



Swedish Public Television Urged to Free Itself from Mental Occupation by USA

Genuinely independent global news service proposed as alternative

Swedish Public Television (SVT) has been urged to cease functioning as a cog in the only remaining superpower's global propaganda apparatus and, instead, to invest in a genuinely independent source of news that could be of great service to the world at large.

That challenge is issued by Al Burke, co-ordinator of Nordic News Network and a former citizen of the United States, in an open letter to SVT's board of directors. Citing broadcast disclosures and undisputed research which document the nature and extent of the problem, Burke notes that, "It is sadly and undeniably true that SVT and other Swedish media have submitted to a sort of mental occupation by the USA and routinely transmit its propaganda, even though the lies and distortions have repeatedly been exposed,"

But he maintains that there is more than adequate competence and integrity in Sweden to form the basis of a truly independent global news service, and recommends that the transformation begin with a "citizens' inquiry" into the causes of SVT's subservience to the USA. The steadily expanding military-economic power of the USA, which to a large extent depends on its ability to steer the flow of information, has created a situation not unlike that which preceded the Vietnam War, argues Burke.

"The difference is that the USA is even more powerful today, and subject to even less resistance as it assumes the combined roles of global police, judge, jury and executioner," he observes. "It is an exceedingly dangerous state of affairs, and god knows what it will lead to."

The role of propaganda is crucial to minimizing resistance to the superpower and enlisting support for its violent crusades. Thus, the falsification of history and the distortion of current events, such as the latest Balkan conflict and its aftermath, are crucial to the expansion and maintenance of the U.S. empire, notes Burke and quotes George Orwell in that connection: "Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past."

Pointing out that Sweden under the leadership of Olof Palme provided valuable international leadership during the perilous days of the Cold War, Burke maintains that there is no reason to continue helping the USA control the past, present and future. Among other things, SVT could in all likelihood count on the support of the public it is supposed to serve if it were to liberate itself from its mental occupation.

"The Swedish people as a whole possess a genuine sense of justice and a fundamental decency that have previously been awakened to life when they have been provided with solid information and wise leadership," notes Burke. "Both of those commodities appear to be in short supply in Sweden today. But it need not always be so."

The open letter to SVT's board of directors, with enclosures, is available on Nordic News Network's web site at: www.nnn.se/abf/svt.htm

WITH THE EYES & EARS OF A SUPERPOWER

SWEDISH PUBLIC TELEVISION (SVT) occupies a position in national life which is similar to that of the BBC in England or the CBC in Canada. It is a highly regarded institution which until fairly recently enjoyed a monopoly on television broadcasting. Together with its public radio counterpart, SVT plays a crucial role in the formation of public opinion in Sweden.

The following open letter to the Board of Directors from Nordic News Network's coordinator, a former citizen of the United States, urges SVT to cease functioning as a channel for the superpower's worldwide propaganda, and to invest instead in an independent source of genuinely Swedish news that could be of great service to the world at large.

To SVT's Board of Directors:

In December 1999, SVT broadcast a very interesting documentary produced by Göran Elwin and Stefan Eriksson which revealed the strict ideological control that applied within the organization during the 1960s.

According to that programme which to my knowledge has never been refuted, there was at that time a sort of thought-control policeman by the name of Olof Wahlund who sat on an internal committee "which evaluated programmes from the standpoint of political correctness. In the mid-1960s, he reacted with particular fervour against programmes that were critical of the USA's war in Vietnam". It was also mentioned that Mr. Wahlund had strong ties to the military, and later became head of a key intelligence agency.

Another powerful figure at that time was the Director of Programming, Nils Erik Baehrendtz, who became furious at a programme that broadcast images of Vietnam and an anti-war demonstration in Sweden. He called producer Lars Boberg immediately and informed him that, "You can pick up your wages on Monday."

"Boberg was called up to the top management for a reprimand," it was related. "Several other producers also received rough treatment when their programmes included protests against the USA's war." One of these was told, "Either you cut that segment, or you are dismissed."

That's the way it could be in those days at SVT. Oddly enough, there was no public debate over these disclosures. The programme was broadcast, then disappeared without any comment or discussion to speak of. This might be interpreted as an indication that it dealt with past conditions that were only of historic interest, lacking all current significance.

An alternative interpretation is that the programme raised disturbing questions about SVT's integrity that are extremely urgent, but were buried in silence because those involved will not or cannot deal with them. Everything suggests that such is the case. In fact, the situation may even be more dreadful now than it was during the 1960s.

For, nearly every day provides confirmation that SVT functions as a cog in the U.S.

empire's worldwide propaganda apparatus. There are exceptions, of course: There *must* be exceptions in a society whose legitimacy rests on democratic grounds. But taken as a whole, it is clear that media researcher Stig Arne Nohrstedt correctly noted in his contribution to the recent public inquiry into democracy that, "The eyes and ears of the Swedish news culture are turned toward the only remaining superpower". To some extent, this also applies to "pure entertainment" programmes, as is evident from the enclosed correspondence concerning the SVT programme, "The West Wing" (see enclosure, "Entertaining Propaganda").



Good neighbours: The main complex of Swedish public radio and TV lies just across the street from the U.S. Embassy on the outskirts of Stockholm. The ideological proximity has often been even greater.

A typical example of the syndrome is the “Rapport” news programme’s coverage of the start of the Haag Tribunal’s proceedings against Slobodan Milosevic on 12 February 2002. The question is why there is any need for a judicial process, inasmuch as “Rapport” made it perfectly clear that the Serbian leader “started four wars” all by himself, and that he is guilty of everything of which he stands accused— genocide, ethnic cleansing and a long list of war crimes. Neither the text nor the accompanying images allowed room for any other conclusion.

What was not explained to unsuspecting SVT viewers was, among many other things, the following:

- Although Milosevic played a central role in the four related Balkan wars, responsibility is shared by several other key players, including the USA and Germany with their respective intelligence/destabilization agencies, all of NATO, the USA-dominated International Monetary Fund and, not least, the Tudjman dictatorship in Croatia which received massive financial and military support from the USA in order to conduct warfare against other parts of the divided (and now conquered) Yugoslavia.
- A peace agreement that could have prevented the war in Bosnia-Hercegovina was sabotaged by the USA.
- The war in Kosovo was started by USA/NATO, thereby setting in motion the wave of refugees for which Milosevic is now being held solely responsible.
- The worst case of ethnic cleansing engineered by internal forces was that which befell the ca. 400,000 Serbs who were harried out of Krajina and Slavonia.
- In modern times, there has occurred one documented case of genocide in the Balkan region— that committed by Croats and Albanians against Serbs during World War II. But despite the fact that it is impossible to comprehend what has since occurred in the Balkans without knowledge of that traumatic event, it has aroused hardly any interest from Swedish politicians or media, which have been all the more eager to help spread the propaganda image of the Serbs. This may be compared with Prime Minister Persson’s initiative to conduct a public education campaign on the Holocaust, or with the apparently inexhaustible understanding shown by the larger part of the Swedish press for all the crimes against humanity committed by the Israeli right wing.

This is merely one example. There are, alas, many more. In this case, the entire business seems to confirm Milosevic’s claim that it all has to do with a show trial, a spectacle in which SVT and other components of the USA’s worldwide propaganda apparatus play their assigned or voluntarily assumed parts.

This is in no way an attempt to whitewash Milosevic or to excuse whatever crimes he may have committed— something so obvious that it should not be necessary to mention it. But SVT and other prominent media have unfortunately created a climate of debate in which every attempt to correct the propaganda image of the Serbs and their leaders involves a great risk of being branded as “Milosevic’s mouthpiece”— as has been done to Swedish MP Karin Wegestål for her courageous and nearly single-handed struggle against the mass psychosis from which the larger part of the Swedish elite and its media appear to be suffering in regard to the Balkan issue.



Some of the ca. 400,000 Serbs victimized by the ethnic cleansing of Krajina-Slavonia, an event of little apparent interest to Swedish media.

In this way, the propaganda image is etched in, while at the same time attention is diverted from the USA and its accomplices in the crimes against international law and human rights that have been committed in the Balkans.

In other words, it is has to do with a betrayal of the Swedish people, who must rely on their media to convey a reasonably truthful account of conditions and events concerning which most have no possibility of developing insights on their own or studying at close range. It is especially serious when the betrayal is committed by “our” public service media.

It is difficult to imagine that you do not grasp the significance of all this. As is very well known, we live in a time when the entire planet is dominated by the most powerful, most resource-laden empire that has ever existed, and whose extraordinary powerful position depends to a great extent on its ability to influence the flow of information. How to relate to that superpower is probably the most important issue confronting the Swedish people today.

It is therefore extremely urgent for Swedish media in general, and our public-service media in particular, to help us understand what reality really looks like. Among other things, it consists of the following well-documented facts:

- The USA is a warrior society whose founding included significant elements of slavery and genocide. During the past century it has systematically conducted a violent, aggressive foreign policy which has afflicted tens of millions of innocent people all over the planet, primarily in the Third World.
- The many positive forces in the USA that advocate peace, human rights and social justice comprise a minority which has never exerted any great influence over foreign policy, and not all that much over domestic policy. This circumstance is reflected in the USA's military budget, which now exceeds the combined military expenditures of the next fifteen countries on the list.
- The USA has developed a plan to secure and further develop its world hegemony, and in so doing to prevent the United Nations, the European Union or any other institution to offer meaningful resistance. This is the main reason why the U.N. has been weakened and marginalized— except when it can be exploited by the USA for its own purposes, as in the case of Afghanistan. This "Defense Planning Guidance" was disclosed by the *New York Times* in 1992, and has since been followed to the letter. To shut one's eyes to this plan is to make the same kind of mistake as that made during the 1930s by all those who disregarded the message of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. (Note: I do not equate the Nazi empire with that of the United States.)
- The United States has never promoted or defended democracy, international law or human rights if those values have been felt to jeopardize its economic or military interests. Thus, the USA has turned a blind eye to NATO-ally Turkey's persecution of its Kurdish minority, and actively opposed any attempt by the U.N. to prevent the Rwandan genocide. The USA's involvement in



Massacre in progress at Song My (My Lai). The USA's destruction of Indochina is the worst international crime since the time of Hitler.

Latin America is one long history of crimes against international law and human rights. The basic principle was formulated by President F.D. Roosevelt in reference to Somoza, the puppet-dictator of Nicaragua: "He may be a son of a bitch, but he's *our* son of a bitch." That principle has since been applied on countless occasions— it is a prominent feature of the current "war against terrorism"— and will no doubt continue to be applied far into the future.

- Since the days of Hitler, the worst crime against international law and human rights committed by one nation against another was the Vietnam War, which laid waste to all of Indochina. In addition to the devastating bomb and chemical war against the largely defenceless peoples of Vietnam and Laos, the USA paved the way for the Khmer Rouge and continued to support them long after their genocide against their own people was exposed.
- When the superpower rushes to extinguish various conflagrations around the world— as a self-sacrificing fire brigade, by its own account— it is to fires that have usually been fuelled and/or lit with substantial inputs from the USA. This applies very definitely to the wars in the Persian Gulf region and the Balkans, and to the most recent assault on Afghanistan. It may be assumed that, at this moment, the USA is laying the groundwork for wars that will break out one, three or five years from now— so that it can once again come to the rescue of a grateful "world community".

All of this is exceedingly well-documented, in most cases by unimpeachable U.S. sources (see enclosure, "Reliable Sources"). But is this the reality that is conveyed by SVT and other Swedish media? Are

these the kinds of questions to which they devote their efforts? Hardly. For the most part, they stay within the framework of that picture of reality which is painted by the USA and its allies to promote their own interests and to divert attention from their own crimes.

To refer once again to Stig Arne Nohrstedt's contribution to the public inquiry on democracy: "From the standpoint of opinion-making, the media collaborate in a process that bears a strong resemblance to a player piano for which the music has been written by the leading international powers". This widespread servility resembles that which applied in Sweden during World War II, before Stalingrad.

It may well be that a majority of Swedes are content with this state of affairs, given the generally positive attitude toward the USA that prevails in this country for well-known reasons (see "Safe in the Arms of Uncle Sam, Again" at this web address: www.nnn.se/n-model/price/price.htm). That this positive, sympathetic view of the United States persists is hardly surprising, considering the USA-imprinted picture of reality that is continuously transmitted by SVT and other Swedish media.

One may also assume an understandable reluctance to think thoughts that could lead to open defiance of an overwhelming superpower. Humans are social animals with a well-established tendency to orient themselves to power and to the perspective of the powerful—no doubt an important explanation of the media's behaviour pattern.

But there is also to be found among the Swedish people a genuine sense of justice and a fundamental decency which has previously been awakened to life—not least during the Vietnam War—when they are provided with solid information and wise leadership. Both of those commodities appear to be in short supply in Sweden today, but it need not always be so.

In this regard, it is essential that our public-service media play a leading role by providing a good example. That may appear to be rather unlikely, given the sad state of affairs outlined above. But there is plenty of competence and integrity in this good land. It is "merely" a question of applying the talents, working conditions, fundamental perspective and, not least, the resources that are necessary to meet that challenge.

For that purpose, it would be useful to conduct a completely independent investigation into the causes of SVT's participation in the USA's global

propaganda machinery. Obviously, those who conduct this investigation on behalf of the general public must be very knowledgeable with regard to the issues involved; they must also possess great competence and integrity, and be relatively fearless.

Among those who come to mind are; author Jan Guillou, current president of Sweden's National Press Club; Prof. Stig Arne Nohrstedt, the only media researcher in Sweden who has systematically addressed these issues; Jan Öberg, head of the Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research (see www.transnational.org); Sören Sommelius, culture editor of the *Helsingborg Dagbladet* newspaper; the Australian journalist, John Pilger; and the U.S. journalist, Robert Parry.

Once the causes of the problem have been illuminated, it is likely to be fairly obvious what needs to be done in order to solve it. A solution is crucial for the future of democracy in Sweden, but it might also have great significance in the world at large. My not-especially-modest proposal is that Sweden, with public service broadcasting in the lead, should invest in becoming a global superpower in the supply of independent news.

This may sound like a wild fantasy in the ears of a people that for centuries has practised unpretentiousness, and which for the past few decades has been sternly schooled in the thought that "little Sweden" cannot achieve anything on its own. But consider the following observation from the speech delivered last autumn in Stockholm by former CIA agent Philip Agee: "Sweden is a unique society with a unique history, culture and language. You would surely have a unique way of viewing and interpreting world events—a vision of the world that is Swedish." (The complete text of Agee's speech, in which he anticipated such developments as the repression which is now spreading all over the world, is available on NNN's web site at: www.nnn.se/abf/abf.htm; see Appendix E.)

Or consider the Swedish music industry's remarkable success in the big, wide world. I am quite certain that Sweden is at least as well-equipped to provide the planet with genuinely independent news if a commitment is made to honest journalism with the same resolve that was once applied to music education.

In order for that to happen, it is necessary to liberate oneself from that mental occupation by the superpower to which one has submitted, and establish a work environment that supports an

independent attitude to all power. This means, of course, that it is necessary to invest much greater resources in public service than has hitherto been the case. I for one would gladly pay a higher TV-licence fee if I knew that those funds would be used to build up a genuine Swedish alternative to CNN and BBC. It would surprise me if a large majority of the Swedish people were not prepared to do the same.

To support such an alternative would be an exceedingly valuable contribution by the Swedish people which would undoubtedly be appreciated by our fellow humans all over the world. Now that the USA's arrogance and autocratic tendencies are becoming increasingly clear, there is mounting concern about what that could lead to. In many ways, the current situation resembles that of the early 1960s, when even in Sweden the United States was regarded as the "leader of the free world".

At that point, the Vietnam War was already under way and, despite great anguish and reluctance, it gradually became clear to decent folks that such a terrible outrage must be opposed. It was Sweden and Olof Palme, with the support of the Swedish people, that took the lead in the international opposition to the war.

Now we find ourselves in a situation in which the USA has accumulated immensely greater power, and god knows what that will lead to. There is an obvious need of trustworthy news sources which consistently focus light on the superpower's violent advance across the planet, while at the same time repelling its propaganda with facts and independent analyses.

Clearly,, it is a dangerous business. But if the USA does not encounter a little resistance now, it will be even more dangerous in the future when the superpower has accumulated even vaster power. Sweden has shown the way before: Why not again, now, when the need is at least as great and as urgent?

There are, of course, powerful interests in Sweden that would surely oppose any such development. It is well known that the superpower has many collaborators among journalistic, economic and political elites—the current Swedish government included. This is not unusual: Empires have always exerted their influence and projected their power via such local talents. Read the Bible on King Herod and the rabbinate of Judea, for example.

In addition to this unavoidable resistance, an outraged reaction could be anticipated among

SHARE YOUR VIEWS

All those, anywhere on earth, who feel that the issues raised here are worthy of debate are urged to share their views with SVT's board of directors, Sweden's Minister of Culture (whose sphere of responsibility includes public broadcasting), and Nordic News Network.

Please send copies of your correspondence to the following addresses, preferably via e-mail. Unless otherwise specified, all correspondence received on this subject will be published on NNN's web site at:

www.nnn.se/abf/svt.htm

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many ordinary TV-viewers. By transmitting a USA-imprinted picture of reality for so long, SVT has prepared the ground for a colossal cognitive dissonance if people are now to be confronted with a reality that lies nearer the truth. It is as though Mickey Mouse were to be transformed into Godzilla: Naturally, those who find comfort and enjoyment in Mickey Mouse will not be amused.

In short, it is bound to be a painful, highly controversial process. But the pain and controversy will all the greater, the longer one delays in liberating oneself from the mental occupation. It is just as well to get started as soon as possible with the necessary process of change.

A good place to start is the proposed investigation of SVT's relationship to the superpower. Among the questions that probably need to be posed are the following:

- What is the current level of knowledge within the organization? Have all journalists, programme-buyers and other reality-transmitters received a thorough education in the history of USA foreign policy and propaganda activities?
- Which sources are relied upon? For example, has proper use been made of the many sources that offer a well-informed counterweight to the official propaganda, not least those based in the USA. How much of their time do SVT personnel spend with representatives of the superpower and its allies, and to what extent do they allow themselves to be influenced by such sources?
- What measures has SVT's management taken to counteract a conscious or subconscious adaptation to the perspective of the superpower, and to avoid dependence on the international news bureaus that function as major components of the propaganda apparatus?
- Is there today a counterpart to the ideological control that was rife within SVT during the 1960s? Who exercises that control, and what are the mechanisms?
- Is there any need for direct control, or has there been a methodical selection of editors and other key personnel who have adopted the USA's picture of reality and/or apply self-censorship by understanding "where the boundary is drawn"?
- Has an atmosphere been established within SVT which rejects "unsuitable" types who are not prepared to submit to the reigning ideology? To what extent are such individuals weeded out during the application process, as opposed to their not even applying for available jobs because they understand that they have no chance of being accepted?

These are a few suggestions, but there are doubtless other questions that need to be investigated. I take it for granted that SVT's board of directors is prepared to accept its responsibility in this matter, but it is conceivable that there may be one or another formal obstacle to commencing this important work. If so, all such obstacles must of course be eliminated.

Finally, I will note that I am aware that SVT and other media constantly receive criticism from every direction. Undoubtedly, it is sometimes difficult to know what to think. But in this case, the problem is so obvious and so serious that there can be no doubt about the need for drastic measures. Further, the problem has been documented with solid research and, as noted at the start of this letter, has even been exposed by one of SVT's own documentary programmes.

Please get in touch when you are ready to discuss the design and composition of the investigation.

Yours sincerely,

*Al Burke, Co-ordinator
Nordic News Network
26 February 2002*

Enclosures

c. Marita Ulvskog, Minister of Culture

ENTERTAINING PROPAGANDA

In 2001, Swedish Public Television began broadcasting a lavishly-produced series from the United States entitled “The West Wing”, which depicts how a gang of intelligent, good-looking, witty and charming individuals manage the USA’s and the entire world’s affairs with great commitment and a deep sense of justice. The programme is very well-made and entertaining—and it includes a considerable amount of propaganda which is commented upon in the following, somewhat abridged e-mail correspondence between NNN’s co-ordinator and the responsible programme-buyer at SVT (whose name is not relevant in this context). Note the shift in attitude that takes place between 6 December 2001 and 5 February 2002.

Subject: “The West Wing”

Date: 6 Dec. 2001

From: Al Burke, NNN

To: “The West Wing’s” buyer

SVT’s programme information service has referred me to you with some questions I have concerning the series, “The West Wing”, which is currently being broadcast on Channel 2 Please point me in the right direction if I come to the wrong place.

I have now seen a couple of episodes of “The West Wing” and must say that it is a very entertaining and well-made programme. Unfortunately, it must also be said that it includes large quantities of propaganda and historical falsifications whose effect, if not whose intent, is to justify the United States’ violently imposed global hegemony.

In the most recent episode, for example, we were informed that the Vietnam War was started by “North” Vietnam when it launched an unprovoked attack on a U.S. warship in the Tonkin Gulf. Of course, the truth is just the opposite: As even the responsible government officials have since admitted, it was in fact the USA that started the war. Its warship had participated in a series of attacks against Vietnam, and the incident in the Tonkin Gulf was a hoax that had been prepared long in advance by the U.S. government as a pretext for launching its devastating bombing war.

I know this, as do probably others among SVT’s audience. But how many are familiar with this history, especially within younger age-groups? It would be easy to find out with one of the viewer surveys conducted that SVT is said to conduct on a regular basis.

There was also a somewhat confused account of the USA’s involvement in Columbia. Nevertheless, the message seemed to be that the super-

power is carrying out an honourable campaign against an evil narcotics mafia which, to judge by this episode, includes the entire liberation movement— pure propaganda, in other words.

Hence, my first question: Is it appropriate for our public service channel to transmit this sort of propaganda by the world’s only remaining superpower without the slightest effort to protect its audience from its influence? It might conceivably be useful for educational purposes, i.e. in combination with unbiased commentary which explains how reality is distorted to suit the USA’s interests. But to simply transmit the propaganda is to make SVT a component of the USA’s worldwide propaganda apparatus— no doubt about that.

I would also argue that the standard distinction between entertainment and news/documentaries has no significance in this context. It has long been known that propaganda which is cleverly woven into entertainment is at least as effective as that which is conveyed by news programmes. Often, it is even more effective, since in that kind of packaging it operates at a subconscious level. . . .

Finally, I would like to know if SVT is prepared to open up for a public debate on this problem. . . . Again, it is a question of balancing the propaganda with reliable information based on known facts and conditions. In many cases, the Vietnam War for example, it is simply a matter of recalling what the U.S. government and its officials have already admitted or disclosed.

I would very much like to have answers to these questions.

Date: 7 Dec 2001
From: "The West Wing's" buyer
To: Al Burke, NNN

Thank you for your thought-provoking and interesting letter concerning "The West Wing". It is quite correct that the series is the responsibility of SVT's Acquisitions Department and myself. I wish that I had the time to provide an immediate response to your important viewpoints. Unfortunately, this is my last day before taking a four-weeks' leave, and I am therefore unable to deal with these issues just now. But I should be able to get back to you after 8 January 2002 and, in the meantime, I will share your e-mail with my colleagues.

Subject: "The West Wing" forts.
Date: 25 Jan 2002
To: "The West Wing's" buyer
From: Al Burke, NNN

As the 8th of January has come and gone, I am naturally curious to know if and when you plan to continue our discussion of "The West Wing". While waiting for your response, I have asked several contacts in the USA if there has been any kind of debate concerning the programme. The following reply from Norman Solomon, one of that country's foremost media critics, is fairly representative:

Thanks for your note. I've seen "West Wing" a couple of times. I found it nauseating because of the way it promotes myths of the well-meaning American presidency while posing as a critique of hard-boiled compromise-driven politics. I haven't seen a thorough critique of the program, and I certainly haven't watched it enough to write one. So far, haven't found the time or stomach for it.

Best wishes,
Norman Solomon

Subject: The case of Haiti
Date: 4 Feb 2002
To: "The West Wing's" buyer
From: Al Burke, NNN

From John Pilger's column in today's edition of *Aftonbladet*: "The former dictator of Haiti, General Prosper Avril, liked to display his bloody torture victims on TV. After he was overthrown, he was flown to Florida by the U.S. government and granted political asylum."

Please compare this account with "The West Wing" episode a few weeks ago, depicting the USA's efforts to defend democracy and human rights in Haiti. To anyone familiar with Haiti's real history— British author Graham Greene, for example— it was grotesque.

Please read Pilger's entire column— and reply to me, as promised.

Date: 5 Feb 2002
From: "The West Wing's" buyer
To: Al Burke, NNN

I thank you for your e-mail and, following my long absence from work, beg your indulgence for the lengthy delay of my response which is as follows:

SVT's programme information service routinely conveys viewpoints on programmes to those concerned with a daily summary, the purpose of which is to provide information on viewpoints from the public, not to encourage every individual producer to respond personally. Some questions call for simple factual information, and it is one of my duties as a programme-buyer to supply it.

Why the information service conveyed your viewpoints directly to me, and not by means of the daily summary, is a question that I cannot answer. My guess is that they felt that your opinions were so specific and thought-provoking that the programme-buyer ought to consider them. Now I have so that. But they can hardly have promised you an "answer" in the sense that I would engage in a polemical debate concerning the fictional message in "The West Wing". In our judgement, the series was well worth purchasing and presenting to the Swedish public. Our right to edit programmes is limited to elements that imply a violation of our broadcast regulations, for example those regarding gratuitous violence, incitement to hatred of ethnic groups, etc.

If one assumes that SVT otherwise follows the regulations, we normally choose other means of balancing the contents of a programme than what you are suggesting, i.e. to follow up individual episodes or feature films with commentary. For SVT, it is the diversity of impressions that provides a balanced view of the world. One may also note that it is, of course, very good if a critical debate is pursued via other media, such as radio. Naturally, I would not wish to defend every single segment of a fiction series as being historically accurate. Neither has SVT in any way tried to conceal the fact that this programme is a U.S. commercial product. . . .

Subject: The case of Haiti

Date: 5 Feb 2002

To: ""The West Wing's" buyer

From: Al Burke, NNN

Thank you for your reply. It turned out to be as expected.

I would like to point out, however, that I never expected you to "engage in a polemical debate" on these issues. I have merely followed the programme information service's advice to contact you, and then awaited the discussion promised in your e-mail dated 7 December 2001: "I wish that I had the time to provide an immediate response to your important viewpoints. . . . I should be able to get back to you after 8 January 2002. . . ."

But there has not been any discussion— only a bureaucratic counter-move which completely ignores the "important viewpoints" conveyed in

my "thought-provoking and interesting letter", as you expressed it two months ago.

Once again, it is discovered that ordinary citizens are permitted exactly no opportunity to pursue a dialogue on these important issues with those who hold the power over words and images, not even where our so-called public-service media are involved. The lack of openness is almost complete. . . .

The only appropriate response is for SVT to assume its responsibility to the Swedish people by ceasing to function as a channel for the superpower's cleverly manufactured propaganda, and by opening up for a genuine dialogue on this important issue. The "balanced view of the world" to which you refer exists neither in this case nor in Swedish media, in general. . . .

RELIABLE SOURCES

In Sweden, as elsewhere, it often happens that those who refer to the USA's many crimes against international law and human rights are dismissed as leftists, communists, radicals, etc. By applying such labels, it is possible to avoid disturbance by disagreeable facts.

There is another label that is often used in Sweden to stigmatize disagreeable messengers: "America-hater". The concept seems to presume some sort of duty to love the superpower, or at least to refrain from criticizing it. A remarkable behaviour pattern, to be sure, but it can be used to identify the USA's leading allies in Sweden. Those who shout "America-hater" the loudest are presumably those who follow the superpower's lead, and who strive to increase its influence over the Swedish people.

In any event, it is not necessary to rely on Swedish America-haters to document the USA's violent, imperialistic history. There are plenty of readily accessible sources which relate various aspects of that history. A remarkably great deal has been disclosed in Congressional hearings, and by virtuous government officials who have resigned or leaked secret documents to the press. The question is why Swedish media do not avail themselves of, or even know about, these valuable sources, but instead gladly help to spread the official propaganda which time and time again has been shown to be misleading or outright false.

For those who wish to liberate themselves from the mental occupation that now grips Sweden,

there is any number of useful sources to draw upon. Among the most useful are the following:

Killing Hope by William Blum, a former official of the USA's foreign ministry who resigned in protest over the Vietnam War. His book is an encyclopaedia of all the intrusions and attacks of especially the CIA against a large number of countries around the world between World War II and the end of the Cold War. The sequel, *Rogue State*, covers the period since then. (Both published by Common Courage Press, Maine, USA.)

"**Defense Planning Guidance**", the USA's blueprint for securing and further extending its world hegemony. Excerpts and an analysis were published in the *New York Times* on 8 March 1992 ("U.S. Strategy Plan Calls for Insuring No Rivals Develop") and 10 March 1992 ("Lone Superpower Plan: Ammunition for Critics"). After that disclosure, the most offensive formulations were removed. But this version was approved by several high officials, including current Vice-President Cheney and foreign minister Powell. The behaviour of the USA since then has been faithful to the principles laid down in this document.

Propaganda, Inc: Selling America's Culture to the World by Nancy Snow, former official of the U.S. Information Agency. This slender volume provides an overview of the USA's worldwide propaganda apparatus, including its history, methods and enormous resources. The author describes how the USA systematically labours to infiltrate and influence other countries' media, educational systems and other cultural institutions. (Seven Stories Press, USA)

Wag the Dog, feature film with documentary aspects directed by Barry Levinson which demonstrates how the media are manipulated and misled by clever spin doctors in the service of the White House. Based on and anticipates "real" events staged by the U.S. government.

Hidden Agendas by John Pilger, an exceptional journalist who reveals the devious manipulations of England and the USA in such places as Burma, Indonesia, South Africa and Vietnam. Also includes valuable observations on the media's often mindless complicity in the "new world order" dominated by the USA. (Vintage)

National Security Archives, web site with large volume of released documents that confirm what is written in the books of William Blum, John Pilger and others. Includes official documents which

disclose how the U.S. government successfully opposed any effort by the U.N. to prevent the Rwandan genocide, Henry Kissinger's co-operation with various Latin America dictatorships, and how the USA's highest military leaders seriously proposed a terror campaign against their own country— including the shooting down of a commercial airliner— which would then be blamed on Cuba in order to justify an invasion of that country.

Web address: <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv>

Z-Net, web site that covers a broad spectrum of subjects relating to U.S. foreign policy. Includes links to other interesting sources, and articles by numerous experts who in Sweden would be labelled "America-haters" if they did not happen to be citizens of that country.

Web address: <http://www.zmag.org>

Yugoslavia: The Avoidable War, documentary film by George Bogdanich and Martin Lettmayer which offers a very different picture of the Balkan conflict than the one transmitted by SVT. Includes long, unedited interviews with such well-informed individuals as British diplomat Peter Carrington and U.N. General Michael Rose. A devastating alternative to the propaganda picture disseminated by Swedish media and politicians.

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