

RESTRICTED
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TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 289
OF 141315Z JUNE 91
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MY TELNO 288: SWEDISH EC BID: STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER

SUMMARY

1. SWEDEN WILL APPLY ON 1 JULY FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE EC. A REFERENDUM WILL BE HELD. SWEDEN REMAINS COMMITTED TO SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF EEA NEGOTIATIONS.

DETAIL

2. AS EXPECTED (MY TUR) PRIME MINISTER CARLSSON TODAY INFORMED THE RIKSDAG IN A SPECIAL STATEMENT THAT SWEDEN WILL APPLY FOR EC MEMBERSHIP (TEXT FAXED TO ECD(E)). THE APPLICATION WILL BE DELIVERED TO THE DUTCH PRESIDENCY IN THE HAGUE ON 1 JULY.

3. THE STATEMENT EMPHASISED THAT THE ESSENCE OF SWEDEN'S NEUTRALITY WAS FREEDOM FROM MILITARY ALLIANCES. WHILE IT WAS LIKELY THAT SOME FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS IN THE EC WOULD BE DETERMINED IN FUTURE BY QUALIFIED MAJORITY VOTING, THIS WOULD APPLY ONLY IN CERTAIN LIMITED AREAS. THE GOVERNMENT HAD CONCLUDED THAT THE EC WAS NOT LIKELY TO BE TRANSFORMED INTO A 'DEFENCE ALLIANCE WITH OPERATIVE MILITARY RESPONSIBILITIES' AND THAT ANY FUTURE DEFENCE COOPERATION WOULD CONTINUE TO HAVE DUE REGARD TO THE POSITIONS OF COUNTRIES THAT COULD NOT OR DID NOT WANT TO PARTICIPATE. THE EC'S DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURES ASSURED MEMBERS OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO SAFEGUARD FUNDAMENTAL SECURITY POLICY INTERESTS. EC MEMBERSHIP WAS, THEREFORE, COMPATIBLE WITH SWEDEN'S NEUTRALITY. SWEDEN SHARED THE COMMUNITY'S LONG-TERM GOALS, AS FORMULATED IN THE TREATY OF ROME AND THE SINGLE EUROPEAN ACT AND WISHED TO WORK FOR THEIR REALISATION TOGETHER WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY.

4. FINAL APPROVAL OF AN AGREEMENT WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE ELECTORATE IN THE FORM OF A REFERENDUM.

5. CARLSSON MADE A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NORDIC COOPERATION

WHICH MUST NOT BE SET BACK BY THE PROCESS OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION.

6. THE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO PURSUE ACTIVELY A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION TO THE EEA NEGOTIATIONS.

7. THE MAIN OPPOSITION PARTY LEADER CARL BILDT WELCOMED THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION, CALLING THE SWEDISH APPLICATION THE MOST IMPORTANT CHANGE IN SWEDISH FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY IN MODERN TIMES. BILDT STRESSED THAT THE HARD CORE OF NEUTRALITY POLICY, WHICH WAS DICTATED BY SWEDEN'S GEO-STRATEGIC POSITION, WOULD BE RETAINED, BUT LEFT NO DOUBT ABOUT THE FIRMNESS OF HIS COMMITMENT TO MEMBERSHIP. LIBERAL AND CENTRE PARTY LEADERS ALSO SUPPORTED THE DECISION. THE LEFT, EX-COMMUNISTS, OPPOSED IT AS TOO HASTY. THE GREENS ALSO OPPOSED IT.

COMMENT

8. SWEDEN HAS NOW MADE THE EXPECTED DECISIVE COMMITMENT TO MEMBERSHIP, ON THE BASIS OF CONSENSUS BETWEEN THE FOUR MAIN POLITICAL PARTIES. THOUGH THE POLICY CHANGE IS MOMENTOUS THE REFERENDUM, WHICH IS LIKELY TO BE HELD IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE 1994 ELECTION, IS NOT AT THIS STAGE EXPECTED TO PRESENT A SERIOUS OBSTACLE.

9. DETAILED COMMENT FOLLOWS.

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