

NM 9/22/89/12

THE SPIDER AFFAIR

Following the publication of the book "The Spider" on Friday and a report in Friday's Arbeiderbladet that the deputy head of the intelligence services, Iver Frigaard, had a secret meeting with furniture dealer Arvid Engen two weeks ago, Labour Party Secretary Thorbjørn Jagland has called for a full investigation of the role of the intelligence services in the affair. The Director of Public Prosecutions will today contact the head of the Intelligence Services' Control Committee to decide who will have responsibility for such an investigation. The Committee will also investigate information revealed in the book. The head of the intelligence services, Jostein Erstad, has said that intelligence staff should not get involved in political matters. The Chairman of the Storting's Justice Committee has called for the Committee to investigate Frigaard and other intelligence officers who may have been involved in the affair. Frigaard has said that he is not afraid of an investigation since he has not been party to any conspiracy.

In a TV interview on Friday evening, Arvid Engen said that he had no idea where the authors of the book got hold of the tapes which are at the centre of the affair. He said that the book gave an exaggerated picture of his activities and that he had been portrayed as a Judas. He strongly denied that either he or Per Karlsen had acted as agents. (Aftenposten 18/11 p. 8; Aftenposten 20/11 p. 3; Arbeiderbladet 18/11 pp. 4 & 5; Arbeiderbladet 20/11 p. 4; Dagbladet 18/11 pp. 3-9; VG 18/11 pp. 3.7)

LABOUR PARTY WINS BACK SUPPORT IN NOVEMBER POLL

Opinion A/S's November poll for Aftenposten shows that the Labour Party have now regained much of the support they lost to SV at the September election. The results read as follows: Labour 36.5% (+2.9%); Conservatives 22% (no change); Socialist Left Party 12.4% (-2.1%); Progress Party 12.3% (-0.4%); Christian People's Party 7.2% (-0.3%); Centre Party 6.1% (+0.3%). (Aftenposten 18/11 p. 12)

DEBATES IN THE STORTING TODAY

The first item on the Storting's agenda today will be an account by Minister of Trade Kaci Kullmann Five of the EFTA/EC process. The Storting will then consider the 1990 budgets for the Finance, Social Affairs, Industry and Consumer Affairs ministries. Norwegian aid to Poland will also be discussed. (Aftenposten 20/11 p. 6)

NORWEGIAN AID TO EL SALVADOR

The MFA have donated Kr.1m to the International Committee of the Red Cross to help El Salvador. The Norwegian Red Cross, who are to administer these funds, will themselves donate Kr.200,000 to be used for medical supplies and ambulances. (Aftenposten Weekend p. 47; Aftenposten 20/11 p. 11)

BODIES AND REMAINING WRECKAGE FOUND AFTER AMBULANCE AIRCRAFT CRASH

The bodies of the four passengers from the Air Express ambulance aircraft which crashed into Langfjelltind last Tuesday (see press summary of 17/11) were found on Friday. Most of the rest of the wreckage was found on Saturday. The cause of the accident is still unknown. (Aftenposten 18/11 p. 10; Aftenposten 20/11 p. 4)

NORWAY A SLOWCOACH IN THE OZONE CAMPAIGN, SAY GREENPEACE

At a UN conference in Geneva last week, Norway, Finland and Sweden proposed halving emissions of CFC gasses by 1993. EC countries were keen to reach agreement to halve emissions in 1991-1992. Geir Wang-Andersen of Greenpeace's Norwegian office says that this has considerably weakened the reputation of Norway and the other Scandinavian countries as prime movers on environmental issues, and that Norway is lagging behind in the international fight to save the ozone layer. He refers to the White Paper following up the Brundtland Commission's report, which says that current international agreements on reducing CFCs are not enough. The Norwegian Ministry of Environment has confirmed that the EC are a step ahead of Norway in reducing CFCs, but says that Norway has chosen to adhere to a joint Nordic strategy. (Arbeiderbladet 18/11 p. 8)

THE ECONOMY, TRADE AND INDUSTRY

PROGRESS PARTY KEEP THEIR FINGER FIRMLY IN BUDGET PIE

Friday saw the second day of the budget debate in the Storting (see press summary of 17/11 for the first day's debate). The Storting approved the tax plan and proposed state revenues for 1990, but the level of state expenditure is still not agreed. In spite of the Government having refused to include the Progress Party as full partners in the budget negotiations (see press summary of 14/11), party leader Carl I. Hagen seemed prepared to bury the hatchet and to help the Government balance the budget by Christmas. But he said that his party would expect something in return, and that the Government could expect to receive the Progress Party's list of proposed cuts shortly. According to Arbeiderbladet, the list will demand net cuts of around Kr 20,000 m, and will include proposals for reductions in subsidies to agriculture, development aid, kindergartens, labour market schemes and refugees. The only Ministry likely to escape the Progress Party's attention will be that of the Environment. Labour Party Leader Gro Harlem Brundtland attacked the Government for its reluctance to cooperate, in spite of promises to the contrary, and called its budget negotiations "a gamble". (Aftenposten 18/11 p. 10; Arbeiderbladet 18/11 p. 6)

TAX REFORMS IN NORTHERN NORWAY UNDER CONSIDERATION

The Storting decided on Friday to consider the effects and consequences of tax reforms designed to maintain population levels in Nord-Troms and Finnmark. The decision was made against votes from the Labour Party and SV. (Aftenposten 18/11 p. 10)

THE US HOT ON NORWAY'S HEELS OVER KØFRI AFFAIR

The US trade authorities have sent the Norwegian authorities 31 questions - requiring very detailed answers - on the Køfri/Amtech road toll equipment affair. The questions are designed to establish whether Norway has broken GATT rules on public procurement. A working group has been established by the Norwegians to answer them. The Ministry of Industry makes no secret of the fact that it cannot understand why the US are making such an issue of this case. It says that the US have already been told that Køfri got the contract because their price was cheaper than Amtech's. The Norwegians argue that the resulting decision should be no subject for dispute. (Aftenposten Weekend p. 9)

NORWEGIAN COMPANIES IN THE RACE FOR NEW MARKETS IN EASTERN EUROPE

Since the breach of the Berlin Wall, Norwegian businesses have been showing great interest in developing new markets in Eastern Europe. Norsk Hydro and Borregaard Industries are the two Norwegian companies with the largest investments in Eastern European markets. Hydro's representative in East Berlin, Tor-Sverre Jacobsen, says that he has received a large number of enquiries from Norwegian companies wanting to learn about the situation and about the potential for breaking into the East German market. He predicts a large number of joint venture agreements in the near future - perhaps even during this week. (Aftenposten 18/11 p. 5; Dagens Næringsliv 20/11 p. 3)

NORWEGIAN BUSINESS TACKLES HUNGARY

The State Secretary for trade issues, Sven Svedman, reports from discussions in Hungary during the Norwegian industrial presentation last week (see press summary of 13/11) that the Hungarians - although not explicit about the matter - seem fearful of being left behind in the world's attention, which is now turned on Poland and East Germany. Svedman said Norway looked positively on Hungary's overtures to EFTA. The Norwegian presentation in Budapest aroused great interest from Norwegian business. (Aftenposten 20/11 p. 14)

GOVERNMENT AGREES THAT SLEIPNER CONDENSATE SHOULD COME ASHORE AT KÅRSTØ

The Government says it supports the proposal by oil companies on the Sleipner East field in the North Sea to bring condensate ashore at Kårstø in Rogaland rather than at Teesside in England, and will put this to the Storting. (Aftenposten 18/11 p. 25)

OIL DISCOVERY IN THE NORTH SEA

Elf Aquitaine has made an oil find at block 25/2-13 north-west of the Frøy field in the North Sea. The company says it is too early to speculate about the size of the find. (Aftenposten 20/11 p. 4)

LOSSES FOR STATKRAFT

Statkraft made losses in the first three-quarters of the year of Kr 512 m, compared to losses of Kr 1,140 m in the same period last year. (Aftenposten 20/11 p. 16)

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