

CONFIDENTIAL

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MDADAN 4493

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FM OSLO
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 84
OF 111055Z APRIL 89
AND TO IMMEDIATE MODUK, CABINET OFFICE, ACTOR
INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON, MOSCOW
INFO SAVING OTHER NATO POSTS

SIC

MY TELNO 82: SOVIET SUBMARINE

SUMMARY

1. NORWEGIAN EXPERTS CONFIRM (A) THAT THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF RADIOACTIVE LEAKAGE SO FAR (B) THAT THEY WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE AREA, AND (C) THAT THEY HAVE NO COMPLAINT AS YET ABOUT SOVIET RESPONSE.

DETAIL

2. WE HAVE DISCUSSED THE INCIDENT FURTHER WITH JOHAN BAARLI, DIRECTOR OF THE STATE INSTITUTE FOR RADIATION SAFETY (SIS), ABOUT THE MEASURES WHICH THE NORWEGIANS HAVE TAKEN TO MONITOR RADIOACTIVE EMISSION FROM THE SUBMARINE WRECK.

3. BAARLI CRITICISED THE DELAY BETWEEN MILITARY DETECTION OF THE INCIDENT AND OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION TO HIS INSTITUTE (FOR WHICH THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE HAS PUBLICLY APOLOGISED). HE HAD HOWEVER BEEN ABLE TO OBTAIN ATMOSPHERIC AND WATER SAMPLES SUFFICIENTLY QUICKLY TO DETERMINE THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO RADIOACTIVE DISCHARGE AT THE TIME WHEN THE SUBMARINE SANK. THE ORION AIRCRAFT WHICH REACHED THE LOCATION WITHIN AN HOUR OF THE SINKING (MY TUR) HAD TAKEN AIR-SAMPLES. NORWEGIAN COASTGUARD VESSELS HAD TAKEN WATER-SAMPLES ON THE MORNING OF 10 APRIL, INCLUDING SAMPLES OF WHAT THE NORWEGIANS BELIEVED TO BE OIL-SPILL FROM THE SUBMARINE ITSELF. TESTS ON ALL THESE SAMPLES HAVE PRODUCED NO TRACES OF RADIOACTIVITY.

4. ON 10 APRIL THE FISHERIES RESEARCH SHIP 'ELDJARN' HAD TAKEN FURTHER WATER SAMPLES FROM THE SEA BED NORTH AND SOUTH OF THE SUBMARINE WRECK (THE NORWEGIANS BELIEVE THAT THEY KNOW THE EXACT LOCATION), USING METHODS THAT ARE REGULARLY ADOPTED IN FISHERIES RESEARCH. THE WATER SAMPLES WILL BE EXAMINED AT THE SIS LABORATORIES IN OSLO AND THE RESULTS PUBLISHED WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS. BAARLI

PAGE 1
CONFIDENTIAL

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140120
MDADAN 4493

SAID THAT HIS OWN INSTITUTE AND THE FISHERIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE WOULD MONITOR THE WRECK 'AS LONG AS IT REMAINED THERE AND POSED A THREAT'.

5. BAARLI SAID THAT THE NORWEGIANS NOW AWAITED A SOVIET RESPONSE TO THEIR REQUEST (REPORTED IN TUR) FOR INFORMATION (WHICH WAS NOT MILITARILY SENSITIVE) ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE REACTOR. HE BELIEVED THAT, THROUGH THE CONTACTS ESTABLISHED SINCE CHERNOBYL, THE RUSSIANS SHOULD CO-OPERATE ADEQUATELY IN THE PRESENT CASE.

SHORT

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PAGE 2
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