

(Translation from the Norwegian original)

Marit Arnstad,  
Member of the Norwegian Parliament

To  
The Norwegian Nobel Committee  
Henrik Ibsens gate 51  
0255 Oslo

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**I would hereby like to nominate Daniel Ellsberg (b. 1931) for the Nobel Peace Prize.**

Daniel Ellsberg was born in 1931. He studied economy and graduated from Harvard University in 1952 whereafter he served in the U. S. armed forces. He then worked as a strategic analyst with the Rand Corporation, performing in-depth analyses for the U. S. government. During this period, he completed his PhD in Economics at Harvard in 1962.

For several years, in the mid-1960s, Ellsberg worked as a military analyst and advisor to the U.S. Secretary of Defense, at the time heavily engaged in the Vietnam War. During a stay in Vietnam, Ellsberg became convinced that the U.S. war strategy could never succeed. He was not alone in this view, but experienced that the decision makers in charge of the war strategy, for opportunistic reasons, expressed the opposite view.

Around 1970, Ellsberg made a dramatic decision – for himself, and for his country. He had access to detailed knowledge and comprehensive documentation that, should it come to the attention of the public, would introduce dramatic facts into the public debate on the Vietnam War.

These documents – later known as the *Pentagon Papers* – revealed that the American authorities had misled the public about the war and its foreseeable outcome. It turned out that it was highly unlikely that the U. S. would succeed, and that more lives would be lost than the estimates given in government information.

Ellsberg decided to hand over the Pentagon Papers to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, J. William Fulbright.

When Fulbright refrained from acting on this information, Ellsberg turned to *The New York Times*. The paper started to publish parts of the material, but was stopped by the Nixon administration. Ellsberg responded by giving access to the documents to *The Washington Post* and 17 other newspapers, making it difficult – if not impossible – for the government to put a lid on the story. Firmly anchored in the Constitution's amendments on Freedom of Expression, the U. S. Supreme Court would soon rule that the newspapers could resume their publishing of the content of the Pentagon Papers.

Ellsberg, however, was apprehended by the police and indicted for several grave violations of the law. Believing that he was about to spend the rest of his life in prison, he still turned himself over to the police. But the accusations did not prevail in court. The presiding judge, Matthew Byrne, concluded that the "totality of the circumstances of this case which I have only briefly sketched offend our sense of justice".

It is important to note the following: Today there can be no doubt that Daniel Ellsberg's actions contributed significantly to ending the Vietnam War.

The year 1973 marks the beginning of a new chapter in Ellsberg's long service to society. As a peace activist he promoted disarmament during the Cold War – at a time when the nuclear arsenals of the superpowers were in steady growth. Up till this day he has been active and central in several peace organizations and peace initiatives – a never resting and influential engagement that through the years has been prizeworthy comprehensive and consistent.

In 2004 Ellsberg founded "The Truth Telling Project" which later gave birth to another important initiative, the manifesto "Call to Patriotic Whistleblowing". This eventually led to the foundation of the "National Security Whistleblowers Coalition" (NSWBC). Ellsberg's *ethos* is that even government employees have a particular democratic responsibility to disclose untruths that manipulate public discussion leading democratic decisions to be taken on false premises..

Even if Ellsberg now is well into his 80s he is untiring in his work. In 2015, for instance, he travelled to several European countries together with other prominent American whistleblowers, on a tour called "Stand-up-for-truth." He also visited Oslo.

Through the media new generations are always informed about the challenges civil society are facing with regard to secrecy, perhaps particularly so in situations where defense interests feel that the public attention is getting to intrusive. In 2015 Ellsberg appeared in the media several times, and it is particularly gratifying that several documentary film makers show interest in his life and his message. He for instance had a main role in the documentary "Digital dissenters" (produced 2015, shown by the NRK (Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation) in January 2016).

Ellsberg is an inspiring example of how authoritative and responsible citizen can influence world-historical events. He was willing to pay a high price to share this information publicly – and he contributed significantly to the ending of one of the most dismal chapters of the 20th century war history. The fact that Ellsberg is a citizen of one of the world's most powerful nations adds a particular dimension to his contribution to peace. In addition to this we have Ellsberg's lifelong and extraordinarily meritorious work for peace and disarmament, where he represents a comprehensive movement that over the years has contributed to peace and détente. He has carried this work forward with undiminished strength during 2015.

Ellsberg's example and attitudes have proved to be of great current significance, and he has won a well deserved reputation as the "grand old man" of whistleblowing. It is hard today to even imagine a presentation of whistleblowing without including the role that Ellsberg's played in the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s. His contribution to the exposure of the Pentagon Papers is a shining example of a citizen's bravery and civil courage.

It is crucial that civil society is able to react when citizens do not get the information that they are entitled to. The free and independent assessments of government policies is an indispensable safety valve in every democracy. It is worth reminding that through sombre chapters of history *individuals* can be as important as *systems* in upholding democratic ideals. This imbues hope for the future of democracy itself.

Friendly greeting,

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Member of the Norwegian Parliament

