

October 22, 1976

**Cable, US Embassy Oslo to the Secretary of State,
'Media Reaction - North Korean Smuggling'**

Citation:

"Cable, US Embassy Oslo to the Secretary of State, 'Media Reaction - North Korean Smuggling'", October 22, 1976, Wilson Center Digital Archive, 1976OSLO05445, Access to Archival Databases (AAD).

<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/155149>

Summary:

This cable discusses coverage of the North Korean smuggling scandals in the Norwegian press.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EA-09 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 DEAE-00 SNM-02 /036 W

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R 221558Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2670

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USIA WASHDC

UNCLAS OSLO 5445

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: NO, KN, POIP, SOPN

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - NORTH KOREAN SMUGGLING

1. ALL ASPECTS OF THE NORTH KOREAN DIPLOMATIC SMUGGLING STORY HAVE BEEN THE SUBJECT OF VERY HEAVY, SENSATIONAL PLAY THIS WEEK IN NORWEGIAN MEDIA, WHICH OBVIOUSLY IS DELIGHTED WITH THE RARE OPPORTUNITY TO REPORT A MAJOR INTERNATIONAL SCANDAL ON HOME-GROUND.

2. FROM THE ANNOUNCEMENT OCTOBER 18 THAT THE NORTH KOREAN EMBASSY IN OSLO WAS INVOLVED, ALL NORWAY'S MAJOR DAILIES AND THE NATIONAL RADIO AND TV NETWORKS HAVE STRESSED THE FACT THAT THE SMUGGLING OPERATIONS IN NORWAY WERE PART OF A LARGER EFFORT APPARENTLY DIRECTED FROM PYONGYANG. LABOR PARTY DAILY ARBEIDERBLADET, IN A TYPICAL BANNER HEADLINE, SAID "ILLEGAL ALCOHOL SALES WERE INCOME FOR KIM IL-SUNG". STORIES CONTRASTED NORTH KOREA'S FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES WITH HOW MUCH THE NORTH KOREAN EMBASSY IN OSLO SPENT BUYING NEWSPAPER SPACE FOR SPEECHES BY KIM IL-SUNG AND TO PUBLISH PROPAGANDA BOOKS IN NORWEGIAN. REPORTS FROM COPENHAGEN, STOCKHOLM AND HELSINKI WERE ALSO GIVEN PROMINENT PLAY.

3. TOWARD THE END OF THE WEEK, PRESS EMPHASIS BEGAN TO SHIFT

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TO THE NARCOTICS AND TERRORIST IMPLICATIONS IN THE AFFAIR.

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AT FIRST THE MEDIA INDICATED THAT THE EMBASSY IN OSLO WAS PROBABLY NOT TRAFFICKING IN NARCOTICS, UNLIKE IN OTHER SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES, BUT ON OCTOBER 21 SEVERAL DAILIES REPORTED THAT NARCOTICS MIGHT COME INTO THE NORWEGIAN PART OF THE AFFAIR AFTER ALL. AND ON OCTOBER 22, SEVERAL DAILIES--AND THE NATIONAL BROADCASTING NETWORKS--PROMINENTLY PLAYED REPORTS THAT THE SMUGGLING AND EFFORTS TO SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL TERRORISTS MAY HAVE BEEN DIRECTED BY THE NORTH KOREAN MILITARY ATTACHE IN EAST GERMANY.

4. IN AMUSING SET OF INTERVIEWS, RADICAL DAILY DAGBLADET ASKED THE HEADS OF FOUR NORWEGIAN-NORTH KOREAN "FRIENDSHIP" ORGANIZATIONS

THEIR VIEWS ON THE AFFAIR. ALL OF THEM CONDEMNED THE SMUGGLING AND ADVOCATED A PROMPT APOLOGY FROM PYONGYANG, BUT THEY ATTEMPTED TO EXPLAIN AWAY THE AFFAIR AS A RESULT OF AMERICAN "IMPERIALIST" PRESSURE ON NORTH KOREA.

5. THOUGH THE SCANDAL HAS PROMPTED A FEW CRITICAL SIDEBARS ON THE PRIVILEGES ENJOYED BY ALL DIPLOMATS, AND NORTH KOREAN CHARGES FROM STOCKHOLM THAT THE CIA WAS BEHIND THE WHOLE AFFAIR HAVE BEEN REPORTED,

NORWEGIAN MEDIA COVERAGE HAS BEEN FOCUSED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON NORTH

KOREA AND WHAT DAILY AFTENPOSTEN DESCRIBED AS ITS "BETWEEN-THE-ACTS CLOWNS."

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, EXPULSION, SMUGGLING, DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 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:
Document Number: 1976OSLO05445
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760398-0321
From: OSLO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761024/aaaaaual.tel
Line Count: 87
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: buchant0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 APR 2004 by DuboseBM>; APPROVED <12 JAN 2005 by buchant0>
Review Markings:

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Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 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: MEDIA REACTION - NORTH KOREAN SMUGGLING
TAGS: PDIP, SOPN, NO, KN
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006