

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FAA-00 SAJ-01 DOTE-00 PM-03 NSC-05

SP-02 SS-15 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 CCO-00 CIAE-00

OTPE-00 EB-07 FCC-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 OC-05 COME-00

BIB-01 DODE-00 FMC-01 COA-01 DLOS-03 PA-01 PRS-01

USIE-00 /067 W

----- 095650

O 101519Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9280

INFO SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

CNO WASHDC IMMEDIATE

COMMANDANT CG WASHDC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 0566

E.O. 11652: GDS

SUBJ: ETEL, MARR, NO

SUBJ: EXPOSE OF NORWAY'S ACQUISITION OF LORAN AND OMEGA SYSTEMS

REF: OSLO 548

SUMMARY: THE LABOR PARTY'S OSLO NEWSPAPER "ARBEIDER-
BLADET" HAS BROKEN THE STORY ALLEGING THAT FOREIGN AND DEFENSE
MINISTRY CIVIL SERVANTS DECEIVED THE GOVERN-
MENT AND PARLIAMENT IN OBTAINING APPROVAL OF THE OMEGA
AND LORAN SYSTEMS OPERATED BY THE NORWEGIANS. FOREIGN
MINISTRY FRYDENLUND IS PREPARING TO ANSWER STORTING
(PARLIAMENT) QUESTION ON ISSUE FEB. 11 WHICH HOPEFULLY
WILL DAMP DOWN CONCERN ABOUT IT. REQUEST EARLY REPLY
TO REFTEL SO WE MAY BE ABLE TO ASSIST FRYDENLUND IN
THIS MATTER. END SUMMARY.

1. THE RULING LABOR PARTY'S NEWSPAPER "ARBEIDERBLADET"

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(AB) PUBLISHED ACCOUNT FEB. 8 OF UNIVERSITY MASTER'S

THESIS BY NORWEGIAN CAPT. ANDRES HALLEBUST ALLEGING THAT FUNCTIONARIES IN FOREIGN AND DEFENSE MINISTRIES DECEIVED THE GOVERNMENT AND STORTING IN GAINING APPROVAL FOR CONSTRUCTION OF LORAN AND OMEGA RADIO NAVIGATION STATIONS IN NORWAY. NEWSPAPER GAVE SENSATIONAL PLAY TO STORY HIGHLIGHTING QUESTIONS RAISED IN THESIS. LATER SAME DAY NORWAY'S LARGEST NEWSPAPER "AFTENPOSTEN" (CONSERVATIVE) RAN BRIEFER SUMMARY OF LABOR PAPER'S ARTICLE. LEFTIST PAPERS, WHO WERE EXPECTED TO BREAK THE STORY, HAVE NOT YET PUBLISHED IT.

2. FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS ANTICIPATE MATTER WILL BE RAISED AS PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION AFTERNOON FEB. 11 AT WHICH TIME FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND HOPES TO GIVE ANSWER WHICH MAKES CLEAR THAT GOVERNMENT AND STORTING WERE AWARE OF ISSUES RELATING TO OMEGA AND LORAN SYSTEMS AND THAT SYSTEMS ARE USED WORLD WIDE AS NAVIGATIONAL AIDS BY FISHING AND MERCHANT VESSELS. HE IS PREPARED SAY ALSO THAT OMEGA SYSTEM IS NOT SUITABLE FOR NUCLEAR TARGETING PURPOSES, AND WOULD LIKE BE ABLE SAY THE SAME FOR LORAN A AND C SYSTEMS IF THAT IS INDEED THE CASE. REQUEST URGENT REPLY TO REFTTEL, IF POSSIBLE, TO ASSIST FRYDENLUND IN HIS STATEMENT.

3. AB STORY, WRITTEN BY LEFTIST JOHAN TORUD, REPORTED HELLEBUST'S THESIS ALLEGED CONCLUSIONS THAT WHEN CIVIL SERVANTS IN FOREIGN AND DEFENSE MINISTERIES DECIDED IN 1958 TO BUILD LORAN STATION IN VESTERALEN AND IN 1964 THROUGH 1967 PRESENTED PROPOSAL FOR CONSTRUCTING OMEGA STATION AT LUROY THEY DELIBERATELY DECEIVED GOVERNMENT AND STORTING. BOTH PROJECTS, AB REPORTS HELLEBUST'S THESIS SAYS, WERE BUILT EXCLUSIVELY TO SERVE US NUCLEAR SUBS AND ARE OF NO INTEREST TO NORWEGIAN MILITARY. REASON ALLEGED FOR CIVIL SERVANT'S ACTION WAS FEAR OF POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES IF REAL FUNCTION OF STATIONS BECAME KNOWN. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE, THESIS SAYS, THAT US CIVIL SERVANTS MAY HAVE HELD BACK IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM NORWEGIAN AUTHORITIES OR THAT KEY NORWEGIAN CONFIDENTIAL

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OFFICIALS WERE INFORMED TOO LATE TO STOP THE PROJECT. ALSO HELLEBUST CONCLUDES THAT CONSTRUCTION OF LORAN AND OMEGA INSTALLATIONS ARE NOT IN KEEPING WITH NORWAY'S BASIC POLICY AND RAISES SOME DOUBT IF ACTION IS CONSISTENT WITH NORWAY'S ATOMIC WEAPONS POLICY.

4. IN HASTY REPLY TO AB QUESTION DEFENSE MINISTER FOSTERVOLL SAID HE FOUND HELLEBUST'S CONCLUSIONS

SURPRISING AND THAT CASE WOULD BE THOROUGHLY INVESTIGATED. HE SAID MINISTRY WAS AWARE OF HELLEBUST'S STUDY. WHILE WRITER HAD NOT HAD ACCESS TO CONFIDENTIAL FILES HE HAD INTERVIEWED KNOWLEDGABLE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WHO HAD PLEDGED ONLY PROVIDE NON-CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION. MINISTER STATED MINISTRY'S KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE THESIS DID NOT IMPLY THAT DISSERTATION'S CLAIMS WERE TRUE.

5. STATEMENT GIVEN BY DEFENSE MINISTRY SECRETARY GENERAL CASPER STEPHANSEN TO "AFTENPOSTEN" WAS MORE HELPFUL. HE SAID ALLEGATIONS THAT RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES WERE NOT ACQUAINTED WITH OMEGA AND LORAN WERE NOT REPEAT NOT TRUE. LORAN CASE HAD BEEN DISCUSSED IN KING'S CABINET AS CONFIDENTIAL MATERIAL THREE TIMES. MATTER HANDLED AS CONFIDENTIAL IN USUAL FASHION BECUASE IT TOUCHED ON MILITARY INTEREST. HE POINTED OUT OMEGA WAS GIVEN TRIAL RUN BY NORWEGIAN ARMY AFTER CLEARANCE FROM STORTING. HE SAID OMEGA SYSTEM HAS LITTLE INTEREST IN MILITARY AND CAN BE USED BY ANYONE WITH RECEIVER. LORAN SYSTEM, HE ADDED, IS AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE.

6. COMMENT: WHILE THE ARBEIDERBLADET PRESENTATION IS CERTAIN TO FAN FLAMES OVER THE ISSUE AND THE DEFENSE MINISTER'S REPLY TO PRESS QUESTIONS WAS LESS THAN HELPFUL, HOPEFULLY AN EARLY, AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENT BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER CAN DAMP DOWN FURTHER QUESTIONS ON THE OMEGA AND LORAN SYSTEMS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, ALLEGATIONS, FRAUDS, GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL, TRACKING STATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975OSLO00566
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750048-0093
From: OSLO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750257/aaaabzfb.tel
Line Count: 145
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 OSLO 548
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 JUN 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <16 OCT 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ETEL, MARR, NO SUBJ: EXPOSE OF NORWAY'S ACQUISITION OF LORAN AND OMEGA SYSTEMS
TAGS: ETEL, MARR, NO, ARBEIDERBLADET, (HALLEBUST, ANDRES)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006