

March 3, 1953.

PERSONAL AND
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Memorandum for

The Secretary of State

The question of establishing an air base in Norway is a difficult one for which to find a completely satisfactory solution. When I was in Europe I came to the conclusion that if the field itself could be built and properly stocked and committed to the care of the Norwegians themselves (possibly assisted by a small, permanent, technical staff of civilian employees of the air forces) that NATO's needs would at least be partially met.

In view of the assurances that Norway has consistently given to Russia about the stationing of foreign troops (indeed, a prohibition of this kind is included in the Norwegian Written Constitution), I do not see how she can publicly and openly accept the permanent stationing of foreign troops within her borders.

There might be some chance of getting this done if it could be made to appear a completely defensive step. By this I mean that if the Norwegians would request help from the United States in establishing a base for the short-range interceptor type of unit, she might get away with it. This question came up during my final visit to Norway and the Norwegians were particularly insistent upon avoiding direct negotiations with the United States Strategic Air Forces. To them the acceptance of the United States Strategic Air Forces as the bargaining agent clearly marked the field as one having an offensive mission. They told me that if the United States would act through the NATO commander (which the Norwegian people accept as having only a defensive purpose) and if the project were executed as part



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of the NATO program, they felt they could probably win support for the project in their Parliament.

At that time, at least, the Strategic Air Forces of the United States were adopting a completely unrealistic attitude in the matter, and insisted that they could make their own arrangements with Norway. The case was, and in my opinion is, hopeless if approached from that angle.

I do not know whether Ridgway completely understands this situation and is in sympathy with it. Gruenther does and is.

My point is that I would not push Lange too hard on this particular angle. I would talk NATO a lot more than I would a strategic air base.

Gruenther will be here in the United States within a matter of a couple of weeks and we should be able to get some enlightenment on the current situation.

On the other hand, I think that what Denmark needs is some stiffening of the backbone. A little urging on that country might do a lot of good, because I do not believe that they have made any specific pledges to Russia. Like Norway, Denmark has a long tradition of neutralism and their faith in this doctrine has not been completely eliminated, even after the invasion of both countries by Hitler. When I first went to Europe, the term of service in Denmark was eight months -- we had a terrific time getting it up to a year. Now I think it has been made something like sixteen or eighteen months. Our top governmental friends such as Kraft, Kristensen, and, I think also, the King, are all striving to help, but they need a lot of moral as well as some material support.

D. D. E.

