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Kursk sunk by own weapons, says Norway

The Norwegian navy has concluded that the Russian submarine Kursk was sunk by its own weapons and not as a result of a collision with another vessel as the Russians claim, according to newspaper reports.

The explosion on board the Kursk was related to a Russian weapons system, most likely a torpedo, Norwegian defence command press spokesman Kjell Grandhagen told the Oslo newspaper Dagbladet.

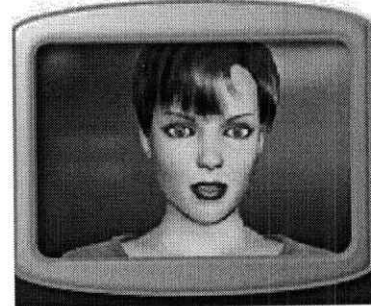
The Norwegian finding contradicted a statement on Monday by Russian defence minister Igor Sergejev, who said the Kursk sank after a collision with another vessel about the same size as the 115-metre-long submarine.

Rear Admiral Einar Skorgen, chief of defence command in northern Norway, dismissed Mr Sergejev's statement as "internal Russian propaganda".

The Norwegian military concluded that two explosions took place on board the Kursk.

"The first was the smallest and must be related to a Russian weapons system," Mr Grandhagen said. "There is also a possibility that the second, much larger explosion that happened two minutes later, is connected with the first."

He said it was also possible that a fire triggered the second



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He said it was also possible that a fire triggered the second explosion.

Norwegian experts have been working for 10 days now analysing data gathered by the Navy's surveillance ship Marjata and other information sources.

Mr Grandhagen said there were no indications that the Kursk had collided with another vessel.

Last updated: 21:48 Tuesday 22nd August 2000.

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