

naval operations: neutral territorial waters

70/14/46

SECRET

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April 7th, 1940

Dear Mr. Secretary,

With reference to my letter of yesterday informing you that a communication had been made by the Allied Governments to the Swedish and Norwegian Governments, I enclose herein the text of a message which I have been instructed to convey to the President for his personal and secret information.

Yours sincerely,

(SOD) LOTHIAN

The Honourable
Cordell Hull,
Secretary of State of the United States,
Washington, D. C.

FRHM:DH

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Personal and Confidential
Message for the President.

In addition to addressing these notes to the Swedish and Norwegian Governments the Allied Governments have now decided to take certain appropriate action in view of the situation described therein.

They have reached the conclusion that they can no longer acquiesce in the present position in regard to the use of Norwegian territorial waters by Germany. As matters now stand Norwegian ships engaged in commerce with Great Britain are being continually and mercilessly sunk in defiance of the laws of war, the Norwegian Government being unable to take any measures to protect them. Meanwhile German vessels are not only permitted to make use of the whole length of Norwegian waters as a shield against the Allied forces, but are actually being accorded special protection in those waters by the Norwegian Navy.

Though they realise that the Norwegian attitude is solely dictated by German threats and pressure the Allied Governments are bound to consider that these facts result in serious discrimination against their interests and they accordingly intend to mine certain stretches of Norwegian territorial waters in order to prevent their use by German vessels. This operation will probably take place early on Monday, April 8th, and the Allied Governments will simultaneously issue a joint declaration of their reasons for undertaking it.

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It is possible that weather conditions may necessitate a short postponement of the operations and this emphasises the necessity for absolute secrecy until the public declaration is issued.