

**October 19, 1976**

**Cable, US Embassy Copenhagen to the Secretary of  
State, 'North Koreans Described as "Diplomatic  
Gang" in Danish Press'**

**Citation:**

"Cable, US Embassy Copenhagen to the Secretary of State, 'North Koreans Described as "Diplomatic Gang" in Danish Press'", October 19, 1976, Wilson Center Digital Archive, 1976COPENH03512, Access to Archival Databases (AAD).

<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/155141>

**Summary:**

This cable describes North Korean Diplomats' illegal cigarette and liquor trafficking in Norway and speculates on the possibility that the trafficking reflects official North Korean policy and a means to finance the country's propaganda efforts.

**Original Language:**

English

**Contents:**

Original Scan

## Message Text

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21

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-09 NEA-10 ISO-00 SNM-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-02 /061 W

----- 004290

R 191630Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3449

INFO DEA HQS WASHDC

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO

UNCLAS COPENHAGEN 3512

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR SNAR KN DA

SUBJECT: NORTH KOREANS DESCRIBED AS "DIPLOMATIC GANG" IN DANISH  
PRESS

REF: COPENHAGEN 3493

SUMMARY: DANISH MEDIA CONTINUE TO BE DOMINATED BY STORIES

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ON THE NORTH KOREAN DIPLOMATS' ILLEGAL TRAFFICKING ACTIVITIES.

REPORTS OF ARRESTS AND EXPULSIONS IN NORWAY AND ARRESTS OF IMPLICATED SWEDES IN SWEDEN MADE DANES MORE AWARE OF SCOPE OF THE NORTH KOREAN ILLICIT ACTIVITY. ACCORDING TO THE REPORTS, THE NORTH KOREANS IN NORWAY WERE ENGAGED IN TRAFFICKING IN CIGARETTES AND LIQUOR BUT NO PROOF HAD BEEN FOUND OF HASHISH INVOLVEMENT. SOME REPORTS CITED BUDGETS CUTS SUFFERED BY THE NORTH KOREAN FOREIGN MINISTRY LAST SPRING AS BEING THE IMMEDIATE CAUSE FOR THE NORTH KOREANS' CRIMINALITY, BUT OTHERS MENTIONED POSSIBILITY OF CALCULATED GOVERNMENT POLICY TO GET FOREIGN EXCHANGE TO FINANCE NORTH KOREAN POLICY OBJECTIVES. OTHERWISE, PRESS STORIES WERE CONCERNED WITH THE DETAILS OF POLICE OPERATIONS WHICH RESULTED IN THE CHARGES AGAINST THE NORTH KOREAN DPLOMATS HERE AND SPECULATION ON NORTH KOREAN OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT REACTION. END SUMMARY.

1. COMMUNIST DAILY LAND AND FOLK IN AN EDITORIAL TODAY (OCTOBER 19 CALLED THE NORTH KOREANS NAIVE AND COMMENTED THAT IT WAS NOT NECESSARY TO BLAME THE CIA FOR THIS SCANDAL BUT THAT PERHAPS THE SOUTH KOREAN INTELLIGENCE SERVICE MIGHT HAVE BEEN INVOLVED. THE EDITORIAL CONCLUDED THAT NORTH KOREAN ACTIVITY HAD NOT HURT DENMARK BUT WAS CERTAINLY A BLACK EYE FOR NORTH KOREA'S IMAGE HERE. TODAY'S INFORMATION (LEFTIST INTELLECTUAL) RAISED THE QUESTION OF HOW THE MONEY WHICH WAS OBTAINED FROM THE ILLEGAL TRAFFICKING WAS USED. IT SPECULATED THAT THE MONEY SUPPORTED NORTH KOREAN INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES AND MIGHT EVEN HAVE ENDED UP IN SWISS BANKS. EDITORIAL CONCLUDED THAT IN ANY CASE THE NORTH KOREANS WERE OBVIOUSLY DILLETTANTES.

2. SOME ARTICLES DEALT WITH NORTH KOREA'S DEFAULT ON ITS FOREIGN DEBTS AND MENTIONED NEGOTIATIONS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY BETWEEN JAPAN AND THE DANISH COMPANY, DANNEBROG, FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF DEBTS OWED BY THE NORTH KOREANS. AKTUEL'T (SOCIAL DEOMCRATIC DAILY) COMMENTED THAT, WHILE THE NORTH KOREAN "DIPLOMATIC GANG" IS MAKING LARGE SUMS OF MONEY  
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ILLEGALLY AND ENORMOUS SUMS ARE BEING PAID BY THE NORTH KOREAN FOREIGN LANGUAGE PUBLISHING HOUSE TO PRAISE PRESIDENT KIM IL-SONG, THE GOVERNMENT IS RENEGING ON ITS DEBTS.

3. IN ITS REPORT ON OCTOBER 19, POLITIKEN (INDEPENDENT LEFT-OF-CENTER) NOTED THAT THE DISCOVERY OF THE NORTH KOREANS' LAWBREAKING FED THE SUSPICION THAT SIMILAR

CRIMES FINACED THEIR DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITIES ALL OVER THE WORLD. POLITIEKN'S EDITORIAL SPECULATED THAT THE MONEY MADE HERE WAS USED FOR NOTH KOREA'S AMATERUISH PROPAGANDA EFFORTS IN SCANDINAVIA AS WELL AS AN EFFORT TO BUILD UP AN ESPIONAGE APPARATUS - WITH ANY UNNEEDED SURPLUS FUNDS BEING TRANSMITTED TO PYONGYANG.

4. ONE PRESS REPORT FROM LUXEMBOURG, WHERE THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY COUNCIL IS MEETING, HAS IT THAT NEW STAFF IS EXPECTED AT THE NORTH KOREAN EMBASSY IN DENMARK SOON.  
DEAN

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NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** NARCOTICS, TOBACCO, DRUG TRAFFIC, DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL EXPULSIONS, ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 19 OCT 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** n/a  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** n/a  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:**  
**Disposition Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Office:** ACTION EUR  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 76 COPENHAGEN 3493  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** ullricre  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 17 JUN 2004  
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**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** NORTH KOREANS DESCRIBED AS "DIPLOMATIC GANG" IN DANISH PRESS  
**TAGS:** PFOR, SNAR, KN, DA  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006