variety of positions, most recently as Norway's ambassador to Canada from 1996 to 2000. I held the position of political director in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 2000 to 2003, following which I came to New York to serve as Norway's ambassador to the UN. On the academic side, I have a Ph.D. from Northwestern University in political science. I did my undergraduate work at the University of Oslo.

Editor: Please describe the work of the Permanent Mission of Norway to the United Nations.

Løvald: Norway's participation in the UN has two distinct but connected emphases. First of all, we are eager to be represented and to participate in the various committees, commissions and working groups of the UN, formal and informal. Norway is a strong supporter of multilateralism in the international arena and in the UN system, which means that we try to be supportive and take an active role in the entire policy agenda of the United Nations. Norway has taken a very strong position on the need for greater interaction on the international stage. At the same time, Norway is a major contributor to the UN's various development funds and programs. Indeed, Norway is one of the largest donors in real terms to these programs, and on a per capita basis our contribution is among the very largest in the world. As a result, we are in contact and, indeed, work with the various development agencies on an ongoing basis. We are a small country, however, and choose to focus on a few of the issues we regard as significant, rather than on the entire spectrum of issues faced by the international community. On the development front, for example, we are particularly active on anything related to the so-called Millennium Development Goals adopted by the members of the UN in September of 2000, which commits the international



Johan L. Løvald

community to a global partnership for development.

Editor: Norway has been a member of NATO and an ally of the United States for more than half a century. It has, nevertheless, an enviable reputation for evenhandedness, objectivity and neutrality. Can you tell us how this has come about?

Løvald: I do not think there is any contradiction between being a member of the NATO Alliance and being an activist in a peace-oriented foreign policy. In fact, today NATO's agenda is very much peace-oriented, and this has served to encourage the evolution of our own foreign policy agenda. At the same time, I must say that Norway's concern for a peaceful world goes back a very long time and parallels its strong interest and participation in the field of international development. This is an undertaking in which much of Norwegian society participates: non-governmental organizations, church groups, the academic community, as well as at the state level. Throughout the English-speaking countries in particular we have built strong networks to support our efforts, and these connections have enabled us to have an impact that is out

of all proportion to our numbers. At this moment Norwegians are active in attempting to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in Sri Lanka between the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamils, and a similar effort is underway in the Sudan. The people engaged in these efforts are carrying out a long-standing Norwegian imperative. There is, I believe, a great consensus in Norway that we should take an active role in promoting peace and that we should use a fair amount of our wealth to pursue the achievement of peace, particularly in countries which have seen little of it in recent years. That, I think, is the reason for what you call our enviable reputation.

Editor: Norway's role in the United Nations – and in many international bodies – has been of great significance, out of all proportion to the country's size and relative wealth, as you have just indicated. Why? What is it that has permitted the country to play such an enormously important role on the world stage, including, of course, giving the United Nations its first Secretary General?

Johan L. Løvald

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Løvald: I might mention three factors. First, I think Norwegians have always been very committed to an international humanitarian agenda and generous in their support of it. Secondly, successive Norwegian governments have attempted to implement, within their means, the desires of the Norwegian populace. Thirdly, the Norwegian economy has grown dramatically with the exploitation of the country's oil and gas resources, and this has given the government the opportunity to sustain a very broad-based, concrete and continuous involvement in international discussion.

Editor: Norway has remained somewhat on the sidelines so far as the European Union and the Euro Zone are concerned. Do you think this is going to change in the near future?

Løvald: While Norway is not a member of the European Union, it has become integrated with the EU in a number of ways. The European Economic Area agreement, for example, makes Norway a member of the EU's internal market for all practical purposes. That is essential for the country's export industry. We have a number of other agreements which govern specific economic, legal and social concerns. I think there is a growing consensus that Norway should not apply for membership for a third time unless and until there is a change of heart in the Norwegian population. As in the past, it will be up to the people to decide.

Editor: Although Norway is not directly involved, do you have any thoughts about the recent breakdown in discussions on a European constitution? Do you think this can be resurrected?

Løvald: Whatever the EU decides will have an effect on us, so we are not neutral in this discussion. It seems that the EU has thrived on various types of crisis. They always manage to survive the crisis and to proceed.

Editor: Do you have any thoughts on what Europe might look like in, say, ten years?

Løvald: I think, despite the recent setback, that there is a continuing momentum toward the adoption of a European constitution. This year the EU is going to see a dramatic increase in its membership. Also these new members, I believe, are willing to work for solutions that will benefit the entire membership and not forget the rest of Europe. That bodes well for Europe in the years to come.

Editor: One of the ongoing themes of our publication is the progress of the rule of law in an international context. Do you have any sense of whether we are making progress in this area?

Løvald: I think we are making progress, but it is in small steps. Looking back over the past ten or fifteen years, we see that a great deal has happened. The rule of law and all of the things that contribute to it, such as access to justice by those denied access, reform of the justice system, the enforceability of contracts, transparency in corporate governance and, indeed, the willingness of governments to be bound

by their legal undertakings, have made positive steps, but not strides. There is a great deal that remains to be accomplished. As globalization continues to evolve, however, I think it is going to be increasingly difficult for those who have defied the rule of law to continue to do so.

Editor: Perhaps no issue has aroused more passion in recent years than globalization. People seem to be either very much in favor or very opposed to it. Do you have any thoughts on this? At this point in our history is it irreversible?

Løvald: I think it is basically irreversible, but a number of governments, including my own, are very concerned that globalization proceed within a framework of rules. That the benefits of globalization be extended to everyone, including the developing countries.

Editor: What about your own country's perspective on globalization? In terms of shipping and international trade, Norway was part of a global economy long before the term was invented. Has this been good for your country?

Løvald: Not only has it been good, it has been essential. Norway's economy is based on interacting with others, and that fact has informed our perception of the world for centuries. We think it is important to have a worldwide meeting of the minds on the meaning of globalization and that also the poor countries must have a fair share of the benefits.

Editor: Finally, the United Nations. Its role has changed from the days of the Cold War. Can you comment on this?

Løvald: It has indeed changed. When I was first here years ago, the UN was a very predictable place, and lines were clearly drawn. Today, the situation at the UN is much more fluid. This is an exciting time to be here, but many issues are more difficult to handle. I believe we possess, collectively, the economic, political and intellectual means to deal with the challenges that face us, but we must organize ourselves to bring those means to bear on the issues. The work of the General Assembly of the UN must be rationalized, and I think the Assembly must become more responsive to its members and to the membership as a whole. The composition of the Security Council ought to be reviewed. It may be an appropriate time to enlarge the Security Council. Most importantly, the various agencies, commissions and other entities within the UN must coordinate their efforts and work much more closely together in advancing the UN agenda. And I can only say that this need to work toward a common, coordinated effort extends to all of the institutions that are part of the international framework. By way of example, I was astonished to learn that when the president of the World Bank addressed the General Assembly of the UN this past fall it was the first time this had occurred. If we are to be effective in dealing with the many problems that we face, in my opinion we must do so together, utilizing all of the resources, financial, institutional and political, at our disposal. An increasing recognition of this fact – together with a recognition that we all live in one world – gives me hope for the future of a multilateral approach to the issues we face in common and for the United Nations.

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