

# FROM NEUTRALITY TO NATO



Revised Version  
September 2012

# CONTENTS

<b>Preface</b>	1	<b>1994</b>	
		Welcome partnership	18
<b>Cold War Co-operation</b>		Green light for non-allied alliance	18
Precautionary planning	2	Sweden joins Partnership for Peace	19
Shared intelligence	3	USA/NATO planning in Sweden	19
In the centre of the world	4	"Yes" to EU in democratic travesty	19
Americanized defence industry	5	Emphasis on military spending	19
		Sweden modifies policy to fit EU	19
<b>1980s</b>		<b>1995</b>	
U-boat hysterics	5	20 – 1 odds against democracy	20
Ending Sweden's Vietnam syndrome	11	Sweden joins EU	20
War by journalism	12	U.S. officials meet in Stockholm	20
		Intimate relations with United States	20
<b>1990</b>		PFP meeting with U.S. minister of war	20
Business leader denounces neutrality	13	<b>1996</b>	
Neutrality dismissed with a footnote	13	From Palme to Persson and USA	21
Christmas with Uncle George	15	Monument to atrocity leads exercise	21
		"New" Sweden to join "new" NATO	21
<b>1991</b>		Persson deviates to justify U.S. attacks	21
SDP signals adaptation to EU	15	Praise from U.S. minister of war	21
Neutrality reduced to "non-alliance"	15	Praise from U.S. ambassador	21
Unconditional submission	15	Swedish PFP initiative	22
Foreign policy's "European identity"	15	"Where has Sweden disappeared to?"	22
Bildt declares death of neutrality	15	Sweden seeks closer co-operation	23
Promise of active participation	15		
"Uncritical support for EU"	16	<b>1997</b>	
		Swedes assigned new nationality	23
<b>1992</b>		Dissenting opinion	23
Non-alliance becomes optional	16	<b>1998</b>	
P.M. Bildt visits President Bush I	16	First Finland, then Sweden	23
Sweden urged to join USA/NATO	17	"Unavoidable" message from Clinton	23
EU policies of "vital national interest"	17	Quiet support for bombing plans	24
		Open support for USA/NATO	24
<b>1993</b>			
No objections to EU foreign policy	17		
The year of discreet silence	17		
"Behind the backs of the citizens"	18		

Continued...

**Cover photo:** Camouflaged Swedish soldiers illustrating a text headlined, "The world has changed. In our new world, being on your own is not an option." The subtext is that Sweden must join forces with USA/NATO via the European Union. From *The Pocket Guide to the Swedish Armed Forces, 2009*, published by those armed forces.

## CONTENTS – 2

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<b>1999</b>		<b>2004</b>	
No more neutrality or limitations	24	Helping to plan EU wars	40
Defence planning with U.S. military	24	Persson's third trip to White House	40
Aggressor's propaganda justifies war	24	Human rights abuses "mere rumours"	41
"Aggression strikes at heart of law"	25	More troops for ISAF	41
Persson enjoys festivities in Brussels	25	EU defence agency	41
USA/NATO well-represented in EU	25	War game in a cold, harsh climate	42
Closer links with USA/NATO	25		
"Peace needs EU teeth"	26	<b>2005</b>	
<b>2000</b>		Non-aligned alignment with NATO	42
Promise of support in event of war	26	USA/NATO exercise in Norway	43
Suffering Americans	26	"Sweden is the leader"	43
Bofors sold to U.S. defence giant	26	From the Baltic to the Pacific	43
Keeping peace the USA/NATO way	27	Agreement on anti-terror research	44
Neutrality "no longer possible"	28	Democracy disinvited to appease U.S.	44
Weapons-buying agreement	29	Certified accomplice to torture	44
<b>2001</b>		First fatalities in Afghanistan	44
With NATO from Peking to Quito	29	More troops to Afghanistan	44
"Sacrificed on altar of Bush's security"	29	Little difference as formal member	45
Article 51 and wars of aggression	30	<b>2006</b>	
The superpower issues a decree	31	New weapon, new rationalization	46
Development of Persson's servility	31	U.S. pleased with Swedish U-boats	46
Neutrality "dead as the dinosaurs"	31	Appeal to end torture collaboration	46
Enforcing U.S. injustice in Sweden	31	More responsibility for Swedish troops	46
Delivering refugees to torturers	32	Wanted: closer ties with USA/NATO	46
<b>2002</b>		Attacks covered up	47
Swedish troops assigned to ISAF	34	"Govt. terrified of U.S. displeasure"	47
Big expansion of military co-operation	35	Nearly as well-adapted as U.K.	48
Polish exercise	35	Another major exercise	48
USA/NATO exploits Hammar skjöld	35	Defence industry foreign-controlled	48
<b>2003</b>		Norway provides principled contrast	48
Bildt lobbies for Bush's war	36	Swedish royals dine with president	48
Powell propaganda impresses Persson	36	Bildt announces closer ties with U.S.	48
In defence of mass murder	37	White House open for Swedish P.M.	48
Great sensitivity to wishes of the U.S.	38	Swedes not keen on ties with U.S.	49
Equal partners in U-boat warfare	38	Swedes regard U.S. as greatest threat	50
"Passivity and subservience to U.S."	38	Bush plans closer ties with Sweden	50
Price of weapons ban is too high	39	<b>2007</b>	
Out of step with international law	39	Pretence of "separate forces" ended	50
Intensified military co-operation	39	SDP & Conservatives in agreement	50
Don't mention the war	39	"A country at war — and for what?"	51
War on Iraq good for business	40	Peacekeeping with intent to kill	51
		Selective concern for human rights	51
		Foreign minister and war lobbyist	52

*Continued...*

## CONTENTS – 3

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### 2007

Joint research on national security	52
Same old rationale for war	52
Naval exercise based in Göteborg	53
Another jovial audience with Bush	53
With NATO for Kosovo secession	53
Via Norway to USA/NATO	54
USA/NATO inspection	55
Fighter planes over northern Sweden	55
Lobbyists arrange Stockholm seminar	55
Change in Sweden much appreciated	55
Upgraded liaison with USA/NATO	55

### 2008

Nordic Council PR for USA/NATO	56
Ripening the people	56
“Swedes/Finns members by 2015”	56
Sweden legitimates Kosovo secession	56
Crisis management with oily scenario	58
Sweden proposed for “Nordic bloc”	58
Confronting “new Russian challenge”	58
Sweden hosts Iraq conference	59
Largest-ever exercise in Finland	60
“Disgrace to very idea of peace”	60
Baltic exercise & friendly destroyer	61
Georgia’s war blamed on Russia	61
USA/NATO equated with democracy	61
Selective amnesia of Bildt/Reinfeldt	62
Computer linkage	62
Swedish ‘advisors’ assist in killings	62
Sharing aircraft with USA/NATO	63
“Nato-izing” Sweden and Finland	63
Swedish TV transmits U.S. self-image	63
Joint initiative with U.S.	64

### 2008

More troops to Afghanistan	64
Nordics against “Russian threat”	64
Swedish elite ratifies Lisbon Treaty	65
Sweden abstains from vote on DU	67
Defending Sweden in Sudan	67

### 2009

P.M. Reinfeldt visits Afghanistan	68
Torture victims remain in Egypt	68
Nordics vs. the Russians	69
USA/NATO exercise in Norway	69
Sweden under USA/NATO command	70
Institute for USA/NATO propaganda	70
Briefing at USA/NATO headquarters	70
U.S. accreditation for aerial warfare	70
Sweden hosts major naval exercise	70
“Loyal Arrow” aimed at Russia	71
“NATO standard” and odd decision	73
U.S. approves Swedish plans	74
More Swedish targets to Afghanistan	74
USA/NATO gets Nordic administrator	75
Toxic training in venerable Uppsala	75
Swede accepts delivery for USA/NATO	75
‘No peace to keep in Afghanistan’	76
Participation in ISAF to be extended	76
Military-industrial forum	76
ISAF force is doubled	76
Obama nullifys ISAF rationale	77
“NATO serves no European interest”	78
Sahlin wants closer ties to USA	79

### Update & Analysis

Deepening collaboration	80
Actors & interests: United States	91
Swedish Armed Forces	95
Intelligence agencies	99
Industry & commerce	102
Political parties	105
Propaganda apparatus	112
An occupied country	118

### Endnotes

127

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## FROM NEUTRALITY TO NATO

### *The “tyranny of small steps” leading Sweden into the military alliance*

The following is an attempt to chart the process by which Sweden has successively abandoned its long-standing policy of neutrality<sup>1</sup> and become ever more deeply entangled with the co-called North Atlantic Treaty Organization. That process was the focus of a project entitled “Stop the Furtive Accession to NATO!” that was conducted in Sweden during 2008-2010.

According to the project proposal, Swedish neutrality is being eliminated by a “tyranny of small steps”, and the purpose of this account is to document the various steps involved — some of which have actually been quite large.

Instead of the misleading acronym of mere NATO, the term USA/NATO is used throughout in order to underscore the often neglected or deliberately obscured fact that the military alliance is dominated by the United States. For the same reason, steps by Sweden toward alliance with and subjugation to the United States, alone, are regarded as steps toward membership in USA/NATO. They are all part of the same process.

Also included are a few glimpses of the related process by which the Swedish people have been and are being indoctrinated to accept and even support U.S. world hegemony, a subject treated more fully at the following web address:  
[www.nnn.se/nordic/americult/amcult.htm](http://www.nnn.se/nordic/americult/amcult.htm)

In such matters it is essential to call things by their right names, as Olof Palme noted when he referred to the United States’ massive bombing of Vietnamese civilians as “a form of torture... an atrocity”. That exercise in correct name-calling provoked outrage in the atrocitizing nation, and among its devout followers in Sweden and elsewhere.

Without drawing any parallels with that episode or its author, some of the statements and formulations in the following text may provoke similar reactions. If so, the offended parties are warmly invited to make their objections and their reasons known. The same applies to anyone who detects errors of commission or omission. Criticism, corrections and suggested amendments are very welcome and may be submitted via e-mail to: [editor@nnn.se](mailto:editor@nnn.se)

Finally, it should be noted that the following account is entirely my doing. No one else associated with the project is responsible for any errors of fact or interpretation that it may contain.

*Al Burke  
22 September 2012*



## Cold War co-operation

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### Precautionary planning

*After WW II, Sweden reaffirmed its commitment to neutrality. But as the Cold War heated up, the possibility of being caught in the middle of an armed conflict between the Soviet and U.S. blocs began to seem very real.*

*It appears that only a handful of top political and military leaders were ever informed of the secret, semi-formal co-operation with USA/NATO.*

*The commission found that, Given the geopolitical situation at the time, it would have been irresponsible not to have taken precautions.*

The Swedish government began limited co-operation with the United States and its allies during World War II, several years before the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was formed. Among other comparatively small things, it involved the establishment of a Swedish resistance force to be activated in the event of invasion by Nazi Germany.

After the war, Sweden reaffirmed its commitment to neutrality and the maintenance of a national defence strong enough to repel any attempted invasion or, failing that, to “hold out long enough for assistance to arrive”. But as the Cold War heated up, the possibility of being caught in the middle of an armed conflict between the Soviet and U.S. blocs began to seem very real.

Given Sweden’s long history of conflict with Russia — much of it instigated by Sweden during its empire phase, centuries ago — and its economic, cultural, and socio-political affinity with the West, it was generally assumed that the Soviet Union posed the only conceivable threat of attack and that the U.S. bloc comprised the only plausible source of assistance.

It was within that context that Sweden began to co-ordinate its emergency planning with the Western military alliance that was to be formalized as NATO in 1949. It appears that only a handful of top political and military leaders were ever informed of this secret, semi-formal co-ordination with USA/NATO — although suspicions were aired from time to time, and categorically denied by the government.

But some details began to emerge toward the end of the Cold War, leading to accusations that a succession of governments had betrayed the official policy of neutrality by secretly entering into a *de facto* military alliance with USA/NATO. In those days, not so very long ago, that was a serious accusation.

Thus, in 1992 an official commission of inquiry (*Neutralitetspolitik-kommissionen*) was appointed to investigate the nature and extent of the co-operation, and its implications for Swedish neutrality. Among the commission’s principal findings were that:

- A limited amount of secret co-operation had indeed taken place during the period studied, 1949-1969.
- It was entirely consistent with the announced policy of neutrality, in that it was concerned solely with preparing for the eventuality of attack or invasion, which *ipso facto* would have eliminated neutrality as an option.
- Given the geopolitical situation at the time, it would have been irresponsible *not* to have taken such precautions.
- Sweden made no commitment to ally itself with USA/NATO in the event of war.
- USA/NATO made no commitment to assist Sweden in the event of attack or invasion.

### **Precautionary planning (cont.)**

*Prime Minister Olof Palme forbade any sort of war planning with USA/NATO, despite the protests of military leaders.*

All parliamentary parties approved the commission's report. But not everyone was persuaded, and the debate continues in various forms to this day. There also remains much that is not known about exactly what was done and by whom.

A related official inquiry completed by Amb. Rolf Ekéus in 2002 found that neutrality policy was sharpened at the start of the 1970s when Prime Minister Olof Palme forbade any sort of precautionary war planning with USA/NATO, despite the protests of military leaders. That policy was continued by subsequent centre-right coalition governments.

Ekéus also turned up evidence that the U.S. government, for its own reasons, had planned to intervene militarily if Sweden were attacked. But he could find no indication that anyone in Sweden had ever been informed of that intent, or that it was ever discussed with NATO allies.

*Thousands of Swedish military personnel have participated in training programmes, joint military exercises and other activities in the United States and elsewhere.*

Like its predecessor, the Ekéus report has been criticized on a variety of grounds. But whatever the extent or the implications for neutrality, Sweden's Cold War co-operation with USA/NATO laid the foundation of something that has grown much larger and more diverse. Although it appears that only a handful of Swedish officials have been directly involved in what began as emergency planning, the decisions they have made and the process thus set in motion have had a much broader effect.

Among other things, thousands of Swedish military personnel have participated in training programmes, joint military exercises and other activities in the United States and elsewhere. Inevitably, USA/NATO has thus been provided with numerous contacts and channels through which it can spy on, infiltrate and exert influence upon Swedish military, political and business structures.

\* \* \*

### **Shared intelligence**

*The Swedish Security Service (SÄPO), has tended to treat critics of U.S. foreign policy as subversive threats, and on occasion has even indulged in efforts to disrupt their activities.*

Swedish intelligence agencies have also co-operated with their USA/NATO counterparts since World War II. During the Cold War, the primary motivation was a mutual interest in the plans and activities of the Soviet bloc. That co-operation appears to have become increasingly intimate and expansive over the years, perhaps more so for some agencies than for others.

Of course, it is not possible for outsiders (including elected officials) to acquire much knowledge of such matters, as intelligence/security agencies are secretive by design and practice. But it is evident that the best known among them, the Swedish Security Service (SÄPO), has never been especially neutral. SÄPO collaborated with the Nazi Gestapo during World War II and has developed equally strong, or stronger, bonds with USA/NATO. It has tended to treat critics of U.S. foreign policy as subversive threats, and on occasion has even indulged in efforts to disrupt their activities; one such occasion was the Russell Tribunal on the Vietnam War that was held in Stockholm in 1967.

According to an article published in 1976, "The American espionage agency, the CIA has, been permitted to work freely in Sweden for almost 20 years.... The CIA has worked under the protection of the Swedish Security Service (SÄPO) and the Intelligence Service (IB).

## In the Centre of the World

In the city of Tampa, about one hour by car south of Orlando on Florida's sunny west coast, Lt. Colonel Michael Andersson has been on duty for over a year. Together with Major Ulf Ahl, Col. Andersson is serving at a Swedish liaison office at United States Central Command, US CENTCOM....

US CENTCOM is a rear headquarters for U.S. commands in conflict areas. It supports operative and strategic planning in co-ordination with the Pentagon and the administration in Washington....

Michael and his wife, Anette, gladly socialize with the families of officers from other countries and with U.S. friends.

"Among other things, we have celebrated Thanksgiving with a U.S. family. Another time, we were invited to a baseball game by the mayor of St. Petersburg...."

One thing that has made a big impression on Michael is the respect that ordinary U.S. citizens show for personnel of the armed services. Every Friday, flags are displayed along a two-lane road in Tampa. Personnel from US CENTCOM, the police, emergency services and other organizations stand there with flags to honour all those who have served, and those who have been injured or killed in service.

"Of course, Ulf and I also stand there with our Swedish flag. People drive by and shout encouragement, blink their headlights and take photos. Then one's entire body fills with pride."

— From *"I världens centrum"*, Försvarets Forum, personnel journal of the Swedish Armed Forces. Nr. 4/May 2009



Swedish lieutenant colonel Michael Andersson, guest of honour, speaks to friends and colleagues at a luncheon hosted by the Tampa chapter of the Military Officers Association of America.

### Shared intelligence (cont.)

*SÄPO agents have long been employed within the influential public broadcasting system. It would appear that one of their main tasks is to limit critical coverage of the United States.*

Sweden remains a key area for CIA work. A large percentage of the American Embassy staff are employed by the CIA. They infiltrate the Foreign Ministry and the news media.... They continuously break Swedish law and act as nonchalantly as if they were in their own backyard."<sup>2</sup>

There is nothing to indicate that the level of such activity has declined during the intervening years — it may well have become even more intense — or that relations between U.S. and Swedish intelligence agencies have become any less intimate, as two political refugees from Egypt discovered to their pain and sorrow in December of 2001 (see "Delivering political refugees to torturers" on p. 32).

It should also be noted that it is not only the CIA, which has infiltrated Swedish news media. SÄPO agents have long been employed within the influential public broadcasting system,



*Shared intelligence (cont.)*

for example. It would appear that one of their main tasks is to limit critical coverage of the United States and its other vassal-states, while at the same time promoting as positive an image of the empire as possible. This does not mean that total control is ever achieved or even attempted; such control would risk dispelling the illusion and self-delusion of independence.

\* \* \*

**Americanized defence industry**

*Dependency on U.S. military technology has been mobilized by the government to justify its blatant and persistent violation of Sweden's declared policy which prohibits exports of its own military technology to warring nations.*

The Swedish defence industry, one of the largest in the world *per capita*, has become increasingly dependent on high-tech components imported by special dispensation from the United States. There is some question as to whether that has been a technological necessity, or a deliberate strategy to link Sweden more tightly to the super-power.

For example: Is Swedish industry, which is world-renowned for its innovative technological prowess, truly incapable of producing the computers, jet engines, etc. required to construct a fighter plane suitable for its own limited defence needs (which are not necessarily the same as those served by its sophisticated export model, the JAS 39 Gripen)?

Whatever the answer to that and related questions, dependency on U.S. military technology has been mobilized by the government to justify its blatant and persistent violation of Sweden's declared policy which prohibits exports of its own military technology to warring nations — especially, as in the case of the United States, when they are perpetrating wars of aggression and crimes against humanity on a massive scale.

That was the case after the start of the most recent U.S. war against Iraq, for example, when Prime Minister Göran Persson explained why it was necessary to continue supplying weapons of deadly efficiency to the United States in the midst of what he, himself, had (reluctantly) labelled as a war of aggression.

**1980s****U-boat hysterics**

*"In order for it to have political and military significance, it had to be a deliberate intrusion. To suggest otherwise was tantamount to treason."*

In 1981, a Soviet submarine — running on the surface with its engines roaring — stranded itself on some rocks off the coast of southern Sweden. This odd, disquieting event turned out to be the result of a disastrous navigation error, due to the effects of vodka and decrepit equipment.

That was the conclusion of the Swedish Navy officer who went on board to inspect the Russian submarine and interview its hung-over crew. Commodore Karl Andersson immediately expressed his doubts that the submarine's presence was intentional, based on his inspection and on the scene of the accident — a shallow, narrow channel that was "...absolutely the last place one would choose for a u-boat; it's completely nuts."

But that was the wrong answer. "It was ordained that the incident was to be treated as a deliberate intrusion," Commodore Andersson

*U-boat hysterics (cont.)*

*The stage was set for a bizarre, protracted hunt for Soviet submarines that played a dominant, perhaps decisive role in Swedish foreign policy throughout the 1980s.*

*More than 4000 fresh sightings and suspicious signals from the watery depths were reported during the period from 1982 to 1992.*

*"We Scandinavians long believed in trolls and elves.... So why not mysterious underwater vessels?"*

later explained. "In order for it to have political and military significance, it had to be a deliberate intrusion. To otherwise was tantamount to treason."<sup>3</sup>

And so the stage was set for a bizarre, protracted hunt for Soviet submarines that played a dominant, perhaps decisive role in Swedish foreign policy throughout the 1980s.

The following year, in October of 1982, foreign u-boats were detected in the waters near Stockholm, and some 500 journalists from all over the world flocked to witness the spectacle of an intense depth-charged hunt that went on for two weeks and resulted in... death and injury to a great many fish and other marine organisms, but no captured or sunken U-boats.

With nothing much to journalize about, the news media lost interest and moved on to other spectacles elsewhere. But the bootless hunt continued, as fresh sightings and suspicious signals from the watery depths were reported — more than 4000 during the period from 1982 to 1992.

A non-partisan omission of inquiry was appointed to investigate the matter and in 1983 concluded, on the basis of no clear evidence, that the submarines whose presence and identity had never been confirmed were Soviet intruders. That resulted in the sharpest letter of protest to the Soviet Union in modern times, and relations between the two countries went into deep freeze. The driving force on the commission and throughout the entire drama was Carl Bildt, a Conservative politician with remarkably close ties to USA/NATO.

Experienced U-boat hunters from other countries were sceptical of the claims made by their Swedish colleagues. One of them was Rear-Admiral Ola Thomesen of the Norwegian Navy, which has long experience of monitoring and interpreting the sounds produced by Soviet/Russian submarines; it also maintains an archive of sound recordings on each and every one of them. Interviewed by Swedish public television in 1993, he smiled in baffled amusement when he listened to some noises that were supposed to be from a Soviet u-boat lurking about in the Stockholm Archipelago.

"When you are sitting in the forest on a dark night and waiting for an elk to come by," observed Admiral Thomesen, "you want to believe that every sound you hear is an elk. Of course, we Scandinavians long believed in trolls and elves; and now when we have stopped believing in such things, we long for something to replace them. So why not mysterious underwater vessels?"<sup>4</sup>

Not long afterward, the admiral's sardonic suggestion was confirmed. In 1996, fourteen years after it all began, the Swedish Navy was compelled to acknowledge that two of its most incriminating items of evidence — sounds picked up by sensitive hydrophones — had not emanated from elks, trolls or Russian U-boats, but from swimming minks and schools of flatulent herring.

But even that was not enough to deter the most ardent U-boat hunters. There remained one hydrophone recording of less than four minutes' length that had been guarded as a state secret. In 1993, making the most of his brief tenure as prime minister, Carl Bildt travelled to Moscow with a copy of the recording and demanded

*U-boat hysteries (cont.)*

*Technical analysis revealed that two of the most incriminating items of evidence had emanated from swimming minks and schools of flatulent herring.*

an apology from post-Soviet Russia on the basis of the cryptic noises that its representatives were now permitted to hear (unlike the Swedish people, from whom the “decisive” evidence was withheld).

The Russians responded as their Soviet predecessors had done before — by declaring that, apart from the original alcohol-related incident in 1981, they were not aware of any further encroachments, accidental or otherwise. Their counter-proposal was that a technical analysis of the recording be carried out by a mutually acceptable third party.

That proposal was rejected, and Bildt’s term as prime minister came to an end the following year. After that, the allegedly incriminating recording was largely forgotten — until 2008, when it was finally released for analysis by technicians at the Swedish Defence Research Agency. Their conclusion: The sounds had almost certainly been produced by the *Amalia*, a sail-equipped training ship that had been hired by the newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* as a floating platform from which its reporters could observe the naval spectacle of 1982. Sensitive soles could presumably feel vibrations from the Swedish ship’s propeller as it propagated the “ultimate evidence” of the violations of territorial integrity that the reporters had come to document.



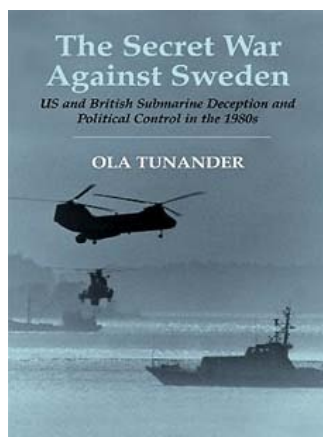
*“Soviet submarine” in its guise as a Swedish training ship*

*It turned out that the sounds had almost certainly been produced by the Amalia, a sail-equipped training ship that had been hired by Dagens Nyheter.*

*The sensational new findings were briefly noted by mainstream media, then quietly swept under the carpet of media neglect.*

You couldn’t make it up. Now, anyone unfamiliar with the current level of Swedish public discourse might assume that this astonishing and, in at least one perspective, highly comical anti-climax of the 27-year-long drama would be treated as a major event, with extensive news coverage, retrospective analysis, demands for a thorough investigation into the costly and harmful fiasco, etc.

But no: The sensational new findings were briefly noted by mainstream Swedish media, then quietly swept under the heavy carpet of media neglect. In a characteristic display of its journalistic standards, *Dagens Nyheter*’s passing reference to the disincriminating evidence delicately refrained from mentioning that *it* had hired the *Amalia*.<sup>5</sup>



Ola Tunander's book,  
*The Secret War against Sweden*

*The evidence includes statements by highly-placed officials in the U.S. and England.*

*Perhaps not so incidentally, Margaret Thatcher is a close political ally of Carl Bildt.*

*All the evidence pointing to USA/NATO involvement has mysteriously disappeared.*

### *The USA/NATO connection*

Meanwhile, as all this was going on, there emerged substantial evidence that foreign countries had indeed sent u-boats into Swedish waters — but that they were members of USA/NATO.

A Swedish scholar who has studied the issue is Ola Tunander, Research Professor at PRIO, the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo. Tunander has assembled a large body of evidence which strongly indicates that submarines from the United States, the United Kingdom and perhaps other USA/NATO countries have entered Swedish waters during the period in question for at least three purposes:

- to develop skills in avoiding detection while penetrating coastal waters of a foreign country
- to test the detection and response capability of Swedish defence forces
- to generate anti-Soviet propaganda and pro-NATO opinion in Sweden.

The extensive evidence on which that conclusion is based includes separate but concurring statements by highly-placed government officials and military leaders in USA/NATO countries. Among them is Caspar Weinberger, U.S. defence minister during the period in question, who told Swedish public TV that U.S. submarines had repeatedly tested Swedish coastal defences in full co-operation with Swedish Navy officials. That was confirmed by Keith Speed, Minister of the Navy in the United Kingdom — a country which, according to Tunander, was deeply involved in similar activities:

Margaret Thatcher ordered the Royal Navy to land Special Boat Service (SBS) frogmen on the coast of Sweden from British submarines pretending to be Soviet vessels....

The deception involved numerous incursions by British forces into Swedish territorial waters in the 1980s and early 1990s, designed to heighten the impression around the world of the Soviet Union as an aggressive superpower.

Sometimes the boats landed commandos, but often their job was to fool the Swedes by mimicking the sonar signals given off by the Soviet vessels that stalked the same waters.

The Swedish government, neutral in the cold war, is not believed to have known about the deceptions, which were carried out by the British and American navies.<sup>6</sup>

Needless to say, all such claims have been emphatically rejected by Swedish officials, tending to confirm Claud Cockburn's famous dictum: "Never believe anything until it is officially denied."

Also lending support to Tunander's analysis is the considerable body of evidence that has mysteriously disappeared or been withheld from scrutiny. It consists of virtually all the numerous indications that intruding submarines have been of USA/NATO



**U-boat hysterics (cont.)**

*Whatever the cause, the great Soviet-submarine hunt has had a major impact on Swedish political life and foreign policy.*

origin. None of the accessible evidence that remains points to the Soviet Union or Russia.<sup>7,8</sup>

Other analysts have arrived at similar conclusions,<sup>9</sup> although few have publicly endorsed Tunander's suggestion that some elements of key political and military institutions must have been secretly working against Sweden's official policy in this and related matters.

Whether the result of ideological blindness, some other form of idiocy, deliberate deception or a combination of factors, the great Soviet-submarine hunt has had a major impact on Swedish political life and foreign policy, and on many of the individuals involved.

**Winners & losers**

The principal beneficiaries of U-boat hysteria have been all interests, both within and outside of Sweden, that are served by inducing invasion anxiety among the Swedish public, fabricating anti-Soviet/Russian propaganda and generating support for USA/NATO.

It is far from inconceivable that the navigation accident in 1981 and the frenzied reaction to it presented itself as an inspiration and golden opportunity for those interests. If so much useful hysteria could be churned up with one such episode, why not arrange for more? That possibility is mere speculation at this point; but it cannot be dismissed as unthinkable, given all the seemingly incredible facts that have emerged thus far.

*One predictable result of the illusory threat was a sharp increase of funding for the Swedish navy.*

In any event, one predictable result of the illusory threat was a sharp increase in funding for the Swedish navy, thereby increasing its proportionate share of the defence budget at the expense of the taxpayers.

For the news media, the U-boat story was a golden opportunity. In those pre-Internet days, sales of newspapers shot up and broadcast audiences expanded. In keeping with standard journalistic ethics, no apologies have been offered for so uncritically misleading the public, or for the various forms of abuse meted out to that minority of journalists who refused to drown their integrity in the occupational safety of mainstream hysterics (see below).

*For the news media, the U-boat story was a golden opportunity.*

In the Swedish political arena, the literally unchallenged winner is Carl Bildt, whose career and reputation as an authoritative fount of foreign-policy knowledge and wisdom are founded on the U-boat hysteria that he, more than anyone else, was responsible for creating.

Bildt has been uncharacteristically reticent in response to the latest evidence of his spectacular ineptitude — i.e. that the Soviet submarines whose intrusion into Swedish waters had filled him with "an inner rage", as he famously pronounced, were in fact swimming minks, farting herring and a training ship hired by one of the mainstream media that have made him what he is today — except to reassure the faithful and possibly himself that he has been right all along and regrets nothing.

Bildt has not been pressed by the mainstream media to explain himself or acknowledge his staggering errors — which is hardly surprising, given their mutual responsibility for the fiasco.



*U-boat hysterics (cont.)*

*Swedish media have failed to pursue an inevitable question: How deeply is Bildt involved in the apparent deception?*

Presumably for the same reason, Swedish media have failed to pursue an intriguing question that inevitably suggests itself, namely: How deeply is Bildt involved in the apparent deception? Has he knowingly conspired with USA/NATO, with whose representatives he has been in continual contact throughout, to perpetrate a hoax orchestrated with U-boats from that military alliance?

An enlightening contrast to the fate of Carl Bildt is that of Lennart Bodström, a Social Democrat who in 1984 was driven from his post as foreign minister by a media-induced uproar over his doubts concerning the alleged evidence of Soviet intrusions. Those well-founded doubts, expressed in an unguarded moment at a private dinner, were overheard by a *Dagens Nyheter* reporter and blown up into a major scandal.

Other opinion-makers who kept their heads and properly did their jobs, while the world around them went mad, were also abused in various ways. "Those of us who tried to apply normal standards of research and analysis were dismissed as lackeys of Moscow," recalls Åke Sandin, historian and radio host.<sup>10</sup>

Among the most severely punished was Maj Wechselman, a journalist and documentary film-maker whose blossoming career was torpedoed by vengeful critics of her scepticism. Following the disclosure of the *Amalia's* central role in the drama, she wrote:

*"Those of us who tried to apply normal standards of research and analysis were dismissed as lackeys of Moscow."*

Would I have dared to be a U-boat sceptic during the 1980s if I had been able to foresee the consequences for my work and for my family? First, I was threatened with the termination of my commentary slot on public radio if I expressed criticism [of the U-boat hunt]. Jan Myrdal took the opportunity to write in *Svenska Dagbladet's* op-ed section that I was worth an entire aircraft carrier to the Russians. When I nevertheless persisted with my scepticism, my radio slot was taken from me and I was blacklisted on public radio and TV.

I was no longer allowed to write on the subject of military aircraft in *Dagens Nyheter* — Lennart Ljung, head of the Swedish armed forces, saw to that.... Nor were my articles accepted by any other publication. For several years, I was not only unemployed, but almost entirely without subsistence. Then there were the constant threats and the telephone terror.

The politician who during it all was the worst liar, and who continued with his attempts to suppress all facts in the case — Carl Bildt — built his career on U-boat hysteria....<sup>11</sup>

*The most tragic victim of U-boat hysteria was Olof Palme.*

The most tragic victim of U-boat hysteria, for himself and for his political adherents, was Social Democratic prime minister and party leader Olof Palme who was assassinated in 1986 amidst a wave of hateful criticism aimed at him for, among other things, insufficient hostility toward the Soviet Union. Worse, he and fellow Social Democrats in Europe were attempting to build bridges between Cold War enemies at a time when the administration of U.S. President Reagan was denouncing the Soviet Union as an "evil empire" and intensifying the nuclear arms race — and when the Soviets were emphatically and repeatedly stated to be menacing the coastal waters of Sweden.

**U-boat hysterics (cont.)**

*Twelve naval officers signed their names to an attack on Palme with a thinly veiled accusation of treason.*

Less than four months before his assassination, twelve naval officers signed their names to a debate article in Sweden's leading conservative newspaper, *Svenska Dagbladet*, charging that Palme spoke with forked tongue on the submarine issue and was guilty of neglecting a serious threat to the nation's security. Therefore, they did not trust him, stated the article in black and white — a thinly veiled accusation of treason. It was such an extraordinary onslaught against a democratically elected head of state that the *New York Times* concluded its Palme obituary a few months later with a reference to it.

This poisoned atmosphere was, to say the least, not conducive to bridge-building. But Palme persisted, and was assassinated shortly before a planned state visit to the Soviet Union — interpreted by his fiercest opponents as *prime facie* evidence of his intent to betray the nation and leave it defenceless against the evil empire.

*Palme's removal from the scene was a blow to all those in Sweden and around the world who supported his commitment to peace, conciliation and disarmament.*

Palme's death put an end to his sort of politics and prepared the way for the takeover of the Social Democratic Party by its right wing, whose foreign policy differs little from that of Carl Bildt (concerning which, more below). Palme's removal from the scene — by whom and for what reason remains unknown — was a devastating blow to all those in Sweden and around the world who admired and supported his commitment to peace, conciliation and disarmament. What they and everyone else got instead was Carl Bildt and a politics of fear, belligerence and preparation for war.

Ola Tunander has summarized the political consequences of the great submarine hunt as follows: "The Swedish people and probably the government, as well, were completely deceived. It was an ingenious strategy on the part of the United States. Prime Minister Palme's east-west dialogue and ambitious projects for common security disappeared with the U-boats into the deep. His independent foreign policy lost all credibility when Soviet U-boats, almost daily, were assumed to be violating Swedish territory. It is clear that Palme suspected that there was something strange about the U-boats' behaviour. But what could he do?"

*The outcome, clearly indicates the workings of a dysfunctional and/or corrupt system controlled by powerful interests.*

Even today, despite the devastating disclosures noted above, nothing has been done. That those who have displayed such colossal incompetence and/or deceit continue to be shielded and rewarded, while the honest and perceptive have been slandered and penalized without so much as an apology, clearly indicates the workings of a dysfunctional and/or corrupt system controlled by powerful interests. The question thus arises: How long and on what basis can such a nation maintain its integrity, to the extent that it has any left?

\* \* \*

**Eradicating Sweden's Vietnam syndrome**

In December of 1989, author Sara Lidman filed a complaint with Sweden's broadcasting review board against public television (then a monopoly) for showing without comment *The Deer Hunter*, the award-winning Hollywood film that portrays the Vietnamese as vicious creatures who cinematically commit the same sorts of barbarities against innocent U.S. soldiers that, in reality, the U.S. and its puppets committed against them. Her complaint was rejected and the film, along with others like it, has since been broadcast repeatedly on public TV and other channels.

*Eradicating Sweden's  
Vietnam syndrome (cont.)*

*The Deer Hunter* is only one component of an ongoing and largely successful process of historical falsification and amnesia regarding the Vietnam War. For the United States and its Swedish allies, it is a strategically important process for eliminating what is perhaps the single most important obstacle to Swedish membership in USA/NATO — the nation's collective memory of the enormous crimes committed by the United States against the peoples of Indochina.

Of course, there are enough exceptions to satisfy the very limited journalistic requirement of "balance". But for the most part, the image of the Vietnam War that for the past quarter-century has been fed to the Swedish public via television and other media — most crucially to younger audiences with no personal memories of the war — is the one described by John Pilger, the Australian-British journalist who covered the war for many years (see below).

## War by Journalism

I refer to... censorship by journalism, which today has become war by journalism. For me, this is the most virulent and powerful form of censorship, fuelling an indoctrination that runs deep in western societies, deeper than many journalists themselves understand or will admit to. Its power is such that it can mean the difference between life and death for untold numbers of people in faraway countries, like Iraq...

The Hollywood movies that followed the [Vietnam] war were an extension of the journalism. The first was *The Deer Hunter*, whose director Michael Cimino fabricated his own military service in Vietnam, and invented scenes of Vietnamese playing Russian roulette with American prisoners. The message was clear. America had suffered, America was stricken, American boys had done their best. It was all the more pernicious because it was brilliantly made and acted. I have to admit it remains the only time I have shouted out in protest, in a packed cinema.

This was followed by *Apocalypse Now*, whose writer, John Millius, invented a sequence about the Vietcong cutting off the arms of children. More oriental barbarity, more American *angst*, more purgative for the audience. Then there was the Rambo series and the "missing in action" films that fed the lie of Americans still imprisoned in Vietnam. Even Oliver Stone's *Platoon*, which gave us glimpses of the Vietnamese as human beings, promoted the invader as victim...

In the acclaimed movie *The Killing Fields*, the story of a *New York Times* reporter and his stringer in Cambodia, scenes that showed the Vietnamese as liberators of Cambodia in 1979 were filmed, but never shown.

These showed Vietnamese soldiers as the liberators they were, handing out food to the survivors of Pol Pot. To my knowledge, this censorship was never reported. The cut version of *The Killing Fields* complied with the official truth then dominant in the United States, especially in the liberal press, such as the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and the *New York Review of Books*. They set out to justify the crime of the Vietnam war by dehumanising the Vietnamese communists and confusing them, in the public mind, with Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge.<sup>12</sup>

— John Pilger

1990

### Leading industrialist denounces neutrality

**28 August.** In an opinion piece in the country's most influential debate forum, Pehr G. Gyllenhammar — head of Volvo Co. and one of Sweden's most powerful and influential opinion-makers — denounces neutrality as a cowardly impediment to international solidarity.<sup>13</sup> As an inspirational contrast, he cites the willingness of the U.K. to "risk British lives in order to apply pressure on Iraq" (i.e. the war initiated by the United States).

This is followed by numerous pronouncements of a similar nature by other authors in the months and years ahead, the evident purpose of which is to discredit Swedish neutrality and thereby remove a major obstacle to EU membership. In nearly every case, "international solidarity" is defined or implied as participation in wars initiated by the United States.

\* \* \*

### Neutrality dismissed with a footnote

**26 October.** Just over a month after a Social Democratic Party Congress unanimously rejected Swedish membership in the European Union, SDP Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson announces that his government has decided — without consulting the grassroots on whose informed consent the party's legitimacy had been based since its inception — to apply for membership in the EU (at that stage entitled the European Economic Community, EEC).

The announcement comes as the last item on a list of measures to combat an economic crisis — a sort of footnote that signals what was to become a steady transfer of Swedish sovereignty to the European Union, now increasingly entwined with USA/NATO. It is an executive coup against the majority of the Social Democratic Party, and widely perceived as such.

*"To do what Ingvar Carlsson did — to present the application for EU membership as an appendage to an economic stabilization package — is totally reprehensible. It is difficult to discern any trace of democratic legitimacy in such a process."*

— Villy Bergström, prominent SDP economist<sup>14</sup>

Prior to that undemocratic decision and its manipulative announcement, SDP leaders (including Carlsson) had consistently rejected EU membership, primarily on the grounds that it would jeopardize Sweden's neutrality. For example:

Tage Erlander, prime minister from 1946 – 1969: "It would be a fatal mistake to allow economic considerations to determine Sweden's foreign policy. Sweden will co-operate with Europe, but neutrality prohibits us from seeking full membership."

Olof Palme, Carlsson's predecessor as party leader and prime minister: "We won't be a member of the EU, but we are co-operating well with it."

Sten Andersson, influential party secretary and cabinet minister in Palme and Carlsson governments: "The arguments in support of Sweden's neutrality are becoming stronger, thereby increasing the strength of arguments for staying out of the EU."<sup>15</sup>

Less than a year before announcing his intention to take Sweden into the EU, Ingvar Carlsson had himself declared that, "The Swedish people have a right to place stringent demands on the stability and predictability of our national security policy. It is with a



*Neutrality dismissed  
with a footnote (cont.)*

*The fateful footnote comes  
just 24 days after the  
Carlsson government's  
clear reaffirmation of  
Swedish neutrality.*

*It makes a sort of sense if the  
purpose was to deceive the  
party faithful into believing  
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committed to preserving  
Sweden's independence  
and neutrality.*

*The manner in which the  
deed was done reflected the  
abandonment of participa-  
tory democracy for rule by  
the manipulative, increas-  
ingly autocratic elites that  
now prevail in the EU and  
its member-states.*

consistent policy of neutrality that we can make our most valuable contribution to the common security of Europe in the 1990s.”<sup>16</sup>

On 2 October 1990, his government's crown speech (its programme and principles for the coming term) proclaimed that Swedish neutrality was incompatible with the EU's plans for compulsory co-operation on foreign policy and a joint defence policy.

Carlsson has attempted to explain his abrupt and baffling turnabout, just 24 days later, by declaring that it was necessary for the nation's economic well-being. So much for Tage Erlander's dire warning that, “It would be a fatal mistake to allow economic considerations to determine Sweden's foreign policy.”

Nor is it by any means certain that the proclaimed economic benefits were real. In effect, the Carlsson government abandoned Sweden's neutrality on the basis of arguments that had less to do with careful analysis than with neo-liberal dogma — the same ideology that has since been thoroughly discredited. It thus appears that Carlsson sold his countrymen's foreign-policy birthright for a mess of dogma.

It also appears that he had been less than candid in his pre-coup defence of neutrality. Carlsson recently confided that one of his three main goals upon succeeding the murdered Palme in March of 1986 was to take his country into the EU — something he neglected to mention at the time.

That was a rather significant omission, considering the profound implications of EU membership. But it makes a sort of sense if the purpose was to deceive the party faithful into believing that he was genuinely committed to preserving Sweden's independence and neutrality. That would have helped to delay the formation of an organized anti-EU movement within the party — one did develop after the fateful footnote was announced — while conveying the impression that Carlsson & Co. were serious about preserving the nation's independence.

In any event, developments since Sweden's entry into the EU have tended to confirm that Erlander, Palme and even Carlsson (sincerely or otherwise) were entirely correct when they warned that membership is incompatible with Swedish neutrality.

Equally significant, the manner in which the deed was done reflected the abandonment of participatory democracy for rule by the manipulative, increasingly autocratic elites that now prevail in the European Union and its member-states, including Sweden. Largely undisturbed by public scrutiny or consent, those elites are in the process of constructing a “United States of Europe”, militarily allied with and subservient to the United States — all the while protesting that they are doing no such thing.

Such assurances are worth about as much as those given to the Swedish people by Ingvar Carlsson and other EU enthusiasts regarding the consequences of membership. There would be no change in the traditional policy of neutrality, they stated reassuringly.

That was also a basic premise of the resolution by which the Swedish parliament on 12 December 1990 approved application for



*Neutrality dismissed (cont.)*

EU membership. Less than three months later, on 20 February 1991, the process of deconstructing Swedish neutrality would begin.

\* \* \*

### Christmas with Uncle George and his warriors

**24 December 1990.** On this, the most sacrosanct holiday of the Swedish calendar, the traditional Christmas Eve programme on public television features a report from Washington with President George Bush I lighting the White House Christmas tree and proclaiming, "God Bless America!" This is followed by a report from Saudi Arabia, on the Yuletide celebrations of U.S. troops stationed there in connection with the first Bush war against Iraq.

## 1991

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### SDP government signals adaptation to EU membership

**20 February.** In its annual foreign policy declaration, the Carlsson government signals Sweden's accommodation to the requirements of EU membership: "We decide, ourselves, what is compatible with our neutrality policy. When the world around us undergoes sweeping change, the conditions for our own peacetime foreign policy also change."

\* \* \*

### Neutrality reduced to "military non-alliance"

**17 June.** In a declaration prior to formal application for EU membership, the Carlsson government reduces neutrality to a "core" of military non-alliance. This opens the door for all forms of EU co-operation, foreign policy included, that do not involve direct military action.

\* \* \*

### Unconditional submission

**14 June.** The Carlsson government submits an *unconditional* application for membership to the EU. Swedish neutrality is not an issue.

\* \* \*

### Foreign policy's "European identity"

**4 October.** The crown speech of the new, centre-right government headed by Carl Bildt proclaims that Swedish foreign policy is now based on a "European identity" and that Sweden will participate in "all aspects" of EU co-operation.

\* \* \*

### Bildt declares death of Swedish neutrality

**13 November.** In a speech in Bonn, Germany, P.M. Bildt declares that "neutrality is dead" as a governing principle of Swedish foreign policy.

\* \* \*

### Promise of active participation

**11 December.** Bildt promises his EU colleagues that Sweden will "actively participate" in the organization's defence and foreign policy.

### **“Uncritical support for EU, and thoughtless sell-out of Swedish neutrality”**

Included in the ongoing manipulation [to get Sweden into the EU] has been a sell-out of Swedish neutrality. Of late, that has been a recurring theme on the opinion pages of *Dagens Nyheter* and *Svenska Dagbladet* [Sweden's two most influential newspapers]. The predominant standpoint has been that Swedish neutrality no longer has any role to play — if, indeed, it ever had one....

The current debate on neutrality is... frighteningly Eurocentric and ahistorical. How has the debate become so narrowly focused? Not with a word is it noted that Swedish neutrality is also about internationalism, disarmament and foreign aid. What we have referred to as the “Dag Hammarskjöld syndrome” included aspects that quite properly made Sweden known through people like Olof Palme, Alva Myrdal, Inga Thorsson and Maj Britt Theorin. But their contributions have been dismissed as of marginal importance.

Instead of the acknowledged skill and competence of Swedish diplomats in international conflicts such as that in the Middle East, we are now prepared to take more primitive measures. Gone is our faith in the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Now the Swedish heart is to beat in march time, and involvement and solidarity shall henceforth be displayed with a rifle in hand....

The concentrated attack on Swedish neutrality and the cultivation of doubts about its ever having existed are part of a clever strategy to herd us into the arms of Europe, the new superpower....

We have a sense that we are losing ourselves, and that our political leaders are filled with ulterior motives and unstated assumptions. How else are we to understand their uncritical enthusiasm for the EU and their thoughtless sell-out of Swedish neutrality?

— Maria Bergom Larsson & Ingrid Rasch, 26 June 1991 <sup>17</sup>

## 1992

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### **Non-alliance becomes optional**

**15 January.** The Bildt government redefines military non-alliance (the vestigial “core” of neutrality) to mean “a sufficiently independent defence capability to be able to remain neutral in the event of war in our immediate vicinity”. This means that neutrality henceforth applies only to Northern Europe and that it is a matter of choice (“to be able”), not of preference or intent.

\* \* \*

### **P.M. Bildt visits President Bush I**

**20 February.** Swedish prime minister Carl Bildt is invited to an audience with President Bush I. According to *Dagens Nyheter*, “It is regarded as unusual that a new head of state is granted the opportunity to meet the U.S. president after only four months in office.”

The newspaper neglects to mention, however, that Bildt has long been a reliable ally of the U.S. and is well-connected with political conservatives in that and other Western countries. The precocious

**Bildt visits Bush I (cont.)**

*Carl Bildt and his infant being cuddled by Pres. Bush I who refers to the Swedish prime minister as "the man who has taken Europe by storm".*

invitation to the White House is clearly intended to boost his status via such media as *Dagens Nyheter*, and thereby facilitate the changes to Swedish society and foreign policy that Bildt and his political bedfellows advocate.

"That we have received an invitation so soon is due to that fact that we are regarded as interesting," explains Bildt. "Previously, Sweden has not really played any significant role in Europe. It was typical that, when Ingvar Carlsson was in the U.S. in 1987, the subject of discussion was Nicaragua" [i.e. the Reagan/Bush administration's proxy war of terror against the people of that country].

No such disagreeable subject disturbed the peace of the White House on this occasion, and the U.S. president clearly approved of Bildt, whom he described as a "very skilful prime minister who enjoys great respect for what he is doing. I am very pleased with our connections with Sweden...."

"Prime Minister Bildt represents an upcoming generation of leadership for a people that is seeking a new role in Europe and a new birth of freedom in Sweden's domestic policy. Sweden is starting a new chapter in its history," asserted Bush, quoting from Bildt's victory speech on election night the previous autumn: "'The winds of change in Europe have finally reached Sweden.'"<sup>18</sup>

\* \* \*

### Sweden urged to join USA/NATO

**23 June 1992.** The United States' official ambassador to NATO, William Taft, says that "when" Sweden becomes a member of the EU, it should also join USA/NATO.

\* \* \*

### EU policies of "vital national interest"

**6 October.** In the Bildt government's crown speech, Swedish participation in the EU's foreign and defence policy is declared to be of "vital national interest".

## 1993

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### No objections to EU foreign/defence policy

**1 February.** During negotiations on its application for membership, Sweden promises not to stand in the way of future EU plans for a common foreign / defence policy.

\* \* \*

### The year of discreet silence

Government negotiations with the EU regarding the terms of Sweden's admission continue throughout 1993. During this time there is little public discussion of neutrality and related matters, presumably because they are of such great importance to the majority of Swedish voters. An open debate on the implications of EU membership for foreign policy in general, and neutrality in particular, has the potential to confound the plans of dominant elites. Since EU membership is supported by the major parliamentary parties and nearly all of the major news media, it is not very difficult to keep the lid on debate.

### **‘Deliberately & systematically behind the backs of the citizens’**

In the autumn of 1990, the Swedish parliament declared that “it is in our national interest for Sweden to retain its neutrality as a member of the EEC.... [But in the negotiations with the EEC on the terms of membership, the government] not only accepted, but expressed a desire to participate in the joint security policy which, according to the parliament’s decision in 1990 and the membership application in 1991, is not in Sweden’s national interest....

[The government] went a significant step further. It also took a stance on the question of a common defence policy... by pledging that Sweden did not intend to obstruct development toward that goal. The practical effect is a complete revision of Swedish security policy....

Among the consequences of that pledge is that Sweden commits itself to participate in a future military-security order without knowing in advance whether it will be compatible with its national interests. Put simply, Sweden thereby signals that it is prepared to buy a pig in a poke — to enter into an alliance, sight unseen....

The entire business has been concealed behind a bunch of empty phrases such as “Swedish foreign and security policy with a European identity”. Of what that European identity consists is a question that has been carefully avoided....

The entire process exudes contempt for the citizens of Sweden, who have not been invited to participate in the most elementary fashion. They have not even been deemed worthy of the knowledge that it is taking place....

Whatever one’s opinion of the new order that is being established, the methods being applied are the most reprehensible that can occur in a democracy — to deliberately and systematically go behind the backs of the citizens.<sup>19</sup>

— Wilhelm Agrell, *peace & conflict researcher*, May 1993

## **1994**

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### **Welcome partnership**

**12 January.** The Foreign Policy Committee of the Swedish parliament “welcomes” an invitation from USA/NATO to participate in Partnership for Peace, a new framework for military co-operation between the alliance and (as yet) non-allied nations. Both Carl Bildt and his predecessor as prime minister, Ingvar Carlsson, support Swedish participation in PFP.

\* \* \*

### **Green light for non-allied alliance**

**26 January.** An “independent” inquiry commissioned by the government reports that participation in the EU’s defence policy is “compatible with military non-alliance”.

\* \* \*

## Sweden joins Partnership for Peace

**9 May 1994.** Sweden formally joins Partnership for Peace, which is gradually supplanting the Western European Union as the framework for military co-operation between EU member-states. Critical voices warn that PFP is an intermediate step toward complete integration and full membership. Those warnings are dismissed by Swedish and USA/NATO officials as unfounded.

Fifteen years later, the facts are these: Twelve former PFP member-states have already joined USA/NATO — Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Albania and Croatia. In addition, the groundwork is already being laid for the inclusion of Sweden, Finland, Austria, Ireland, Switzerland, Malta, Bosnia, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo. Other PFP countries that may become full members in the future: Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Moldova, Belarus and the five former Soviet states of Central Asia.

\* \* \*

## Participating in the unthinkable

**26 May.** Anders Björck becomes the first Swedish Defence Minister to participate in a meeting at USA/NATO headquarters in Brussels. Björck notes that, "Only a year ago, it was unthinkable for us to participate in any activity here in NATO headquarters. Now we are here."<sup>20</sup>

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## USA/NATO planning in Sweden

**26 June:** A working group of some 20 military officers from twelve PFP and USA/NATO countries meets in Sweden to plan future joint operations.

\* \* \*

## "Yes" to EU in democratic travesty

**13 November.** Following a referendum campaign that is a travesty of democracy, Swedish voters approve membership in the EU. Jubilant conservatives literally sing the praises of Ingvar Carlsson.<sup>21</sup>

\* \* \*

## Emphasis on military spending

**30 November.** The head of Sweden's oldest peace organization, notes that, "Since the Cold War came to an end in 1989, Sweden has allocated SEK 300 million to bilateral development aid to Russia. During the same period, SEK 176,000 million has been allocated to the Swedish military."<sup>22</sup>

\* \* \*

## Sweden modifies nuclear policy to fit EU

**9 December.** Sweden abstains from voting on a U.N. resolution that calls upon the International Court of Justice to rule on the question of whether or not the use of nuclear weapons, or the threat of such use, constitutes a violation of international law. The resolution passes with 77 votes for, 33 against and 21 abstentions.

Sweden has previously been a driving force on issues of nuclear weapons and disarmament. But all member-states of the EU abstained, and Sweden's altered stance is interpreted as a sign that it has begun to modify its foreign policy to fit its imminent membership in the alliance.<sup>23</sup>



## 20 – 1 Odds against Democracy

In 1991, grassroots democracy was still a valid ideal within the SDP, and the reversal of EU policy was but one in a series of decisions by the Carlsson government that violated majority opinion. As author and loyal Social Democrat Sven Lindqvist sardonically noted: "The decision comes first, and the discussion afterwards. When it comes to such minor matters as giving up Sweden's independence, abandoning its neutrality, replacing the krona with another currency, and sacrificing full employment for the sake of a fixed exchange rate — on such occasions, no one is interested in our opinions...."

A content analysis of the country's four largest newspapers during the month preceding the referendum found that 48 percent of all articles on the subject included information and/or arguments in support of EU membership, while only 15 percent documented contrary positions. A clear bias for EU membership was detected in 38 percent of the articles, as against five percent for opposing viewpoints....

Apart from its lack of access to national media, the opposition was confronted with a nearly united political-economic elite. The "yes" campaign has declined to provide an accounting of its expenditures; but a research project led by political scientist Rune Premfors of Stockholm University has estimated that it had at least ten times more money to spend than the "no" campaign, not counting the substantial value of the organizational resources at the establishment's disposal. The total economic advantage of the "yes" campaign is believed to have been about 20 – 1, perhaps even greater.<sup>24</sup>

### 1995

#### Sweden joins EU

**1 January.** Sweden formally enters the European Union.

\* \* \*

#### U.S. officials meet in Stockholm

**21 April.** U.S. ambassadors to the Baltic and Nordic countries gather in Stockholm for a meeting with Richard Holbrooke, the U.S. foreign ministry official in charge of relations with Europe. Holbrooke declares that neutrality became meaningless with the end of the Cold War and urges Sweden to take a leading role in the Baltic sphere of Partnership for Peace.

\* \* \*

#### Intimate relations with United States

**5 May.** In connection with a two-week tour of the United States by former P.M. Carl Bildt as "PR man" for the European Union, a leading Swedish newspaper reports that, "Relations between Sweden and the U.S. appear to be more intimate than they have ever been.... That is the impression derived from a series of discussions conducted by *Svenska Dagbladet* with highly placed Swedish and U.S. sources concerning foreign policy, trade and defence issues."<sup>25</sup>

\* \* \*

#### PFP meeting with U.S. minister of war

**9 June.** Sweden participates in a Partnership for Peace meeting with the U.S. minister of war ("Secretary of Defense") and 14 defence ministers from PFP member-states. Representing Sweden is Thage G. Peterson, defence minister in the new SDP government of Ingvar Carlsson.<sup>26</sup>

## 1996

### From Palme to Persson and USA

**21 March.** Ingvar Carlsson is succeeded as prime minister and SDP party leader by Göran Persson, who will lead the country for the next ten years. The change in leadership results in a reversal of SDP foreign policy, as Persson — who is largely ignorant of such matters — repudiates the legacy of Olof Palme and follows the lead of the United States.



Göran Persson

\* \* \*

### Floating monument to atrocity leads “peace” exercise in the Baltic

**10-22 June.** Sweden participates in “Baltops 96”, a Partnership for Peace exercise in the Baltic Sea involving 14 countries, 48 ships and numerous aircraft. Flagship for the exercise is the U.S. missile cruiser Hué City, named after the ancient city in Vietnam that was reduced to rubble during the U.S. war of aggression against that country. According to a high-ranking U.S. official: “The Americans pounded the Citadel and surrounding city almost to dust with air strikes, napalm runs, artillery and naval gunfire, and the direct cannon fire from tanks and recoilless rifles.... The mind reels at the carnage, cost, and ruthlessness of it all.”<sup>27</sup>

\* \* \*

### “New” Sweden destined to join “new” USA/NATO

**August.** In co-ordination with a forthcoming visit by the U.S. minister of war, *Svenska Dagbladet* runs a series of articles on the theme of “Sweden’s New Roll” with headlines such as “NATO No Longer a Taboo Subject in Sweden” and “USA Wants to See Sweden in the New NATO”. The series conveys a sense of inevitability that “new” Sweden will eventually join “new” USA/NATO.

\* \* \*

### Persson government deviates to justify U.S. missile attacks

**7 September.** Lena Hjelm-Wallén, foreign minister in the Persson government, expresses understanding for U.S. missile attacks on Iraq on the dubious grounds that the government had “invaded” the Kurdistan region of its own country. Nothing in U.N. resolutions on Iraq prohibits the movement of Iraqi troops into Kurdistan. “But one can say that the U.S. acted in accordance with the spirit of the Security Council’s resolutions,” argues Hjelm-Wallén, deviating from the strict adherence to international law that has previously informed the Swedish standpoint on unprovoked military attacks.<sup>28</sup>

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### Praise from U.S. minister of war

**23 September.** William Perry, the U.S. minister of war, visits Stockholm to consult with Sweden’s defence minister. “I can only be satisfied with the manner in which Sweden is taking responsibility for security in the new Europe,” says Perry.<sup>29</sup>

\* \* \*

### Praise from U.S. ambassador

**19 November.** Robert Hunter, the United States’ NATO ambassador heaps praise on Sweden for its support of the Baltic States, and expresses his expectation that their anticipated membership in

*Praise from U.S.  
ambassador (cont.)*

USA/NATO will be facilitated by both Sweden and Finland. "You can do it better and less provocatively than we Americans can," explains Hunter. "Russia has never protested against anything that Sweden or Finland has done in the Baltic."<sup>30</sup>

Hunter is in Stockholm for a seminar organized jointly by the U.S. embassy and the Swedish Institute of International Affairs. The latter is tax-supported and advertises itself as "an ideologically and politically independent institution for information and research on matters of international politics". But in these matters, it functions more as a channel for USA/NATO propaganda.<sup>31</sup>

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**Swedish PFP initiative**

**6 December.** Sweden announces an initiative to establish a training centre dedicated to Partnership for Peace near the town of Södertälje. Its primary function will be to co-ordinate the training of military personnel from the Baltic States.<sup>32</sup>

\* \* \*

## ‘Where has Sweden disappeared to?’ Behind closed doors in Brussels.

Sweden played a central role in the discussions on nuclear disarmament that took place in Geneva during the 1960s. Among other things, Swedish scientists designed the system of control and verification for the current nuclear testing moratorium.

"We were the only neutral nation that mastered the subject," notes disarmament expert Jan Prawitz, "and it had two consequences. One was that it prevented the nuclear powers from cheating with their proposals. We were able to see if there was something wrong with them. The second consequence was that other countries trusted us. So, if little Sweden proposed something, that was what usually formed the basis of the majority in the U.N. General Assembly....

"It meant a great deal for Sweden's international profile. Now, one very often meets old colleagues abroad who ask, 'Where has Sweden disappeared to?' They think that the wind has gone out of Sweden and its disarmament policy.... Partly it's because we no longer have a leading figure who promotes disarmament policy; and partly it's because we have joined the European Union, with its common foreign/defence policy. Everything is turned into mincemeat behind closed doors in Brussels, and a joint policy is adopted. In that setting, of course, Sweden is drowned out in the company of much larger member-states....

"As a result, our standpoint is not likely to have much influence in the future. And it seems evident that our political leaders fear an open discussion on the question of nuclear weapons and the European Union because they obviously believe that people will not only be against nuclear weapons, as they have always been, but also against the EU.... There is a noticeable resistance when one tries to take up these issues."<sup>33</sup>

— August 1996

## Sweden seeks closer co-operation

**11 December 1996.** Jan Eliasson, a high official of the foreign ministry, visits USA/NATO headquarters in Brussels and announces Sweden's desire to work more closely with the military alliance within the framework of Partnership for Peace. He also says USA/NATO is welcome to establish an office in Stockholm.<sup>34</sup>

## 1997

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## Swedes assigned new nationality

**9 July.** Prominent SDP politician Kristina Persson, a political ally of Prime Minister Persson (no relation), conveys her belief that, "Europe is our new nation-state."<sup>35</sup>

\* \* \*

## Dissenting opinion

**7 November.** Interviewed by Swedish Public Television, British author Frederick Forsyth explains: "If you look at the EU today, which Sweden also has now been sucked into, you are being told, and we [in the U.K.] are being told, that it is all about your prosperity, and mine. Trust me: It has nothing whatever to do with your prosperity, or your freedom, or 'peace in our time'. It has to do with the transfer of power from the elected Swedish parliament to the commission in Brussels, the court in Luxembourg and the bankers in Frankfurt."<sup>36</sup>

## 1998

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## First Finland, then Sweden

**22 March.** The chairperson of the Finnish parliament's Defence Committee states that Finland is quietly being prepared for membership in USA/NATO. "Preparations are under way for something that is not openly acknowledged," says Kalevi Lamminen. "Military leaders say no more than they think is necessary."<sup>37</sup>

It is widely assumed that if Finland joins USA/NATO, the pressure on Sweden to follow suit will become irresistible.

\* \* \*

## "Unavoidable" message, live from the White House

**20 August.** Swedish Public Television interrupts a prime-time programme for an important announcement, live from the U.S. White House: President Clinton explains why he feels compelled to bomb "terrorists" in Afghanistan and Sudan, two nations that have never dropped so much as a leaflet on the United States.

The following day, Foreign Minister Lena Hjelm-Wallin states her belief that the attacks — crystal clear violations of international law — were "unavoidable", but that she hopes other countries do not indulge in similar behaviour because "that would be taking the law into their own hands".<sup>38</sup>

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## Quiet support for bombing plans

**November 1998.** As a temporary member of the U.N. Security Council, Sweden quietly supports USA/NATO plans to bomb Serbia, with or without U.N. approval.<sup>39</sup>

\* \* \*

## Open support for USA/NATO

**16 December.** The new foreign minister, Anna Lindh, states that USA/NATO is “the most effective tool for crisis management in Europe”.<sup>40</sup>

## 1999

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## No more neutrality or limitations

**26 January.** Foreign Minister Anna Lindh declares that “the concept of neutrality and the self-imposed limitations it included in order to make our policy credible have lost all significance”.<sup>41</sup>

\* \* \*

## Defence planning with U.S. military

**17 March.** It is disclosed that, for the past 18 months, Swedish and U.S. military leaders have been secretly discussing the possible adoption by Sweden of an integrated defence system developed by the United States. Among other things, it involves the use of Swedish defence data for millions of simulations of the system’s effectiveness.<sup>42</sup>

\* \* \*

## Aggressor’s propaganda justifies war

**22 March.** Start of 79-day bombing campaign against Serbia by USA/NATO, in clear violation of international law. Having previously opposed any attack without U.N. approval, Göran Persson immediately reverses himself and regurgitates USA/NATO propaganda to justify the bombing.

*The government issues one objection — when windows at the Swedish Embassy are broken.*

The Persson government does issue one objection: Some of the bombs fall so close to the Swedish Embassy in Belgrade that shock waves break some of its windows. This is sharply criticized by Foreign Minister Anna Lindh.

Persson’s predecessor, Ingvar Carlsson, joins a colleague from Guyana in strongly condemning the USA/NATO aggression. Their sharply worded critique is published in the *International Herald-Tribune* and *The Guardian* (see excerpt below). At home in Sweden, however, Carlsson adheres to the strict loyalty of the Social Democratic Party and refrains from openly challenging the policy of his successor.

*Like the prime minister, Swedish media serve as channels for USA/NATO war propaganda.*

Despite this unusual and highly significant disagreement between two Social Democratic leaders, Swedish mainstream media largely ignore it — most likely because, with few exceptions, they have also swallowed the USA/NATO propaganda whole. Based on that and little else (contrary evidence is ignored, or automatically rejected as Serb propaganda) the media busy themselves with the task of creating a reality as false and simple-minded as that of the previous decade’s U-boat hysteria, from which they have evidently learned nothing.<sup>43</sup>

\* \* \*



## “Aggression that strikes at the heart of international law”

*Ingvar Carlsson & Shridath Ramphal*

*The Guardian • 2 April 1999*

NATO air strikes against Yugoslavia have not been authorized by the United Nations. That authority was not even sought. They are therefore acts of aggression against a sovereign country; and as such they strike at the heart of the rule of international law and the authority of the United Nations. Because they are acts undertaken by the world's most militarily powerful countries, that damage is incalculable....

NATO countries assert their respect for the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law that arise from it. Europe, in particular, claims moral authority as a custodian of internationalism. Now the gamekeepers have turned poachers, posing as policemen. This temptation to assume police powers on the basis of righteousness and military strength is dangerous for world order and world peace; what results is a world ordered by vigilante action....

If in our responses we become violators too, in the end we return to a dark time when might alone is right and law comes out of the barrel of a gun.

\* \* \*

Note: Ingvar Carlsson and Shridath Ramphal were co-chairmen of the Commission on Global Governance, which in 1994 presented recommendations for strengthening the U.N. that have been thwarted by the United States and other major powers.

### Swedish P.M. enjoys festivities in Brussels

**4 April 1999.** While the bombs are raining down on Serbia, Prime Minister Göran Persson participates enthusiastically in USA/NATO's 50th anniversary celebrations in Brussels.

\* \* \*

### USA/NATO interests well-represented in EU

**18 October.** Spanish Social Democrat Xavier Solana leaves his job as Secretary General of USA/NATO to become the EU's chief representative on foreign policy issues. According to the weekly news magazine, *New Europe*, it is “a common secret in Brussels that Xavier Solana is the informal caretaker of American interests in the EU”.<sup>44</sup>

*Swedish Foreign Minister Anna Lindh shares an agreeable moment with “U.S. caretaker” Xavier Solana*



### Closer links with USA/NATO

**27 October.** At a meeting of foreign policy officials from EU member-states, the Finnish delegation submits a proposal for closer links with USA/NATO, based on “a political military structure for

*Closer links (cont.)*

joint consultations, co-operation and openness between the two institutions". Swedish Foreign Minister Anna Lindh expresses approval of the proposal.<sup>45</sup>

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**Social Democrat says peace needs EU teeth**

**18 November 1999.** Pierre Schori, formerly a close associate of Olof Palme but now Göran Persson's man in Brussels, declares that, "The EU must have a capability for independent action which is backed up by credible military forces, the possibility of taking decisions to use them, and preparations to do so.... For me, the EU's military capacity is necessary and correct. Peace needs teeth."<sup>46</sup>

**2000****Promise of support in the event of war**

**9 February.** Now deputy prime minister, Lena Hjelm-Wallén states that, "Although there are no military obligations implicit in EU membership, we have a political obligation to support each other. In the event of war in our immediate vicinity, I don't see how we could stand on the sidelines.... We would react in some way."<sup>47</sup>

\* \* \*

**Suffering Americans**

**30 April.** On the 25th anniversary of Vietnam's reunification, Swedish public radio and television focus almost entirely on the suffering of the invaders. Other themes: the war caused no lasting harm to the Vietnamese, who nowadays hardly ever think about it; also, the war was well-intentioned and made a valuable contribution to the defeat of communism.

*Throughout the entire day, not a single Vietnamese voice is heard.*

Public radio features a lengthy interview with a U.S. soldier in New York City, repeated hourly throughout the day. The TV evening news includes an interview conducted in Vietnam — with another U.S. soldier on a visit to the scene of his country's massive crimes, which are not mentioned. Throughout the entire day, not a single Vietnamese voice is heard in these, Sweden's most influential and trusted news channels.<sup>48</sup>

\* \* \*

**Bofors Weapons sold to U.S. defence giant**

**14 June.** Bofors Weapon Systems, the venerable Swedish firm developed by Alfred Nobel of the famous prizes, is sold to United Defense, a major U.S. arms manufacturer. It is the latest in a series of transactions through which the major portion of Sweden's defence industry has been acquired by foreign interests.

*Excalibur, a GPS-guided artillery shell that can travel up to 60 kilometres is one of the advanced weapons developed by Bofors.*



***Bofors Weapons sold to  
U.S. defence giant (cont.)***

Objections are raised by peace groups and by the Left and Green parties, who argue that, among other things, U.S. ownership will compromise Sweden's comparatively restrictive weapon export regulations.

But the Social Democratic government has no objections, as long as the purchaser is from North America or within the European Union. The new owner is also pleased: "Bofors will be our bridgehead to Europe," predicts the head of United Defense.<sup>49</sup>

\* \* \*

***Keeping peace  
the USA/NATO way***

**November 2000.** Sweden begins organizing its contribution to the Nordic Battlegroup, part of the army of 60 – 80,000 troops that the EU plans to assemble by year 2003. The Battlegroup will consist of some 5000 troops from two Nordic countries that are members of USA/NATO, Norway and Denmark, and two that are not, Finland and Sweden.

*"Sweden has probably  
had the most extensive  
co-operation with NATO."*

According to Christofer Gyllenstierna, a foreign ministry official attached to the Ministry of Defence, "Sweden and NATO have begun a process that will lead to a fully developed capacity for co-operation. Of the participating countries that are not members of the alliance, Sweden has probably had the most extensive co-operation with NATO."

*The two "peacekeeping"  
missions in which Swedish  
troops have thus far  
participated have followed  
upon wars of aggression  
committed by the U.S.  
and its military alliance.*

Adds Col. Sten Edholm, commander of the Nordic Brigade, "In my view as a professional officer, it is important that we have accepted NATO's system. Now that the EU is setting up its military force, NATO is making sure that everything meets NATO standards. For a professional officer, it makes little difference whether an operation is led by NATO or the EU."<sup>50</sup>

Swedish and EU officials maintain that the sole purpose of the developing EU army is to carry out peacekeeping operations authorized by either the United Nations *or* USA/NATO, i.e. with or without a U.N. mandate.

But the two USA/NATO "peacekeeping" missions in which Swedish troops have thus far participated — in Kosovo and Afghanistan — have followed upon wars of aggression committed by the United States and its military alliance. In Kosovo, USA/NATO has been widely criticized for its inability and/or unwillingness to halt the persecution and ethnic cleansing of minority groups by the majority Kosovo-Albanians.

*The ethnic cleansing used  
to justify the war of aggres-  
sion occurred as a direct,  
deliberate consequence  
of its perpetration.*

That is a bitter irony, since the pretext for the war was alleged ethnic cleansing of Kosovo-Albanians, large numbers of whom were in fact temporarily driven from their homes — but as a *result* of the war, as the aggressors had been explicitly forewarned. In short, the ethnic cleansing used to justify the war of aggression occurred as a direct, deliberate consequence of its perpetration.

This is the peace that Swedish troops are helping USA/NATO to keep in Kosovo.

The U.S. war of aggression against Afghanistan has been an even greater human catastrophe, with no end in sight. The post-aggression "peacekeeping" force, ISAF, was supposed to be a NATO operation, but is now under direct U.S. military command.

### *Keeping peace the USA/NATO way (cont.)*

*The post-aggression  
“peacekeeping” force was  
supposed to be a USA/NATO  
operation, but is now under  
direct U.S. command.*



*Photo: Försvarsmakten*

*Swedish soldiers serving under U.S. command in Afghanistan.*

*The war and occupation  
have already resulted in  
thousands of civilian deaths,  
many other gross violations  
of human rights and severe  
hardship for much of the  
population.*

ISAF was approved by the U.N. Security Council in what has been described as a gross violation of the U.N. Charter (see “Article 51 and Wars of Aggression” on p. 30). It remains unclear as to why the Security Council provided this *ex post facto* façade of legitimacy for the U.S. aggression and the USA/NATO occupation. But it may be assumed that the United States applied its customary mix of threats and inducements to produce the desired outcome.<sup>51</sup>

It has also been suggested that Russia and perhaps other members of the Council may have consented, in the belief that the United States and its vassal-states would inevitably suffer the same sort of enervating and ignominious defeat in Afghanistan as the Soviet and British empires before them.

Whatever the dynamics involved, the war and occupation have already resulted in thousands of civilian deaths, many other gross violations of human rights and severe, protracted hardship for much of the population.

USA/NATO officials have given notice that it is all likely to continue for decades. And for what purpose? As in the case of the latest U.S. war against Iraq, the original rationale has been abandoned in response to the changing propaganda needs of the aggressor.

*The original rationale has  
been abandoned in response  
to the changing propaganda  
needs of the aggressor.*

Whatever Swedish officers and other supporters of the war against Afghanistan may choose to believe, it cannot be explained by a desire on the part of the U.S. government to spread peace and democracy. Such stated motives are useful for justifying the war, all the more so if some semblance of those blessings can be arranged. But the war — which was planned well in advance of the terror attacks that have been used to justify it — is primarily about control of valuable oil resources and strategically important territory.<sup>52</sup>

This is the peace that Swedish troops are helping USA/NATO to keep in Afghanistan.

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### **Neutrality “no longer possible”**

**13 December.** Anna Lindh, foreign minister in the Social Democratic government, announces that Sweden is no longer neutral. The option of remaining neutral in time of war remains, she explains, but is now hardly possible due to the country’s EU membership and close co-operation with USA/NATO.



*Neutrality “no longer possible” (cont.)*

“The question is how much longer it will be until ‘military non-alignment’ also disappears,” notes *Dagens Nyheter*.<sup>53</sup>

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**Weapons-buying agreement**

**18 December.** In a major step toward military interdependence, Sweden enters an agreement for the joint purchase of weapons with five EU and USA/NATO member-states — Germany, France, Italy, Spain and the U.K.<sup>54</sup>

## 2001

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**With USA/NATO, from Peking to Quito**

**30 January.** Speaking to supporters of the governing Social Democratic Party in Stockholm, Maj Britt Theorin reminds the audience that the “Yes” side in the EU referendum promised that membership would not affect Swedish neutrality.

Theorin is a leading figure of the increasingly marginalized left-wing of the party, having served as an M.P. in both the Swedish and EU parliaments, ambassador to the U.N. and Minister for Disarmament, a post created by Tage Erlander and eliminated by Ingvar Carlsson.

She also notes that the SDP government of Göran Persson has decided to discard neutrality and retain military non-alignment, but argues that the two principles are inseparable.

*The expansion of USA/NATO has coincided with a reduction by more than half of U.N. peacekeeping forces.*

Theorin observes that the expansion of USA/NATO has coincided with a reduction by more than half of U.N. peacekeeping forces, which previously consisted of 70,000 troops. As of this date, there are only 33,000. Further reductions may be anticipated when the EU army of 60,000 is formed.

The EU’s self-assigned sphere of influence, to be defended in collaboration with USA/NATO, is defined as a circle with a radius of 4000 kilometres from Brussels, the east-west axis of which stretches from Peking to Quito, Ecuador. “I don’t understand how the government can let this happen. There *has* to be a referendum on this.” Apparently not; no such referendum was ever held.<sup>55</sup>

\* \* \*

**“Sacrificed on the altar of Bush’s security”**

**15–16 June.** The EU summit meeting in Göteborg is accompanied by protest demonstrations that are suppressed with unusual brutality by the Swedish police. The excessive force is the result of a false threat scenario based on inaccurate information from U.S. security personnel who were involved in preparations for the visit of President Bush II.

*The police excesses are the result of a false threat scenario based on inaccurate information from U.S. security personnel.*

That is the assessment of Dr. Hans Abrahamsson of Göteborg University, who has conducted extensive research on the police response and related matters. Months of conflict-management planning between local officials and protest organizers were thereby “sacrificed on the altar of President Bush’s security,” concludes Abrahamsson, who notes that the episode illustrates the close ties between Swedish and U.S. security personnel.



*"Sacrificed on the altar of Bush's security" (cont.)*

Networks developed during the Cold War among intelligence / security agencies and within the weapons industry have not only survived, according to Abrahamsson's research, "They have also been strengthened, and principally on the basis of new U.S. security needs. Even politically, Sweden has been forced into line.... The security intelligence that informs strategic decisions, and evidently police tactics as well, are based primarily on U.S. sources."<sup>56</sup>

\* \* \*

## Article 51 and Wars of Aggression

In international law, the concept of self-defence is recognized by the Charter of the United Nations:

Article 51. Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defence shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security.

In the case of the 9/11 attacks, the concepts of self-defence and aggression simply do not apply. Afghanistan could not be considered an aggressor state since the attacks were neither perpetrated by it or its agents nor planned on its territory (the planning took place in Germany). As well, in early October 2001 when it launched its war on Afghanistan, the United States was not, to anyone's knowledge, facing an imminent threat of new attacks.

Furthermore, it was not until three years later, on 29 October 2004, that Osama Ben Laden acknowledged Al Qaeda's authorship of the attacks. Before that time, the United States had not demonstrated his or Al Qaeda's guilt, much less that of Afghanistan, in any appropriate forum. The United States even rejected the Taliban's offer to extradite Ben Laden to Pakistan for trial so that they could present their evidence against him.

In both international and domestic law, self-defence certainly cannot be invoked to justify a later attack on a person or country who is merely presumed or claimed to be an aggressor.

The US aggression against Afghanistan in October 2001 more closely resembles the new doctrine of "preventive war" which the White House subsequently made official in its National Security Strategy of September 2002. With this doctrine, the US claims the right to attack unilaterally, "preventively," any country perceived as a serious threat to its vital interests or those of its allies. This doctrine was used as a cover for the invasion of Iraq and will likely serve the same purpose in any future aggression against Iran, Syria, or other countries. Under international law, such acts and "strategy" are totally illegal and illegitimate. All they are is the doctrine of "might makes right" dressed up in fancy language.

— *Collectif Échec à la guerre*<sup>59</sup>

## The superpower issues a decree

**4 October 2001.** At a USA/NATO meeting held 23 days after terror attacks in New York city and Washington D.C., the United States announces that the C.I.A. has been authorized to kidnap suspected terrorists on the territory of member-states, which have nothing to say in the matter. They may not pose questions nor inspect the U.S. aircraft to be used in the kidnappings, which are subsequently cloaked with the euphemism of “extraordinary renditions”. The first country to submit to this decree will be Sweden, which is not a formal member of the military alliance; see 17 December, below.<sup>57</sup>

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## Further development of Persson’s servility

**7 October.** Assisted by the United Kingdom, the United States launches a massive assault on Afghanistan. The aggression is justified by reference to the U.N. Charter’s Article 51 which, claims the Bush II administration, entitles the U.S. to respond in this way to terror attacks in New York city and Washington D.C. on September 11<sup>th</sup>.

It is a patently false argument (see “Article 51 and Wars of Aggression”). But numerous so-called legal experts and political leaders choose to accept it as a valid. Among the latter is Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson who states that the twisted rationale is a welcome “further development of international law”.<sup>58</sup>

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## Neutrality “dead as the dinosaurs”

**11 October.** Henrik Landerholm, Conservative chair of the Swedish parliament’s Defence Committee, declares that, “Swedish neutrality is as dead as the dinosaurs. With entry into the EU nearly six years ago, we are members of a moral, economic and political alliance. To remain indifferent in the event of an attack or the threat of attack against any EU member-state is an impossibility.”

Regarding the EU’s common defence policy and military forces, former SDP Defence Minister Thage G. Peterson says, “In my view, it not only *looks* like a military alliance; it *is* one.”<sup>60</sup>

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## Enforcing U.S. injustice in Sweden via the EU

**13 November.** Three Swedish immigrants from Somalia are labelled as terrorists and bereft of their civil rights. Their financial assets are frozen and they are denied the right to earn a living or receive financial support of any kind from anyone (although social services remain obligated to ensure that they and their families are provided with the minimum requirements for existence).

In effect they are declared outlaws, as a result of a decision by the EU to honour a passive decision by an agency of the United Nations — to validate a list of terrorist organizations and individuals concocted by an agency of the U.S. government on the basis of little or no evidence. The three men are not given an opportunity to defend themselves, or even to know the basis of the sanctions inflicted upon them. Their predicament is described as “Kafkaesque”.

Eventually it emerges that the U.S. has found the three Swedish immigrants to be guilty by association with Al Barakaat International, a Somali “barefoot bank” that is accused of helping to finance the activities of the Al Qaeda organization. But it is quickly

*They are declared outlaws and are not given an opportunity to defend themselves, or even to know the basis of the sanctions inflicted upon them.*

### *Enforcing U.S. injustice in Sweden via the EU (cont.)*

*“At every step, this ‘legislative process’ has set aside fundamental and internationally recognized guarantees of legal rights.”*

determined by, among others, the Swedish Security Service (“SÄPO”) and the F.B.I. in the United States that there is no evidence that either Al Barakaat or the three Swedes — who in various capacities have been associated with the bank — have been involved in terrorist activities. Yet the responsible agency, the Office of Foreign Assets Control in the U.S. Treasury Department, refuses to reconsider its unfounded accusations. (Note that it is the U.S. government which controls the process, not the U.N.)

The government of Göran Persson declares that, while it does not agree with the sanctions, it is obliged to honour them as a member of the EU and the U.N. But critics point out that the EU is not a member of the U.N., and that its decision in this matter is both irrelevant to Sweden and clearly influenced by the United States. It is also argued that the civil rights of Swedish citizens and legal residents may not be abrogated by a decision of a U.N. agency which violates basic human rights — especially a decision that has so obviously resulted from the manipulation and/or pressure of a member-state.

The injustice of it all was summarized by Christian Åhlund, Chair of the Swedish Bar Association’s Committee on Human Rights: “A list drawn up by the U.S. government, as a preventive measure to freeze the assets of a number of organizations and individuals, has thus been automatically accepted by the U.N. Sanctions Committee, and then immediately established as law in every member-state by the EU Commission. At every step, this ‘legislative process’ has set aside fundamental and internationally recognized guarantees of legal rights.”<sup>61</sup>

\* \* \*

### *Delivering political refugees to torturers*

*Secret, hooded agents of a foreign government are allowed to enter Sweden, take possession of two political refugees, brutally molest them, and transport them to a country that is known to be a gross and persistent violator of human rights.*

**17 December.** Submitting to pressure from the United States, the Social Democratic government of Göran Persson abruptly revokes the political refugee status of two Egyptians accused by the U.S. of terrorism. Ahmed Agiza and Mohammed al-Zari, are delivered to a C.I.A. kidnap squad waiting at a Stockholm airport and then transported to Egypt where they are subjected to torture and other abuses. Sweden thus becomes the first country to collaborate with the U.S. programme of “extraordinary renditions” (see “The super-power issues a decree” on p. 31). It is a scandal with several dimensions, including:

- Secret, hooded agents of a foreign government are allowed to enter Sweden, take possession of two political refugees, brutally molest them, and transport them to a country that is known to be a gross and persistent violator of human rights (for its own purposes, and as a “torture subcontractor” for the United States).
- Sweden thereby violates its obligations under international law to protect all human beings from torture or the risk of torture.
- The removal of the political refugees is implemented without due process of law. It is rationalized on the basis of blindly accepted “evidence” supplied by the C.I.A. which the victims are not permitted to challenge or even to learn. According to Kjell Jönsson, attorney for one of the victims, this and other cases indicate that, “There is a wide-open highway from U.S. assessments to the Swedish government.”<sup>62</sup>

### *Delivering refugees to torturers (cont.)*

*Either Persson and Bodström are totally ignorant and incompetent, which neither they nor anyone else suggests, or they are well aware that a guarantee from a government like Egypt's is worthless.*

*"Relying on the principle of trust and on diplomatic assurances given by undemocratic states known not to respect human rights is simply cowardly and hypocritical."*

*Persson and Bodström try to pin the blame for the scandal on the deceased Anna Lindh*

- The decision is made by a handful of government officials and implemented within hours so that the victims' attorneys will be unable to file appeals with the European Court of Justice, which almost certainly would have ruled against the government.
- The decision is made in response to a U.S. threat to impose a trade embargo on Sweden and possibly on the European Union if the two Egyptians are not surrendered to their torturers.

Little of this becomes public until 2½ years later when TV4, Sweden's leading private television channel, broadcasts a rare investigative report on the deportation and its circumstances.<sup>63</sup> Prime Minister Göran Persson and his Minister of Justice, Thomas Bodström, attempt to defend the government's collaboration by referring to a written guarantee from the Egyptian government that the two men would not be tortured or otherwise mistreated. But either they are totally ignorant and incompetent, which neither they nor anyone else suggests, or they are well aware that such a guarantee from a government like Egypt's is worthless.

As Human Rights Watch has explained: "To cover itself, the Swedish government obtained promises from the Egyptian authorities that the men would not be subjected to torture or the death penalty, and would be given fair trials.... Both men were tortured in Egypt. In April 2004, Agiza was convicted on terrorism charges following a flagrantly unfair trial monitored by Human Rights Watch. Al-Zari was released in October 2003 without charge or trial, and remains under police surveillance in Egypt.

"The al-Zari and Agiza cases illustrate why diplomatic assurances against torture from governments with a well-documented record of such abuse are worthless. Sweden has recently been singled out by two significant European bodies investigating illegal C.I.A. rendition and detention activities. In June, Dick Marty, a Swiss senator tasked by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe with investigating European states' involvement in 'extraordinary renditions' and possible secret detention sites, highlighted the al-Zari and Agiza cases in his report. Marty concluded that: 'Relying on the principle of trust and on diplomatic assurances given by undemocratic states known not to respect human rights is simply cowardly and hypocritical.'" <sup>64</sup>

Among the other human rights organizations that condemn the deportation in much the same terms are Amnesty International, the U.N. Committee against Torture and the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights.

As more details of the scandal emerge, Persson and Bodström try to pin the blame for the scandal on Anna Lindh, who was foreign minister at the time and temporarily responsible for asylum matters due to a cabinet vacancy. Among other things, Persson claims that he was not informed of the United States' involvement until months afterward. Anna Lindh is in no position to offer a different account, having been murdered the previous September; but it eventually comes to light that she was far from solely, or even primarily responsible.

According to a well-documented account by Eva Franchell, Anna Lindh's secretary, Bodström was more directly involved in the



*Eva Franchell's book offers a very different account than that of Lindh's surviving colleagues.*

arrangements for the deportation than Lindh was; and it was Persson who had informed her of the threatened embargo and told her to "do what needs to be done".<sup>65</sup>

Persson also tries to justify the deportation by proclaiming that the two victims have received proper justice in Egypt. One was convicted of a crime, asserts Persson (albeit not the alleged crime used to justify his deportation), and the fact that the other one was set free proves that the Egyptian legal system works properly. He also persists in denying that the two men were tortured, even though that has been established by Swedish officials and several human rights organizations.

"It knocks the wind right out of you," responds attorney Kjell Jönsson. "That Göran Persson, head of government in a democratic society based on the rule of law refers to an Egyptian military court to support his assertions regarding Agiza, and also refers to legal guarantees in Egypt where the process includes torture and it is obvious that neither of the men has been given a fair trial — I find that frightening. One has to question his credibility and trustworthiness in matters of fundamental human rights."<sup>66</sup>

While Jönsson and others may question, Persson and Bodström never alter their pose. Both continue to assert that, presented with the same sort of situation again, they would act in precisely the same manner.

Given all this, Dick Marty's accusation of cowardice against the no-longer-neutral Sweden offers an interesting point of comparison with Pehr Gyllenhammar's accusation of cowardice against the previously neutral Sweden (see "Leading industrialist denounces neutrality" on p. 13).

*It all makes for an interesting point of comparison with Pehr Gyllenhammar's accusation of cowardice against the previously neutral Sweden.*

That contrast is heightened by the observations of Theo van Boven, U.N. Special Rapporteur on Torture. "Returned persons have indeed been subjected to torture [in Egypt], despite assurances given.... It turns out that these guarantees have often been loopholes rather than guarantees. If a country like Sweden — I respect Sweden a great deal. It has a long history, tradition and reputation for human rights. Now, if they start to 'shake' on these kinds of issues — to accommodate, to make concessions — what can we expect from other countries?"<sup>67</sup>

## 2002

### Swedish troops assigned to ISAF

**January.** A contingent of some 40 Swedish troops is assigned to the ISAF "peacekeeping" force in Afghanistan (see "Keeping peace the USA/NATO way" on p. 27). Their numbers will steadily increase during the following years.

All seven parliamentary parties approve the decision, on the understanding that the ISAF force will be kept strictly separate from the U.S. invasion/occupation force. But that assurance turns out to be false, and the pretence is abandoned completely in 2007 when a U.S. general formally takes command of ISAF.



### *Swedish troops assigned to ISAF (cont.)*

The bill authorizing the Swedish troops refers to the war of aggression and occupation as “the efforts in Afghanistan of the coalition led by the United States”.<sup>68</sup>

\* \* \*

### **Major expansion of military co-operation**

**7 February 2002.** The Swedish government signs a new agreement with USA/NATO concerning joint exercises of Partnership for Peace (PFP) and bilateral military co-operation. Among the areas of co-operation involved are monitoring of air space, defence policy and planning, budgeting, purchasing, materiel, strategy, military training and military infrastructure.

According to USA/NATO officials, the Swedish defence is better adapted to that of the military alliance than are those of several member-states.<sup>69</sup>

\* \* \*

### **Polish exercise**

**March.** Sweden contributes 1700 troops to a PFP exercise in Poland.

NATO  
Review

The military/civilian divide: peacekeeping and beyond

current issue: autumn 2007      previous issues | language

## History

### Sweden's partnership with NATO

*Ryan Hendrickson looks at how Sweden has managed to get the best from both neutrality and NATO.*

For many of the past 170 years, Sweden has had a policy of "neutrality" in its foreign affairs. Starting with King Karl XIV Johan in the early 19th century, Sweden avoided military engagement in international conflicts. It is no coincidence that the country has not been at war since 1814.

But since the mid 1990s, Sweden has increasingly cooperated with NATO. And it is now developing into a country that can play a significant role as a security provider and vital Partner to the Allies.

### Not so neutral in international diplomacy

In the aftermath of World War II, the official policy from Sweden was one of neutrality. Yet with the creation of the United Nations, it was also clear that Sweden wanted to see democracy advance and the protection of human rights. To help achieve these goals, it put forward skilled diplomats to help shape the international political agenda.

Among Swedish diplomats who played such roles, perhaps most significant during the post World War II era was the "visionary" Dag Hammarskjöld, the United Nations Secretary General. Hammarskjöld was a founding strategist in calling for the presence of international peacekeepers to help stabilize international political crises, which today is a central component of NATO's post cold war mission.



Diplomatic Dag: The first Swedish Secretary General of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld  
(© AP / Reporters)

*In its publicity material, USA/NATO exploits the positive image of the genuine peacemaker Dag Hammarskjöld to suggest a continuity between Sweden's neutral past and its current role as a "security provider" in the so-called Partnership for Peace.*

## 2003

**Bildt co-chairs lobby group for Bush's war**

*"Someone of Carl's stature, with his background — and from Sweden to boot — was of course very important."*

**January-March.** Carl Bildt signs on as co-chair for the European branch of the Committee for the Liberation of Iraq, a lobby group with close ties to the White House. Its function is to generate public opinion for the next war against Iraq, currently being prepared by the Bush II administration. Among the other collaborating propagandists are three army chiefs from the Iraq war of the Bush I administration in 1991, Republican senators John McCain and Newt Gingrich, executives from the weapons industry, a former head of the C.I.A., union leader James Hoffa, and more of that ilk.

The head of the Committee, a former advisor to U.S. minister of war Donald Rumsfeld, would later explain that it "played a decisive role in building a coalition against Saddam Hussein.... Someone of Carl's stature, with his background — and from Sweden to boot — was of course very important. Thanks to his personal network and his endorsement, we were able to recruit several other [collaborators].

"Their most important contribution was to provide us with a variety of voices in several languages in a number of major European cities.... Our task was to serve as a communications channel and a sort of media centre that reporters could call upon when they were preparing to write about developments in Iraq. Carl was deeply involved in that aspect, and was himself a strong voice in public debate."

One of Bildt's themes was that Sweden must abandon the last remaining vestiges of its neutrality, and take its place at "all the international advisory councils" and "shoulder our responsibility, even in situations where none of the paths is simple".<sup>70</sup>

\* \* \*

**Powell propaganda impresses Persson**

*Swedish and international experts dismiss the so-called evidence as at best circumstantial, and in some cases pure invention. But Göran Persson claims to be convinced.*

**5 February.** At a special meeting of the U.N. Security Council, U.S. foreign minister ("Secretary of State") Colin Powell presents what he claims is sufficient evidence to justify war against Iraq. In honour of the occasion, Picasso's famous depiction of bombing terror, "Guernica"— which Powell must pass on his way to the meeting—is covered over in order to avoid the risk that some wayward camera might register a visual reminder of what war can do and what the United Nations is *supposed* to do.

The "evidence" is weak or irrelevant and Powell will later confide that this blatant exercise in war propaganda, including the theatrical display of alleged anthrax bacteria, is the worst mistake of his career (which is to say much for a career that includes efforts to cover up the My Lai massacre, the most well-known of the many committed by U.S. troops during the Vietnam War).

With near unanimity, Swedish and international experts dismiss Powell's so-called evidence as at best circumstantial, and in some cases pure invention. But Göran Persson claims to be convinced. "He focuses primarily on the media impact, on the convincing power of the presentation", notes a Swedish science journal. "But the validity of the alleged facts and the rationality of the argument are not considered to require any examination whatsoever."<sup>71</sup>

*Powell propaganda  
impresses Persson (cont.)*

*Persson relates what he  
has seen on U.S. television  
instead of clearly stating  
what ought to be done.*

The Swedish people are considerably less impressed by Powell's dramatic performance. A survey conducted by two national security-related agencies finds that 82 per cent doubted the claims of the United States, "especially after Powell presented his so-called evidence to the U.N. Security Council", and that "86 per cent were certain that they had been subjected to a propaganda war in the mass media".<sup>72</sup>

But none of this scepticism appears to rub off on Prime Minister Persson, who labours to avoid any clear position on the necessity or legality of the war. "He concerns himself more with analysing and predicting the likelihood of war than with promoting a Swedish standpoint," notes one observer. "He relates what he has seen on U.S. television during a visit to Canada instead of clearly stating Sweden's position on what the Security Council ought to do."<sup>73</sup>

\* \* \*

**In defence of  
mass murder**



*Madeleine Albright, for  
whom the deaths of  
500,000 Iraqi children  
were "worth the price".*

**23 March 2003.** Foreign Minister Anna Lindh emphatically rejects the widely held view that U.S. plans for yet another war against Iraq are based on oil politics. She states that the conflict between Iraq and the *United Nations* (not the U.S.) is of long duration and that oil has never been cited as an explanation.

She also rejects accusations that the U.N. programme of sanctions against Iraq, established after its previous war with the U.S., have resulted in large-scale suffering and death to innocent Iraqis. That accusation has been made by two former administrators of the programme, Dennis Halliday and Hans von Sponeck, who resigned in protest at what they explicitly termed its genocidal consequences.

Anna Lindh thereby allies herself with the position of the U.S. government, whose foreign minister Madeleine Albright infamously responded to a question about the 500,000 Iraqi children estimated to have died as a result of the sanctions, with these words: "We think the price is worth it."

"The people of Iraq are not suffering from the sanctions," asserts Lindh. "They are suffering from a political elite that is benefiting itself." She blames the widespread "misunderstanding" of the situation on "critics of the United States in Sweden and other countries".<sup>74</sup>

*"Since Iraqis have the poor  
judgement to suffer from  
one of the most oppressive  
regimes in the Middle East,  
they will just have to accept  
being subjected to mass  
murder."*

One of those critics is Jan Guillou, writer, journalist and former president of the Swedish PEN Club: "What our foreign minister now says to the dead children and their mothers," he replied, "is that it was a 'misunderstanding' that the children were killed by systematic, murderous biological and chemical warfare. It was Saddam Hussein who did it. And since you have the poor judgement to suffer from one of the most oppressive regimes in the Middle East, you will just have to accept being subjected to mass murder...."

"The sort of propaganda for which Anna Lindh now serves as a mouthpiece, and which is now flooding all the Western media, can only have one purpose: It is to convey the necessity of the great sacrifice that once again awaits the people of Iraq. For although

*In defence of  
mass murder (cont.)*

they shall once again die in the hundreds of thousands, the war is not really about them; it is about Saddam Hussein, alone. Once again, Western politicians will say that 'It was worth it'. In the case of Iraq [unlike those of South Africa and the Soviet Union, for example], the regime must be toppled with the help of a mass slaughter of the oppressed population."<sup>75</sup>

\* \* \*

**Great sensitivity to  
the wishes of the U.S.**

**13 March 2003.** One week after the U.S. "requests" that two Iraqi diplomats be declared *persona non grata*, they are told to leave Sweden. Prime Minister Persson explains that it is merely a coincidence and notes that two other Iraqi diplomats had been expelled the previous year on the same grounds, i.e. spying on political refugees from Iraq. But that turns out to be "incompatible with the truth", to employ a diplomatic Swedish expression; those two had merely been questioned about their activities. According to a journalist with close ties to the Social Democratic Party, the latest episode "seems rather to indicate a great, perhaps embarrassingly great sensitivity to the wishes of the United States".<sup>76</sup>

\* \* \*

**Equal partners  
in U-boat warfare**

**13 March.** It is reported that U.S. and Swedish submarines have quietly conducted a joint exercise off the west coast of Sweden. The U.S. is especially interested in the Swedish capability for submarine warfare in coastal waters. "The Americans were very impressed," says a participating Swedish naval officer. "We were able to conduct the exercise as equal partners."<sup>77</sup>

**"Evasive mumbling, passivity and subservience to the U.S."**

Why has not Sweden, with its strong peace tradition, openly and from the start supported the efforts of Germany and France to find a peaceful solution to the Iraq conflict?

... Unfortunately, the words and actions of our prime minister and foreign minister have not been clear and direct, but have instead been characterized by incomprehensible and evasive mumbling, passivity and subservience to the United States. In the end we will have to support the U.S., they seem to say. We have to follow the U.N. if it gives the start signal for the war.

That kind of talk represents a major shift, and grates in the ears of this fellow Social Democrat. If there is anything that has been a lodestar for the Social Democratic movement during all its years in Sweden, from the days of Hjalmar Branting onward, it is an unequivocal struggle against war and for peace....

Like the U.N., Sweden will lose its credibility as a champion of peace, progress and justice— not least in the Third World— if it breaks its centuries-old tradition of neutrality, non-alliance and peace.

— Agne Gustafsson, political scientist<sup>78</sup>



### Price of weapons ban is too high

**19 March 2003.** As the U.S. launches its war against Iraq, critics demand that the government stop exports of war materiel to the aggressor nation in accordance with Swedish law. "It is also a question of our own interest," responds Prime Minister Persson. "It is a simple matter for us to stop exports to the US. But it is impossible for us to live without imports from that country. If we lose our own defence capability, the price of an export ban is too high."<sup>79</sup>

\* \* \*

### Out of step with international law

**26 March.** Prime Minister Persson's initial response to the start of the U.S. war against Iraq on 19 March was that it clearly violated international law. But seven days later he backs off from that judgement, contenting himself with the formulation that, "The superpower has not proceeded in step with world opinion". The implication is that, if the U.S. had been more patient, world opinion would have caught up with the inexorable march toward war.

Persson also says that, "We must not forget that the U.S. has gone via the United Nations", by which he apparently refers to the superpower's failed attempt to gain the consent of the Security Council for its war of aggression (see "Powell propaganda impresses Persson" on p. 36).

Persson now praises the other countries that, like his Sweden, have not "locked themselves" into a position on the legality of the war. What is important now, he explains, is to look forward and join together in building up Iraq afterwards.<sup>80</sup>

\* \* \*

### Intensified military co-operation

**28 April.** With utmost discretion, Sweden accepts the invitation of the Bush II government to join the Defense Trade Security Initiative, together with Japan, Australia and the member-states of USA/NATO. The stated purpose is to increase the efficiency of export licensing, promote technical compatibility and further develop advanced weapons technology.

"It is mind-boggling that, in the midst of an illegal war, the Swedish government chooses to intensify military co-operation with the United States," says the chair of *Svenska Freds*, Sweden's largest peace organization.<sup>81</sup>

\* \* \*

### Don't mention the war

**25 September.** Sweden's contribution to the annual debate of the U.N. General Assembly makes no mention of the U.S. war against Iraq, provoking the following response from Sverker Åström, a retired civil servant who is widely regarded as the Nestor of Swedish foreign policy:

"The address was a complete disappointment. Nothing was said of Sweden's position regarding the most important event of the preceding year, the U.S. assault on Iraq, or our reflections on the questions of international law and politics that have been actualized by that assault.... It is fairly typical that the Swedish address appears not to have been commented upon or even mentioned in the Swedish media."<sup>82</sup>

\* \* \*



## War on Iraq good for business

**8 October 2003.** Statistics Sweden reports that exports of Swedish war materiel have nearly tripled, due primarily to the U.S. war against Iraq. "The important thing is that the U.S. military is a customer of ours and that it has used some of our weapons systems in Iraq," proudly notes a spokesman for Saab Bofors Dynamics. "It is a certification of quality that the world's biggest and best equipped army buys our equipment."<sup>83</sup>

## 2004

### Helping to plan EU wars

**1 January.** A lieutenant-colonel becomes Sweden's representative on the EU military staff that is responsible for planning and preparation for war.<sup>84</sup>

\* \* \*

### Persson's third trip to the White House

**27 April.** Göran Persson is granted an audience with President Bush II and thus becomes the only Swedish prime minister ever to visit the White House three times. There is no published agenda, but it is reported that Sweden's much-appreciated contribution of troops to the USA/NATO "peacekeeping" force in Afghanistan is discussed, and that Bush expressed his desire for countries other than the U.S. to convey positive thoughts about the reconstruction of Iraq.



Organizational chart of the European Union Military Staff, on which Sweden is now represented. The flags indicate the nationalities of the officers in charge of the various sections.

*Persson's third trip  
to the White House (cont.)*

*Bush is "intelligent, well-read, determined and knows exactly what he is doing."*

Persson has nothing but praise for his host. "He is intelligent, well-read and meticulous," claims the prime minister. "One seldom meets a politician on his level who is so familiar with the details. He knows Swedish unemployment statistics. Apart from that, he is exceptionally pleasant to deal with, easy to converse with. One feels respected and 'seen', and one is able to present one's point of view."

"He is extremely underrated in Europe. He is often described as someone who doesn't know what he wants. He is determined and knows exactly what he is doing.... The U.S. can be arrogant and make incorrect decisions. It was a mistake of the United States to go into Iraq without the U.N. Now the U.N. is going back in again."<sup>85</sup>

**Human rights abuses  
are "mere rumours"**

*Sweden's foreign minister  
relies on the assurances  
of U.S. officials.*

**7 May 2004.** Anna Lindh's successor as foreign minister, Laila Freivalds, dismisses reports of widespread human rights violations by U.S. troops in Iraq as mere rumours. "There have been rumours of a general nature concerning conditions in prison camps, and we have discussed them [with representatives of the United States] and requested information. But thus far, they have always denied that abuses have occurred."

It is a disingenuous response, as indicated by Amnesty International. "The Swedish foreign ministry receives essentially everything that Amnesty publishes," notes Elisabeth Löfgren of the Swedish branch of AI. "There can be several messages a day. In this case, there are well-documented reports from many sources, and one would have thought that there is good reason to discuss the issue more concretely."<sup>86</sup>

A far more robust statement is issued one month later by Freivalds' counterpart in Norway, a USA/NATO member-state. The U.S. mistreatment of prisoners in Iraq has worsened the situation there, and has increased distrust of both the United States and Western democratic values, declares Foreign Minister Jan Petersen in the Norwegian parliament. "The abuses in Abu Ghuraib Prison are nothing less than outrageous," says Petersen, who also points out that it is the United States' obligation under international law to protect the human rights of prisoners.<sup>87</sup>

\* \* \*

**More troops for ISAF**

**26 May.** The Swedish parliament votes to increase the number of Swedish troops attached to the ISAF force in Afghanistan to a maximum of 150.

\* \* \*

**EU defence agency**

**24 June.** The government decides that Sweden shall participate in a new agency of the European Union, the function of which is to co-ordinate the defence industries of the member-states and increase co-operation on research, purchasing and technological development.<sup>88</sup>

\* \* \*

## Practicing for war in a cold, harsh climate

*One of the photos used in a government document to illustrate the value of northern Sweden for military testing and exercises.*



**16 December 2004.** With minimal preparation and discussion, the Swedish parliament approves a scheme by which USA/NATO and individual countries may hire a large area of sparsely populated northern Sweden for military tests and exercises. Such activities may be conducted in the air and/or on land, with or without the participation of Swedish personnel.

The legislation specifically notes that the opportunity to gain experience in a “subarctic setting” is of particular interest. Apart from Scandinavia, the only land areas of the globe that are subject to real subarctic warfare are in Finland, Canada, Alaska and... Russia.

The legislation is the result of a hurried one-man public inquiry commissioned and approved by the Social Democratic government of Göran Persson. But some party comrades in the affected area are less than pleased. “Foreign powers are standing in line to come here and conduct military exercises by themselves,” says Jalle Henriksen, head of the Älvsbyn Social Democratic Association.

“Why does the Dutch army have to come here and hold exercises in ‘a cold, harsh climate’? That is not the kind of climate they have in The Netherlands.... With small steps, we are moving away from our previous national security policy. The approach to NATO is fairly obvious.”<sup>89</sup>

## 2005

### Non-aligned in alignment with USA/NATO

**9 February.** The concept of non-alignment is further revised to include participation in USA/NATO operations. In the words of Foreign Minister Laila Freivalds, “Sweden is militarily non-aligned. At the same time, NATO is an important partner when it comes to military efforts in crisis areas.”<sup>90</sup>

There is apparently no need to mention that Sweden is a very junior “partner” in this context, or that it is USA/NATO that decides which areas are to be subjected to its violent form of “crisis management.”

## USA/NATO exercise in Norway

**March 2005.** For the first time, Swedish troops participate in a major exercise in northern Norway, together with contingents from Finland and twelve USA/NATO member-states.<sup>91</sup>

\* \* \*

### "Sweden is the leader"

**24-25 May.** In one of the largest high-level meetings ever held on Swedish soil, delegates from 46 USA/NATO member-states and "Euro-Atlantic partners" gather at the winter resort of Åre.

The leader of the Left (formerly Communist) Party expresses concern that the meeting indicates closer ties with USA/NATO. But the head of the local party association says, "Of course there is something in what Lars Ohly says; but this is really good PR for Åre."<sup>92</sup>

*The United States is very pleased with Sweden: "We work so well together."*

The alliance's secretary-general, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer of The Netherlands, explains that the organization is special due to its military nature and the United States' "participation". But the U.S. is hardly likely to subordinate itself to the European Union, he notes.

The United States is very pleased with Sweden. "We work so well together," says Nicholas Burns, head of the U.S. delegation. "I can count on the fingers of one hand the countries that have been more actively involved in Partnership for Peace than Sweden. There simply isn't any other. Sweden is the leader."<sup>93</sup>

*This NATO meeting  
"is not a NATO meeting".*

Swedish Foreign Minister Laila Freivalds, however, is reluctant to speak of such things — at least not to a Swedish audience. She attempts instead to take refuge beneath the PR umbrella of the military alliance's Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPR), in the name of which the meeting has been organized.

"This is not a NATO meeting," she struggles to explain at a press conference, "even if you journalists persist in writing that it is. This is a meeting of EA... EPR... an ERA...."

"Say 'NATO meeting'," suggests a reporter. "It's easier."<sup>94</sup>

\* \* \*

## From the Baltic to the Pacific

**June.** A Swedish submarine is dispatched to San Diego for naval exercises with U.S. counterparts. "To come from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean was something that one could only dream of," exalts the U-boat's captain. According to the U.S. Navy, the *Gotland* will play a key role in improving the U.S. submarine defence.<sup>95</sup>

*San Diego, with  
the Swedish submarine  
Gotland in the foreground  
and the U.S. aircraft carrier  
Ronald Reagan looming  
in the background.  
(Photo: U.S. Navy)*





## Agreement on anti-terror research

**22 August 2005.** The Swedish Defence Research Agency ("FOI") is instructed by the government to enter an agreement with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to conduct joint research on the prevention of terrorist attacks.<sup>96</sup>

\* \* \*

## Democracy disinvented in deference to U.S.



*Eva Golinger's offence is that she has documented the assault on democracy in Latin America by U.S. agencies.*

**29 August.** Author and attorney Eva Golinger, who is invited to speak at a World Meeting of Democracy Promoting Foundations in Stockholm, is informed upon arrival that she has been removed from the agenda. The reason: The secretary-general of the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy (NED), who has been invited to participate in the same session, refuses to appear on the same stage with Golinger. The Swedish organizers, who include representatives of parliamentary parties, submit to his ultimatum.

Golinger's offence is that she has used official U.S. documents and other convincing sources to document, in the book *The Chavez Code* and elsewhere, how the NED and other agencies were used to finance and in various other ways support the failed 2002 coup against Venezuela's president Hugo Chavez. Despite having been repeatedly chosen by large majorities of Venezuelan voters in internationally certified elections, Chavez is routinely characterized as a dictator by the U.S. propaganda apparatus, including its Swedish components.

Golinger has also documented how the same methods have been used against other democratically elected governments in Latin America, including those of Chile and Nicaragua. It was presumably on the basis of that expertise that she was invited to participate in the conference session entitled, "Supporting regime change — democratic assistance or intervention?"

She is permitted to sit in the audience and listen to the lavishly financed NED official explain why it is sometimes necessary to undermine democracy in order to save it.<sup>97</sup>

\* \* \*

## Certified accomplice in torture programme

**10 November.** In a report to the U.N. General Assembly, the United States, Sweden, the U.K., Canada, France and Kyrgyzstan are singled out for violating human rights by deporting terrorist suspects to Egypt and other countries that are known to conduct torture. Entitled "Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment", it is the work of special rapporteur Manfred Nowak.<sup>98</sup>

\* \* \*

## Little difference with formal membership

**16 November.** An official of the Defence Ministry states that Sweden is already so deeply involved in USA/NATO that no one would be able to tell the difference if it were to formally become a member. He notes that Swedish troops participate in the alliance's military exercises with increasing frequency, Swedish officers are permanently in place at its Brussels headquarters, Sweden buys increasing amounts of materiel from USA/NATO countries, etc.<sup>99</sup>

\* \* \*



## First fatalities in Afghanistan

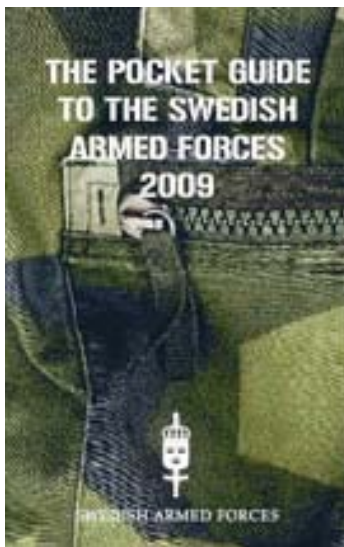
**25 November 2005.** Two Swedish soldiers are killed by an explosive device in Afghanistan, the first fatalities among the Swedish troops in the USA/NATO “peacekeeping” force.

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## More troops to Afghanistan

**7 December.** The Swedish contingent in the USA/NATO force is increased to a maximum of 375.

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*The extent to which Sweden's "national defence" now serves EU/USA/NATO is clearly reflected in the Pocket Guide to the Swedish Armed Forces, an official publication. The message of page 4, shown to the right has become a leitmotif in all forms of PR material relating to the Swedish military.*

### THE WORLD HAS CHANGED

## IN OUR NEW WORLD, BEING ON YOUR OWN IS NOT AN OPTION

Since the Cold War ended two decades ago, the security policy situation in Europe has fundamentally changed. Confrontation has been replaced by cooperation. Virtually every state in Europe is now a member of both the EU and NATO. Sweden's security is based on solidarity with other countries with shared democratic values.

Challenges and threats to our security are changeable, complex and immense. Our security is strengthened through common crisis management and by making active and credible contributions to Nordic, European and global security. The Swedish Armed Forces should be able to both give and



## 2006

**New weapon,  
new rationalization**

*"The the regulations  
established by the parliament  
have already been distorted  
beyond recognition."*

**February.** A more effective type of artillery shell developed by Swedish and U.S. arms manufacturers is introduced for use in the war against Iraq. Dubbed "Excalibur", the weapon is highly accurate and has a range of up to 60 kilometres, nearly twice that of previous shells (photo on p. 26).

The government has justified previous exports to the U.S., in the midst of its aggression, on the basis of contractual obligations to supply existing weapons. Since that line of reasoning cannot be applied to the new weapon, it is argued instead that ending co-operation with the United States would weaken Sweden's national security.

It is an argument that does not sit well with the SDP government's two supporting parties, the Left and the Greens. "This is a disaster," says Lars Ohly, leader of the Left Party. "When we have previously objected to Sweden contributing to the U.S. war, we have been told that existing contracts must be honoured. But this is a new type of weapon and a new contract. It is a violation of the regulations established by the parliament, which have already been distorted beyond recognition by all the exemptions that have been granted."<sup>100</sup>

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**War game in Alaska**

**9 March.** Six Swedish fighter planes and 100 personnel participate in an aerial war game in Alaska.

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**U.S. pleased with  
Swedish submariners**

**18 April.** The U.S. Navy announces that it is so pleased with the Swedish submarine *Gotland* that it wishes to extend the agreement on joint exercises for another year (see "From the Baltic to the Pacific" on p. 43). The *Gotland*, which operates with a very quiet Stirling motor, has been playing the role of prey in a game of hide-and-seek with U.S., Canadian and Australian U-boats. All costs for the Swedish participation, including travel and housing expenses, are paid by the U.S.<sup>101</sup>

\* \* \*

**Appeal to end  
torture collaboration**

**9 March.** Manfred Novak, U.N. rapporteur on torture publicly appeals to the Swedish government to cease its collaboration with the torturers in the White House (see "Certified accomplice in torture programme" on p. 44).<sup>102</sup>

\* \* \*

**More responsibility  
for Swedish troops**

**15 March.** Swedish troops assume responsibility for reconstruction efforts in the four northern provinces of Afghanistan.<sup>103</sup>

\* \* \*

**Wanted: closer  
ties with USA/NATO**

**5 April.** Foreign Minister Jan Eliasson, formerly a close associate of Olof Palme, tells the parliament that the government seeks closer ties with USA/NATO and cites the participation of Swedish troops in the Afghanistan ISAF force as a positive example.<sup>104</sup>

**Attacks covered up**

**27 May 2006.** It is reported that at least three attacks on Swedish troops in Afghanistan during the past year have been kept secret, presumably to avoid the risk of arousing public opinion against the “peacekeeping” mission in that country.<sup>105</sup>

### **Silent Government Terrified of U.S. Displeasure**

ONCE EVERY YEAR, it is the duty of the government to present the parliament with its view of the world situation and the general direction of Swedish foreign policy. The rhetorical emphasis this year was on our defence of international law and human rights. It was stated that our entire foreign policy is “permeated” with concern for those issues — and that “international law, humanitarian law and human rights guide the government’s standpoint on current conflicts”.

One can hardly believe one’s eyes and ears. The reality is completely different.

What is undoubtedly the most serious violation of international law and the U.N. Charter since World War II, the U.S. assault on Iraq in March 2003 and the continuing occupation, is not mentioned with a single word.... Nor was there any comment on the fact that the war continues in a cruel manner and increasingly has the character of a popular liberation struggle with the primary objective of ending the occupation. There is no analysis of the consequence — so crucial for future developments — that the Iraq war is deepening the division between the West and the Muslim world.

The same silence applies to what is called our struggle on behalf of human rights. The continuing war in Iraq, in itself, involves serious violations of those rights — stemming partly from the war-related actions that are causing unspeakable suffering for the Iraqi people who have already suffered so much, and partly from conditions in the U.S. prisons with their systematic torture authorized by the White House....

The government’s silence on these issues is shameful and unworthy of the proud tradition that is Sweden’s to maintain in matters of international law....

It is probably not a wild guess that the government’s position on these issues is characterized by an almost panic-stricken terror of saying anything that might arouse displeasure in Washington.

It is there that it has been decided to incorporate torture, violations of international law, etc. as basic features of U.S. policy.... It is there that the theory has been developed which gives the U.S. the unilateral right to take preventive military measures whenever and wherever on earth it perceives the slightest sign of a threat to U.S. interests.

It is natural during these days, when the memory of Olof Palme is powerfully alive, to ask how he would have reacted to the Iraq war. It is quite certain that he would have loudly raised his voice with rage and indignation....<sup>106</sup>

— Sverker Åström, 5 March 2006

### Nearly as well-adapted as the U.K.

**29 May 2006.** A USA/NATO official in Brussels states that Sweden's "interoperability" with the military alliance is almost as fully developed as the United Kingdom's, including everything from fuel types to tank parts and communications equipment. He also notes that Sweden participates in thirty exercises with the alliance or individual member-states every year, and has assigned a staff officer to headquarters in Brussels to co-ordinate Swedish plans with the alliance's six-year planning cycle. Of the five West European partner countries, Sweden is the only one that is represented by a special ambassador to USA/NATO. Foreign Minister Jan Eliasson is reported to welcome these developments.<sup>107</sup>

\* \* \*

### Another major exercise

**June.** Thousands of USA/NATO army, navy and air force personnel participate in a major exercise in southern Sweden and the adjacent Baltic Sea.<sup>108</sup>

\* \* \*

### Defence industry under foreign control

**9 August.** "The Swedish weapons industry became foreign-owned" is the headline of an article which describes the purchase of controlling interests in that industry by U.S., British and German companies, a process that began in 1997.<sup>109</sup>

\* \* \*

### Norway provides principled contrast

**October.** Kjell Magne Bondevik, former prime minister of a centre-right Norwegian government, discloses in his autobiography that he threatened to resign in 2003 if his coalition cabinet refused to support his opposition to the U.S. war of aggression against Iraq. The principled standpoint of the otherwise conservative Christian Democratic leader offers an instructive contrast to the very different posture of Göran Persson, his Social Democratic counterpart in Sweden.<sup>110</sup>

\* \* \*

### Swedish royals dine with president

**13 October.** The king and queen of Sweden are invited to lunch in the White House with President Bush II. It is "an opportunity to further strengthen the friendship between Sweden and the United States," says Bush.<sup>111</sup>

\* \* \*

### Bildt announces closer ties with U.S.

**24 October.** In the latest of his numerous visits to Washington, this time as foreign minister in the centre-right government led by Conservative comrade Fredrik Reinfeldt, Carl Bildt explains that Sweden has begun a more intensive relationship with the United States. In between meetings with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Vice-president Dick Cheney, Bildt notes that, "There is a clear interest here in Washington for us to play a more active role on the European scene and in the transatlantic dialogue, and we will try to do so."<sup>112</sup>

\* \* \*

### White House open door for Swedish P.M.

**26 October.** White House hospitality for Swedish prime ministers continues, as Conservative Fredrik Reinfeldt is invited to an audience after just 19 days as head of a new centre-right government. Meanwhile, his Social Democratic counterpart in Norway,



*White House open door  
for Swedish P.M. (cont.)*

USA/NATO member-state  
Norway has been far less  
compliant than non-member  
Sweden.



Photo: Regeringskansliet/Thomas Quiggle

*Prime Minister Reinholdt conferring with President Bush II*

Jens Stoltenberg, has yet to receive an invitation after 952 days in office — apparently because USA/NATO member-state Norway has been far less compliant than non-member Sweden. Among other things, Norway has taken a strong stand against the Iraq war (see “Norway provides principled contrast” on preceding page) and has actively engaged with Hamas, the Palestinian political movement that has been designated as an untouchable terrorist group by the U.S. and, consequently, by the European Union.<sup>113</sup>

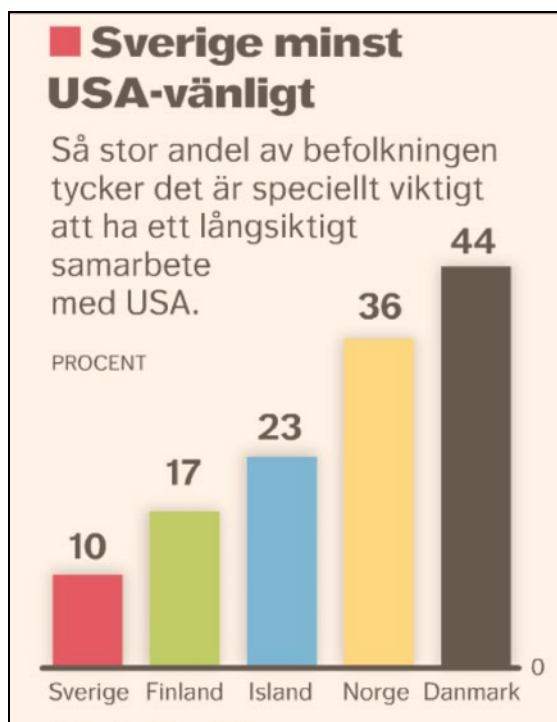
\* \* \*

**Swedish people not  
keen on ties with U.S.**

**25 October 2006.** An opinion survey commissioned by the Nordic Council finds that, of the Nordic peoples, Swedes are the least enthusiastic about long-term co-operation with the United States. Only ten per cent think that it is “especially important”, compared with 36 per cent of Norwegians and 44 per cent of Danes. The Swedish figure is the same as that for China, and closer to the seven per cent for Russia than for any of the other Nordic countries.<sup>114</sup>

*Percentage of respondents  
who agree that long-term  
co-operation with U.S.  
is especially important.*

*Left-to-right:  
Sweden, Finland,  
Iceland, Norway,  
Denmark*





### Swedish people regard U.S. as greatest threat

**29 October 2006.** An opinion survey commissioned by a media group in Sweden finds that, of six alternatives, Swedes regard the United States as the greatest threat to world peace. The six countries they were asked to rank were Israel, China, Russia, United States, North Korea and Iran. The U.S. was ranked as the greatest threat by 29 per cent, North Korea by 28 per cent and Iran by 18 per cent. Younger Swedes were more likely than their elders to regard the U.S. as the greatest threat.<sup>115</sup>

\* \* \*

### Bush plans closer ties with Sweden

**22 November.** President Bush II announces that USA/NATO plans to strengthen its ties to five “partners”: Sweden, Finland, Japan, Australia and South Korea (the last three of which are not usually regarded as located in or near the North Atlantic region). It is one of the main points he intends to raise at the forthcoming meeting of alliance members in Latvia during 28-29 November.<sup>116</sup>

## 2007

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### Pretence of “separate forces” is terminated

**4 February.** U.S. General Dan K. McNeil takes command of the ISAF “peacekeeping” force in Afghanistan, thereby violating a basic premise of the legislation (Prop. 2005/06:34) authorizing Sweden’s participation: “The International Security Assistance Force, ISAF, and the OEF coalition (Operation Enduring Freedom led by the United States) shall continue to be two distinct forces, operating with separate mandates and chains of command”.

McNeil, who is implicated in serious human rights violations,<sup>117</sup> issues more lethal rules of engagement that encourage “pre-emptive action against perceived threats”.

It is this man whose orders the Swedish troops are now required to obey. The response of their government to this development is... no response.

\* \* \*

### SDP and Conservatives in basic agreement

*“Totally lacking is a coherent vision of a global order of peace and justice, probably because such a vision would necessarily include a withering critique of the U.S. view of the world.”*

**14 February.** The centre-right government’s annual foreign policy declaration is presented to the parliament by Foreign Minister Carl Bildt. “The declaration included the usual homage to a number of noble aims that Sweden is striving to support, such as freedom, peace, reconciliation, democracy, human rights [etc.]”, notes retired diplomat and civil servant, Sverker Åström.

“But totally lacking is a coherent vision of a global order of peace and justice, to the construction of which Sweden wishes to contribute on the basis of our traditions, values and principles. This is probably because such a vision, even if the United States is not specifically mentioned, would necessarily include a withering critique of the U.S. view of the world as defined in official documents and now practiced in Iraq.... That conflict, the most serious in the world since World War II, is dealt with in a single sentence: ‘Developments in Iraq give great cause for concern’.”<sup>118</sup>

But there is little complaint from Urban Ahlin, the foreign policy spokesman for the Social Democrats — the largest party, now

## A country at war — and for what?

Sweden is at war. But the curious thing is that few Swedes seem to have noticed that not-insignificant circumstance.... It is to be hoped that the general public will [eventually] discover that we are at war — even if theoreticians of the new centre-right government, cheered on by “liberal” editorialists, have begun to speak of the Swedish military as a foreign aid organization. A leader in *Dagens Nyheter* describes the task of our soldiers as working for “market economy and social development”....

At first, the idea was that Afghanistan was to be liberated from the Taliban so that Usama bin Ladin and his followers could be captured. When that turned out to be impossible, the rationale for the war became, instead, to liberate Afghan women. With that also having turned out to be impossible, the rationale has now become the introduction of “market economy and social development”....

Exactly how many Swedish lives are we prepared to sacrifice in Afghanistan — and for what?... The terrible truth is that there will have to be a number of needlessly sacrificed human lives in order to gain the simple insight that we have no business being there, nor any cause worth dying for.<sup>119</sup>

— Jan Guillou, February 2007

### SDP and Conservatives in basic agreement (cont.)

in opposition. The debate that follows Bildt’s presentation is a “Swedish championship match in back-slapping between Messrs. Bildt and Ahlin,” observes Hans Linde of the Left Party.

That view is warmly seconded by Bildt’s party colleague, Foreign Aid Minister Gunilla Carlsson, who says that the Social Democrats and the Conservatives are in basic agreement on foreign policy. She is especially pleased with Ahlin’s positive attitude toward NATO.<sup>120</sup>

\* \* \*

### Peacekeeping with intent to kill

**8 March 2007.** It is reported that Swedish troops in Afghanistan have joined U.S. and Finnish troops in military attacks on targeted “militants”. It is not the Swedes who choose the targets. Critics argue that such deadly attacks do not conform with the stated peacekeeping function of ISAF.<sup>121</sup>

\* \* \*

### Selective concern for human rights

**13 March.** In his presentation of the Swedish government’s general standpoint to the U.N. Human Rights Council, Foreign Minister Carl Bildt, among other things:

- States that regimes that violate human rights are often the same that threaten international peace and stability, but does not mention the U.S. wars of aggression against and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Condemns the death penalty in Iran and China, but does not mention the U.S. where even non-adults and mentally handicapped persons are executed.
- Singles out Cuba for criticism, but does not mention the United States’ illegal, punitive trade embargo against that country or the U.S. torture centre and concentration camp at Guantanamo.<sup>122</sup>

### *Selective concern for human rights (cont.)*

*Bildt's account of human rights violations on the island of Cuba ignores the U.S. torture centre and concentration camp at Guantanamo Bay.*

Peter Nobel, former Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination, notes that Bildt's historical review of human rights violations in Latin America fails to mention "how dictators like Banzer, Pinochet, Stroessner, Somoza, Trujillo and Videla came to power and held on to it with the support of the U.S.

"It was not only in Latin America," observes Nobel. "The same applied in Papadopoulos's Greece, Sam Doe's Liberia, Mobutu's Congo, Ngo Dinh Diem's South Vietnam, Park Chung Hee's South Korea, Suharto's Indonesia, and so on. The United States spoke of democracy, but betrayed it....

"Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, Abu Ghraib in Irak and Bagram in Afghanistan are fresh stains on the escutcheon of the Western world.... The responsibility lies with the leaders of the United States, as established by the Nuremberg Tribunal."<sup>123</sup>

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### **Foreign minister and war lobbyist**



*A few victims of  
the Bush-Bildt war*

**19 March 2007.** Exactly four years after the U.S. launched its war against Iraq, economist and author Carl Hamilton recalls that former prime minister Carl Bildt had predicted that the war would last four-to-six years and justified it with the following explanation: "The only way to achieve peace is to remove Saddam Hussein's regime. The coming weeks could be the beginning of the end of decades of war for the people of Iraq."

After reviewing the resulting catastrophe for the people of Iraq and noting that Bildt was the only European politician to join the Committee for the Liberation of Iraq, a lobby group set up to spread propaganda in support of the war,\* Hamilton concludes:

"The expert who spoke so warmly and eloquently in favour of war is Sweden's foreign minister. The European politician who thought so little of international law that he became a war lobbyist in the U.S. is, intriguingly, Sweden's foreign minister — the foreign minister who now declares, on behalf of Sweden, that the planned theft of Iraq's oil is 'a positive sign'."<sup>124</sup>

\*See "Bildt co-chairs lobby group for Bush's war" on p. 36.

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### **Joint research on national security**

**13 April.** Together with the head of the U.S. Department for Homeland Security, Swedish Defence Minister signs an agreement on joint research in matters of national security.<sup>125</sup>

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### **Same old rationale for war**

**16 April.** Foreign Minister Bildt declares that "the rules of international law provided some room for different interpretations" concerning the legality of the U.S. war against Iraq. He supports his rationale by reference to U.N. resolutions 687 and 688 following the Gulf War of 1991 — essentially the same argument with which the U.S. tried, and failed, to persuade the Security Council to approve its war of aggression.<sup>126</sup>

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## Major naval exercise based in Göteborg



*Page from Pocket Guide to the Swedish Armed Forces*

## Another jovial audience with Bush

*The very “present” Bush is not confronted with a single word of dissent.*

## With USA/NATO for secession of Kosovo

**10-13 May 2007.** The city of Göteborg on Sweden’s west coast serves as the base for a large-scale USA/NATO naval exercise dubbed “Noble Mariner”, the largest ever conducted in Swedish waters.

One critical Göteborg resident is Tom Heyman, a former Conservative M.P. whose dissident views include the following: “In this exercise, the NATO force will invade Poland in order to secure Europe’s energy supply. That is not an especially likely scenario. But if one thinks instead of Venezuela, Nigeria or Iraq, it becomes more plausible. There are plenty of troubled oil nations to choose from.

“The notion that Swedish conscripts might participate in a future war against Venezuela may seem dizzying. But ten years ago, Sweden’s current participation in the U.S. war against Afghanistan would have seemed equally improbable.... [In Afghanistan] we are being gradually drawn into a war that we cannot control, cannot influence or, even less, can win — in a region that does not pose the slightest threat to us, and where we have no interests to defend....

“The Swedish people are to be gradually accustomed to the new role of loyal NATO member and, without any troubling debate, we shall quietly join as a full member after the next election [in 2010]. After that, Swedish conscripts can be sent to distant battlefields to secure the future for the U.S. oil industry.”<sup>127</sup>

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**15 May.** Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt enjoys his second audience with Pres. Bush II. “When one meets President Bush in face-to-face conversation,” says Reinfeldt afterward, “I will say that he is a very powerful, very knowledgeable, very ‘present’, very jovial person.”

Of course, this is not the President Bush that the people of Iraq and Afghanistan, or the victims of Bagram and Guantanamo, have experienced. But such discordant realities are beyond the scope of the Swedish prime minister’s harmonious *tête-à-tête* in the Oval Office. The mood of the U.S. president — whose great intelligence and charm have now been certified by Social Democratic and Conservative prime ministers alike — is no doubt enhanced by the fact that he is not confronted with a single word of dissent from his Swedish visitor.

“In my view, that is how such discussions should be conducted,” explains Reinfeldt. “One should assume that there are good intentions on both sides and try to understand each other’s point of view.”<sup>128</sup>

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**15 June.** Ten former foreign ministers issue a public appeal for the recognition of Kosovo as an independent state. Nine are from USA/NATO member-states. The tenth is from Sweden; he is Jan Eliasson, a career diplomat who at one time was a close associate of Olof Palme and later served as Sweden’s ambassador to both the U.N. and the United States.

The U.S. signatory is Madeleine Albright, the foreign minister in the Clinton administration who — among other dark deeds — has



### USA/NATO for secession of Kosovo (cont.)

*The appeal for Kosovo nationhood is part of a public relations campaign to win support for a "solution" to the problems created by the USA/NATO war — which the authors try to blame on Russia.*

acknowledged her key role in instigating the Kosovo War and has approved the untimely deaths of 500,000 Iraqi children as "worth the price" of the punitive sanctions imposed on that country (see "In defence of mass murder" on page 37).

Another signatory is Joschka Fischer of Germany — the USA/NATO/EU member-state that pressed hardest for the dissolution of Yugoslavia, apparently in hopes of re-establishing its former influence in the northern Balkans. One of Germany's contributions to that predictably (and amply predicted) violent process was the provision of vital assistance to the revival of the dreaded *Ustasha*, the Croatian militia that enthusiastically participated in the mass slaughter of Serbs and other ethnic groups in the Balkan theatre of the Nazi Holocaust.

The appeal for Kosovo nationhood is part of a public relations campaign to win international support for this "solution" to the problems created by the USA/NATO war. The former ministers try to blame those problems on an "intransigent" Russia, which had opposed the war and now opposes the forced detachment of Kosovo from Serbia.

Not only Russian, but many other critics from the entire community of nations point out that the U.N. resolution authorizing the "temporary" occupation of Kosovo by USA/NATO troops explicitly confirms that it is a province of Serbia. They also warn that, if Kosovo independence is recognized, it will create a precedent that will inevitably have dangerous repercussions for disputed areas in other parts of the world.

*The former ministers dismiss concerns about secession with the completely unfounded assurance that Kosovo is a special case.*

The former ministers dismiss such concerns with the simple and completely unfounded assurance that Kosovo is a special case with no relevance beyond itself. The falsity of that clearly disingenuous assurance from the Swedish diplomat and his nine USA/NATO collaborators will be demonstrated just two years later, when the disputed regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia cite the example of Kosovo to support their separate demands for independence from Georgia.<sup>129</sup>

\* \* \*

### Via Norway to USA/NATO

*The proposal is evidently intended to entwine Sweden more tightly with USA/NATO via its Scandinavian neighbour.*

**31 August 2007.** The commander-in-chief of Sweden's armed forces joins his counterpart in Norway, a formal member of USA/NATO, in an opinion piece that urges more intense military co-operation between the two countries. It is necessary to abandon "out-dated sovereignty reflexes", they argue, in order to increase their influence in both European and "Euro-Atlantic" security efforts.<sup>130</sup>

The proposal is evidently intended to entwine Sweden more tightly with USA/NATO via its Scandinavian neighbour, and one who objects is the leader of the Left Party. "It is a cause for alarm that we are becoming ever more tightly bound to NATO. We should instead be strengthening our non-alliance," says Lars Ohly. "We have a government that wants to take Sweden into NATO eventually. This proposal worries me a great deal."<sup>131</sup>

\* \* \*



**USA/NATO inspection**

**11-13 September 2007.** Inspectors from USA/NATO visit Sweden to evaluate the readiness of two military units to participate in “peace-keeping” operations of the military alliance. It is the first such inspection to take place on Swedish soil.<sup>132</sup>

\* \* \*

**Fighter planes over northern Sweden**

**26 September.** Start of an 8-day military exercise in the skies above an area of northern Sweden that is as large as all of Germany. Participating in the “Nordic Air Meet” are 30 fighter planes from the U.S., Sweden, Norway, Finland, Switzerland and France.<sup>133</sup>

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**Lobby group arranges seminar in Stockholm**

**9 November.** Representatives of the European Union and USA/NATO meet in Stockholm to discuss Nordic defence issues at a seminar arranged by the Swedish Atlantic Council, an organization whose primary function is to lobby for Sweden’s membership in the military alliance.<sup>134</sup>

\* \* \*

**Change in Sweden is greatly appreciated**

*Carl Bildt with interpreter and Iraq Prime Minister Al-Malik (far right).*



*Photo: Regeringskansliet/Diana Jansen*

**14 November.** Foreign Minister Carl Bildt visits Condoleezza Rice, his counterpart in Washington, for the third time in slightly over a year. His efforts to “improve relations” with the U.S. are acknowledged by an unnamed State Dept. official who confides to *Dagens Nyheter* that, “Sweden’s change of course has certainly been noted. Your foreign minister’s visit to Baghdad in September to show support for the political process was especially appreciated.”

*The subject of Iraq does not arise during the meeting with Ms. Rice. “We had so many other things to talk about,” explains Bildt.*

But as with P.M. Reinfeldt’s friendly encounter with Pres. Bush a few months earlier (see above, 15 May), the subject of Iraq does not arise during the meeting with Rice. “We had so many other things to talk about,” explains Bildt afterward. One of those things was the issue of Palestine-Israel, and Bildt praised what he described as U.S. efforts to promote a peaceful resolution of that conflict.<sup>135</sup>

\* \* \*

**Upgraded liaison with USA/ NATO**

**18 December.** The Swedish delegation to USA/NATO headquarters in Brussels is upgraded to an independent unit of the Foreign Ministry’s hierarchy in order to “demonstrate the importance that Sweden attaches to co-operation with NATO”.<sup>136</sup>

2008

## Nordic Council PR for USA/NATO

*Enestam's proposal appears to be the start of a co-ordinated campaign to gain public support for membership.*

**9 January.** Jan-Erik Enestam, a Finnish politician serving as secretary-general of the Nordic Council, publishes an opinion piece that urges Finland, and by implication Sweden, to formally become members of USA/NATO on the grounds that the military alliance "is the only important international organisation of which Finland is not a member. It would seem as if the time is now ripe for membership. Meanwhile it would be sensible to enter into closer defence co-operation with Sweden and Norway. Norway is after all a NATO country." (See also, "Via Norway to USA/NATO" on page 54.)

Enestam's proposal appears to be the start of a co-ordinated campaign to gain public support in Finland and Sweden for membership in the military alliance.<sup>137</sup>

\* \* \*

## Ripening the people

*The colonel advises readers to acquire correct knowledge of USA/NATO's true nature by studying its website.*

**8 February.** Echoing the "time is ripe" theme of Jan-Erik Enestam (see foregoing item), Swedish colonel Ulf Henricsson publishes an opinion piece which argues that "the people must be made ripe" to understand the necessity of joining USA/NATO. Advising readers to acquire correct knowledge of USA/NATO's true nature by studying its website, Henricsson explains:

"The question for the Swedish people is not one of yes or no to NATO. The question is whether we shall build our future security by ourselves and as a result become a marginalized little nation in the north... or continue to build a common prosperity and a common security together with others, in which case NATO is the best alternative...."

"NATO is not led by a U.S. general, but rather by the Atlantic Council in which all 26 members are represented by a high-ranking civilian ambassador with veto power. In addition to peacekeeping tasks, the organization's activities consist of whatever education is needed in the new member-states with regard to democracy, leadership and defence planning...."

"Will we become more dependent on the United States with NATO membership? How dependent are we not already on the U.S. economy? ... But [it has been said that] the Swedish people are not yet ripe for it. It is time to make them ripe!"<sup>138</sup>

\* \* \*

## "Swedish/Finnish membership ca. 2015"

**16 February.** Defence Minister Sten Tolgfors declares that membership in USA/NATO is regarded by his Conservative Party as a natural step at some time in the future, and that Sweden will join at the same time as Finland. He estimates that Finland will be ready by 2013 at the earliest, and will become a member in 2015.<sup>139</sup>

\* \* \*



This headline from *Svenska Dagbladet* reads. "NATO chief demands new war strategy. Ever-greater worries for U.S. in Afghanistan". The NATO chief is U.S. general Stanley McChrystal.<sup>140</sup>

This indicates that U.S. leaders have neglected to study the NATO website, as recommended by Col. Ulf Henricsson (see "Ripening the people" on preceding page). Contrary to the "correct knowledge" which according to the Swedish colonel is to be gained from such study, the U.S. appears to labour under the impression that it dominates the organization, and that problems for the military alliance are first and foremost problems for the United States. As usual, there is no mention of the Atlantic Council with its 26 national representatives who, according to Col. Henricsson and the recommended website, govern the organization.

### Sweden legitimates Kosovo independence

**4 March 2008.** Following the lead of the United States and the European Union, the government of Sweden officially recognizes Kosovo as an independent state. The legal basis of that status is sharply questioned throughout the world and, over a year later, Kosovo will be recognized by less than a third of the United Nations' 192 member-states.

Foreign Minister Carl Bildt concedes that there is scant basis in international law for recognition of Kosovo, but explains that "our decision must first and foremost be seen as part of a common European assumption of responsibility" for a difficult situation.<sup>141</sup> But he neglects to mention that even in the generally conformist atmosphere of the European Union, five of the 27 member-states — Spain, Greece, Cyprus, Slovakia and Romania — refuse to acknowledge Kosovo.

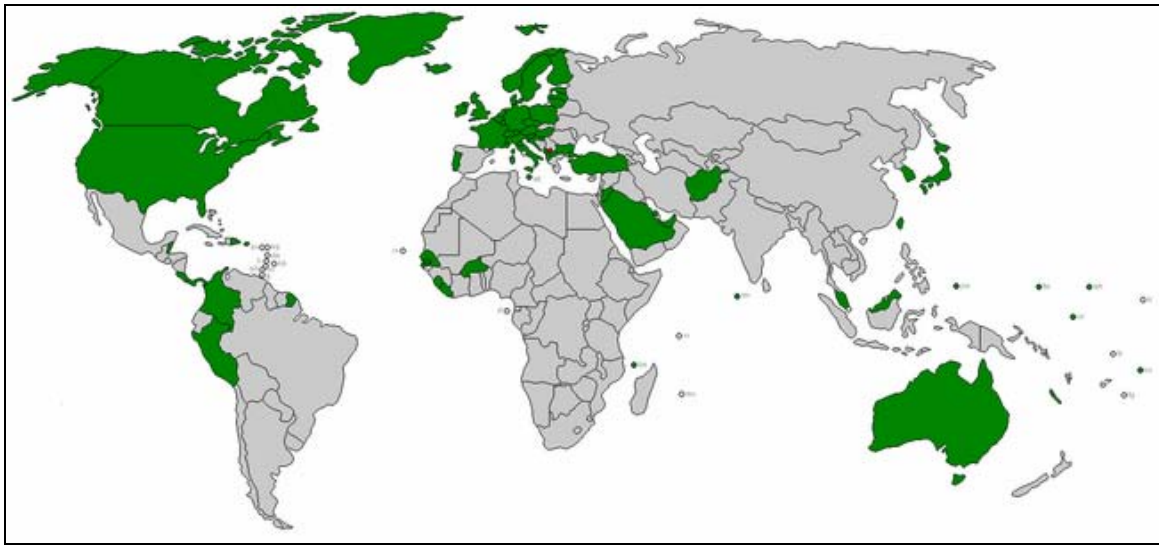
One of many critical voices in Sweden is that of Prof. Robert Nilsson, a political scientist and civil engineer with long experience of Serbia on various assignments for the OECD and EU-supported organizations. He observes that Bildt "squirms like a worm on a hook" in his rhetorical efforts to justify the government's decision "in contradiction of U.N. Resolution 1244 [affirming Kosovo as part of Serbia] and international principles concerning the recognition of new states....

"The EU member-states that have acknowledged a second Albanian nation in Europe will come to pay a heavy price for their misguided policy," predicts Nilsson.<sup>142</sup>

\* \* \*

*Bildt "squirms like a worm on a hook" in his rhetorical efforts to justify the government's decision.*

## Recognition of Kosovo as Independent State



*Countries that had officially recognized Kosovo as of June 2009 are indicated in green. Most of them are USA/NATO member-states or "partners". (Source: Wikipedia)*

### Crisis management with oily scenario

**16-22 April 2008.** Sweden, Finland and ten other "partner nations" are for the first time invited to participate in USA/NATO's annual Crisis Management Exercise, which is "designed to practice crisis management procedures, including planning and consultations between NATO and its partner nations as well as co-operation on a national level".

The hypothetical crisis envisioned by alliance member Denmark is all about oil: "Terrorist attack on a Danish oil tanker — hostages taken, oil leaked, fire on board, sea traffic stopped, closing of oil/gas production."<sup>143</sup>

\* \* \*

### Finland & Sweden proposed for 'Nordic bloc'

**6 May.** In a speech to the Atlantic Council of Finland, Finnish Defence Minister Jyri Häkämies urges the formation of a Nordic bloc within the alliance: "With Denmark, Norway and Iceland already serving as NATO members... the joining of Finland and Sweden would make the Nordic bloc an influential force within the military alliance". Further, "NATO membership would further the Nordics' position in the face of Russia's growing power."<sup>144</sup>

\* \* \*

### Confronting "new challenge" from Russia

*"The Barents region is of interest for oil extraction, transport and as a base for strategic forces."*

**26 May.** The Swedish and Finnish defence ministers, Sten Tolgfors and Jyri Häkämies, publish an opinion piece calling for closer military co-operation between the two countries and jointly with USA/NATO. Conceding that neither is under any threat of invasion, they argue that Finland and Sweden are nevertheless confronted with "new challenges", not least from Russia:

"For Russia, the Barents Sea region is of interest for oil extraction, transport and as a base for strategic forces. Now, new opportunities for energy exploitation are being opened in the region.... [We plan closer co-operation] at a time when Russia has raised its tone level.



*"New challenge"  
from Russia (cont.)*

For Sweden and Finland, it is a question of improving our capacity for joint action. We are planning closer co-operation on military training, exercises and materiel acquisition. Our two countries are also seeking co-operation with NATO in order to benefit from the member-states' combined monitoring of air space."<sup>145</sup>

\* \* \*

**Sweden hosts  
Iraq conference**



*U.S. foreign minister Condoleezza Rice and Swedish P.M. Fredrik Reinfeldt at the conference on Iraq.*

*(Photo: Pawel Flato)*

*No criticism of the war or its dreadful consequences is permitted to disturb the harmonious atmosphere of the proceedings.*

**29 May 2008.** The Swedish government hosts the "Iraq Compact Annual Review Conference" in Stockholm. It is "an important step in demonstrating that the international community must increase its involvement," declares Prime Minister Reinfeldt.<sup>146</sup>

Representing the United States is foreign minister Condoleezza Rice, who shares executive responsibility with President Bush II for the crimes of aggression and torture, along with all the other suffering caused by the war. Her Swedish counterpart, Carl Bildt, has played a helpful role in promoting and supporting the war since its planning stage (see "Foreign minister and war lobbyist" on p. 52). Representing Iraq are key figures of the puppet regime installed by the occupying power.

Accordingly, no criticism of the war or its dreadful consequences is permitted to disturb the harmonious atmosphere of the proceedings. Media coverage is exemplified by *Dagens Nyheter* which conveys, without comment, Rice's preposterous assertion that, "We are there at the invitation of the Iraqis."

Not surprisingly, the foreign minister and president of the United States are very pleased with the conference organizers. "Sweden has made a great contribution," states Rice afterward. Bush waits until Sweden's national day, June 6th, to express his appreciation to Reinfeldt: "He telephoned at ten minutes to two and thanked us for hosting the conference. He had heard from Condoleezza Rice that it went very well," relates the collaborating prime minister to *Dagens Nyheter* — which informs its readers that, "It is not every day that the president of the United States rings up the Swedish head of government. This was the first time that Bush II has called Reinfeldt."

A clearly pleased Reinfeldt explains: "It reflects the fact that, in this case, we became part of world politics by holding the Iraq conference here."<sup>147</sup>

*The conference seems to be based on the assumption that the country has experienced some sort of natural disaster, like an earthquake.*

But there are many in Sweden who are not at all pleased with the event and its implications for Sweden's role in the world. One critic is veteran diplomat Sverker Åström, who observes: "This effort to help Iraq seems to be based on the assumption that the country has experienced some sort of natural disaster, like an earthquake, and that it is now the responsibility of the international community to repair the damage...."

"That is not the case. The decision to assault and occupy Iraq was made by... the U.S. and the United Kingdom under the leadership of George W Bush and Tony Blair. The only appropriate response is for those two nations to take responsibility for organizing and financing the reconstruction of the country which, through their actions, now finds itself in its current desperate situation...."



*Sweden hosts  
Iraq conference (cont.)*

"The political implication of the conference is that Sweden legitimates U.S. policy in Iraq. [In doing so] it risks evoking the contempt of the world.<sup>148</sup>

*"The political implication  
is that Sweden legitimates  
U.S. policy in Iraq."*

"Sweden has no reason whatsoever to support the U.S. in this matter. We must not for an instant expose ourselves to the risk of appearing to be Tony Blair's successor as the United States' little poodle in Europe. That risk is amplified by the fact that we have a foreign minister who from the very being has wholeheartedly supported U.S. policy in Iraq."<sup>149</sup>

\* \* \*

**Largest-ever  
exercise in Finland**

**1-5 June.** The largest international exercise ever to be held in Finland involves some 1000 troops from 25 USA/NATO member-states and partners, including Sweden.<sup>150</sup>

\* \* \*

## **"A disgrace to the very idea of peace and reconciliation"**

[Having watched the conference on Swedish Public Television], here are some scattered observations:

Opening speeches by Iraq's P.M. and Deputy P.M. which are pure PR speeches, well suited to the upcoming elections [in Iraq]. "A new chapter" and "the new Iraq" are repeated endlessly. Iraq is almost at peace, security is so much better, most problems solved, people largely reconciled and the country is ready for integration into the global economy....

The rest of the day consists of foreign ministers from around the world reading written speeches of three minutes' duration. Standard ingredients:

- Thank you Sweden, for hosting this.
- We welcome the good news from Iraq.
- My country has done so much for Iraq....
- There are still a few problems.
- We will help Iraq in the future....

It is as uniform as the dress code in the conference hall with 99% men. It is predictable and intellectually poor. It lacks humanism, creativity and empathy with anyone outside the Green Zone [in Baghdad]. Women and children in Iraq are hardly mentioned....

How on earth is the world ever going to be a better place if this is the best that its foreign ministers can present to us, and media willingly broadcast without question, on one of the most serious problem areas in the world?

Whatever the answers, this PR event hosted by Sweden and the United Nations for the repair of the consequences of the unmentioned U.S. policies in Iraq is a disgrace for the Iraqi people — and to the very idea of peace and reconciliation.<sup>151</sup>

— Jan Oberg

### Baltic exercise and friendly destroyer

**6-20 June 2008.** Sweden and Finland participate in the USA/NATO's annual military exercise in the Baltic region. This year it is led by U.S. Carrier Strike Group 12, whose previous duty was in the Persian Gulf.

"This year's BALTOPS theme of operation was 'Uniting the Spirits'," reports the U.S. European Command. "True to its motto, more than 13 countries, including Sweden, and 30 ships and submarines joined forces to participate in the 36th annual maritime and land exercise." Afterward, the guided missile destroyer USS Cole made a "friendship visit" to Stockholm.<sup>152</sup>

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### Sweden blames Russia for Georgia's war

**9 August.** The Swedish government sharply criticizes Russia for its military response to a military assault by Georgia on the disputed region of South Ossetia. "We see a war in the immediate vicinity of Europe," says Prime Minister Reinfeldt. "We see Russian aggression in violation of international conventions."<sup>153</sup> Georgia is a USA/NATO "partner" and is expected to become a full member in the near future.

*The Swedish government chooses to ignore the aggressive policies of Georgia and its central role in the ongoing encirclement of Russia by USA/NATO.*

In keeping with the predominant viewpoint of the United States, its allies and their mainstream media, no criticism is directed at Georgia for starting the armed conflict with the attack on South Ossetia, which resulted in thousands of casualties and extensive damage.

The criticism continues when Russia subsequently recognizes the independence of South Ossetia and another disputed territory, Abkhazia. Historically and ethnically, both regions are more closely associated with Russia than with Georgia, and they cite the example of Kosovo to support their secession. "After the recognition of Kosovo by many Western states, the geopolitical situation has significantly changed," states a declaration of the Abkhazian parliament. "Any legal decision has a universal character.... All people have the same rights to freedom and independence."<sup>154</sup>

This argument is rejected by the Swedish government, which continues to ignore the aggressive policies of Georgia and its central role in the ongoing encirclement of Russia by USA/NATO — in betrayal of a promise made to the Soviet Union/Russia in exchange for the reunification of Germany.<sup>155</sup>

See also "With USA/NATO for secession of Kosovo" on page 53, "Sweden legitimates Kosovo independence" on page 56, and further details at endnote no. 155.

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### USA/NATO equated with democracy

**10 September.** Former Finnish president Martti Ahtisaari, who has served as USA/NATO's errand boy in the Balkans and been rewarded with the Nobel Peace Prize, equates membership in the military alliance with sincere devotion to democracy. "There aren't very many of these oddities — countries that say that they belong to the Western democracies, but which are not part of all of the organizations. I think that this also applies to Sweden. I see no reason why we could not join NATO. Norway is already there, and so are Denmark and Iceland"<sup>156</sup>

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## The selective amnesia of Bildt and Reinfeldt

In a statement of unusual severity in the context of international diplomacy, Carl Bildt seconded by Fredrik Reinfeldt has condemned the secession of South Ossetia and Abkhazia from Georgia, and also the recognition of their independence by Russia....

In an attack of selective amnesia, Bildt and Reinfeldt suppress the fact that it was [Georgian president] Mikheil Saakasjvili who initiated open military aggression with the brutal destruction of Tschinvali, the capital of South Ossetia with a population of over 30,000.

The media have depicted the war as an attempt by Russia to occupy a Western-style democracy. As regards the “democratic” Georgia, the use of the military to crush the demonstration in Tbilisi against Saakasjvili’s regime in November of 2007, the imposition of martial law and the occupation of TV station Imedia have evidently been completely eradicated from memory.

Some observers [*including Bildt — ed. note*] have likened the Russian military operations with the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, an utterly absurd parallel that has been rejected even by Czech president Vaclav Klaus....

While the situation that has developed is indeed problematic, the indignation of Bildt and Reinfeldt — supported by reference to international law and resolutions of the U.N. Security Council — is the pinnacle of hypocrisy.

No, Carl Bildt: It is not Russia, but you who, together with representatives of governments both within and outside of the European Union who opened a “Pandora’s box” with your recognition of Kosovo in contradiction of international law and U.N. Resolution 1244.... Russia is now using precisely the same argument that was made in the case of Kosovo.... Russia is following in Bildt’s footsteps.

The misgivings I expressed [in March\*] have now been realized.<sup>157</sup>

— Prof. Robert Nilsson

\*See “Sweden legitimates Kosovo independence” on page 56.

### Computer linkage

**24 September 2008.** Sweden’s military and police computer systems are linked directly with those of USA/NATO in an experimental exercise related to, among other things, the occupation of Afghanistan.<sup>158</sup>

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### Swedish ‘advisors’ assist targeted killings

**4 October.** It is reported that nine Swedish soldiers have been serving as “advisors” to the Afghanistan army during attacks intended to kill targeted individuals, some 25 to date. The criteria and process by which the targets are selected are not specified.

It is a type of activity that usually falls under the heading of assassination. But these incidents tend to result in extensive “collateral damage” — death and disability to other persons near the main targets, and destruction of the places where they happen to be when the attacks occur.

### Swedish 'advisors' assist in killings (cont.)

*The Swedes' participation in the death squads is justified on the grounds that they do not pull the triggers.*

Officially, the Swedish personnel are part of the "peacekeeping" ISAF force. But in fact they are attached to the Afghan army and are housed on a U.S. military base. The Swedes' participation in the death squads is justified on the grounds that they do not pull the triggers, but merely offer advice and guidance to those who do.<sup>159</sup>

"These Swedish war activities are a flagrant violation of Sweden's neutrality," protests Thage G. Peterson, a former Social Democratic defence minister. "Sweden is being drawn deeper and deeper into the unjust war in Afghanistan. After 200 year of peace, Sweden is *de facto* again at war."<sup>160</sup>

\* \* \*

### Sharing giant aircraft with USA/NATO

**October 2008.** Sweden and Finland enter a agreement with ten USA/NATO members to share the expense and use of three very large and very expensive transport planes of type Boeing C-17 Globemaster III. Sweden's share of the investment in the time-sharing plan is second only to that of the United States.<sup>161</sup>

The function of the giant planes, based in Hungary with a complement of U.S. personnel, is to "increase NATO's ability to transport large numbers of troops and supplies to far-flung places, such as Afghanistan.... The C-17 fleet will be operated by a heavy airlift wing under the command of [a U.S. colonel] and a Swedish deputy commander.... 'It can also provide a model for future capability development,' said Peter Flory, NATO assistant secretary-general for defense investment."<sup>162</sup>

\* \* \*

### "Nato-izing" Sweden and Finland

**9 October.** *The Economist* magazine reports that, "Norway is quietly boosting defence co-operation with Sweden and Finland. And it hopes to 'NATO-ise' a big land, sea and air military exercise next spring, named Response. Just what that is responding to is left tactfully unclear."<sup>163</sup>

\* \* \*

### Swedish TV transmits U.S. self-image

**November.** Swedish Public Television provides extensive coverage of the U.S. presidential election, cloaked in visual imagery adapted from a popular TV programme it has imported from that country—"The West Wing", a lavishly produced series that functions as an

*Swedish news coverage of U.S. election, all dressed up as "The West Wing"*



*Swedish TV transmits  
U.S. self-image (cont.)*

entertaining and, for the unwary, subliminal advertisement for the United States in its role as world policeman and benevolent protector. A complaint to the Swedish television review board concerning the programme's evident propaganda function is rejected on the recommendation of a board official who becomes apoplectic when exposed to criticism of the United States.<sup>164</sup>

\* \* \*

**Joint initiative with U.S.**

**3-14 November 2008.** "Exercise Viking" is conducted by over 2200 civilian and military personnel in seven countries: Sweden, Finland, Latvia, Norway, Austria, Ireland and Switzerland. Described as a U.S.-Swedish initiative, the exercise "is built around a fictitious scenario involving several countries in deep crises. A substantial NATO joint task force is intervening in one country. In a neighbouring country an EU battle group is providing assistance."<sup>165</sup>

\* \* \*

**More troops  
to Afghanistan**

**14 November.** The Swedish contingent in the Afghanistan "peace-keeping" force is increased from 390 to 500, including additional "advisors" to the Afghan army's assassination squads. (See "Swedish 'advisors' assist targeted killings" on p. 62.)<sup>166</sup>

\* \* \*

**Nordic co-operation  
against 'Russian threat'**

**20 November.** Swedish Defence Minister Sten Tolgfors states that it is necessary to intensify military co-operation among the Nordic countries, as exemplified by an agreement signed the previous week with Norway, Denmark, Finland and Iceland. Tolgfors also implies that Sweden is now part of a *de facto* military alliance: "It is difficult to envision a situation in which Sweden would leave another Nordic or EU country to meet a security threat alone."

While acknowledging that there is no current threat to Sweden or the other Nordic countries, Tolgfors warns that, "The Arctic and the Barents region have acquired new geostrategic significance.... Russia's military patrols and stationing of strategic forces demonstrate its strategic interest in the region's natural assets and ocean waters."

*Almost in passing, Tolgfors mentions that Sweden has now joined USA/NATO's air defence network.*

Almost in passing, Tolgfors mentions that Sweden "via Norway" has been incorporated in USA/NATO's air defence network, and "is working toward complete technical interoperability according to the NATO standard...."

"Previously, an emphasis was placed on Sweden following its own specifications in order to underscore our independent neutrality. Today, when security is being built together with others, technical differences are costly impediments to co-ordination at home and in our military efforts abroad."<sup>167</sup>

Tolgfors notes that the four parties of the centre-right government have agreed not to apply for Swedish membership in USA/NATO during the current term of office. But the implication is clear that it intends to do so if re-elected in the parliamentary election scheduled for September 2010.

\* \* \*



## Lisbon Treaty ratified by Swedish elite



*Unveiling of the Lisbon Treaty in 2007 by members of the EU elite.*

*Whatever it may turn out to be, it is clear that the treaty represents a giant step toward a United States of Europe with its own president and foreign minister, and a corresponding loss of sovereign independence for the member-states.*

**20 November.** On the same day that Defence Minister Tolgfors explains why Sweden is now part of a Nordic/EU/USA/NATO alliance (see foregoing item), the Swedish parliament votes to ratify the EU's Lisbon Treaty, a sort of constitution that has profound implications for the European Union and its relationship to the member-states.

Exactly what those implications will turn out to be is shrouded in mystery, since the massive document has been deliberately constructed to defy comprehension, as its chief framers — all of them political conservatives — have gladly acknowledged. It is therefore almost certain to result in numerous disputes over interpretation that will end up in the EU supreme court, also packed with conservatives.

But it is clear that the treaty represents a giant step toward a United States of Europe with its own president and foreign minister, and a corresponding loss of sovereign independence for the member-states.

*This being the EU, most of the peoples affected have not been consulted.*

This being the EU, most of the peoples affected have not been consulted on this degradation of their nations and what it may or may not mean for their future identities, opportunities and obligations. With three exceptions, none of them is permitted to vote on the treaty because, as French President Sarkozy and others have explained, the vast majority of them would certainly reject it.

Sarkozy should know, as the French were one of the three EU populations initially granted a referendum on the treaty. They rejected it by a comfortable margin, as did the Dutch and the Irish. The first two annoyances were dealt with by arranging for the French and Dutch parliaments to rubber-stamp a "revised" treaty that was essentially the same as the one rejected by the people.

*For Sweden, the Lisbon Treaty is another major step toward military alliance*

The Irish are required to rectify their earlier aberration by voting on another unrevised revision in a second referendum held on 2 October 2009. In the meantime, they have experienced a severe economic crisis that appears to have frightened them into submission, even though their predicament may well have been caused entirely or in part by the economic policy that is enshrined in the treaty. In any event, this time they obediently approve the treaty by a wide margin — an outcome which the elite inevitably declares to be a triumph of democracy.

The Swedish people are among the vast majority that does not get to vote even once on the Lisbon Treaty, the decisive factor being the rejection of democracy by the Social Democratic Party leadership.

*Lisbon Treaty ratified  
by Swedish elite (cont.)*



*For all its many pages,  
the Lisbon Treaty is not  
sufficient unto itself. It must  
be read in combination with  
numerous other documents.*

*Everything is subordinated  
to the development of a  
capacity to attack.*

*There is nothing to indicate  
that any leading party would  
veto any of the policies that  
are written into the treaty.*

It has also helped to divert attention from the far-reaching foreign policy implications of the treaty by concentrating on domestic issues, especially the rights of labour unions (indisputably an important issue but not the only one).

For Sweden, the Lisbon Treaty is another major step toward military alliance. Among many other things, it declares an intention to develop a common defence policy and army, institutionalizes "the strategic partnership between the EU and NATO", includes a mutual defence clause, and asserts the right to intervene militarily anywhere in the world with or without a U.N. mandate.

Of the European Union's 27 current member-states, 21 are also members of USA/NATO. There is little doubt that they — and especially France, Germany and the U.K. — will dominate the formulation of EU defence and foreign policy. That will no doubt be facilitated by the officers that the treaty entitles USA/NATO to place at EU headquarters in Brussels.

According to a critical German member of the EU parliament, the following provisions are included in the treaty / constitution:

- The member-states oblige themselves to gradually improve their military capabilities.... The arms race becomes a constitutional commandment.
- There is an obvious intent to make the European Union fit for global military intervention.
- An "arms agency" should be set up to supervise the realization of this policy and push through "adequate means for the strengthening of the industrial and technological basis of the defence sector".
- All attempts to provide for civilian co-responsibility for the maintenance of peace in the world have failed.
- Also missing are explicit formulations that war may never again be waged on the territories of the EU. One also seeks in vain for a prohibition against wars of aggression.
- Neither a European agency for disarmament and peaceful conversion, nor an agency for weapons export control is established.
- There is to be no peace-promoting reduction of military forces to the level where they would simply guarantee a capacity to defend the EU. On the contrary: Everything is subordinated to the development of a capacity to attack.<sup>168</sup>

The current government and its allies in the SDP maintain that the planned common defence / foreign policy requires a unanimous decision of the member-states. But similar assurances were issued prior to EU membership concerning Swedish neutrality, and they have turned out to be as worthless as critics had warned.

In any event, both centre-right and SDP governments have thus far demonstrated a consistent eagerness to endorse every expansion of EU power. There is nothing to indicate that either of them would veto any provision of the Lisbon Treaty— on the contrary. As for Sweden's military non-alliance, Defence Minister Tolgfors and others have already declared that it no longer applies.

### **“We only know for sure that the U.S. will remain in command”**

Born in the United States and a citizen of France, I am a fervent European. At this point in history, I believe that only Europe can provide all its citizens with democratic government, dignified living standards, greater social equality, public services, universal healthcare and education. This small continent, with just 15 per cent of the world's people, can lead the way towards ecological sanity and a liveable planet, and prove that nations can overcome even the most tenacious hatreds and live together in peace. Europe can be a counter-model to the myriad brutalities, affinity for war and stupendous inequalities on display elsewhere.

For these and other reasons, I voted no to the deeply flawed, undemocratic European constitution in May 2005. Had the French government not confiscated the people's right to another referendum, I would have voted no again to the Lisbon ("Reform") Treaty — a clone of the rejected constitution, except for "cosmetic changes" making it "easier to swallow", as Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, principal author of the constitution, said....

The treaty contains no substantive changes. It's just much harder to understand, worse even than the immensely complex constitution. Now we must deal with two European treaties (Rome, 1957, and Maastricht, 1992, with their subsequent revisions) to which Lisbon adds 145 pages of amendments plus 132 more pages of 12 protocols and 51 declarations, all legally binding, all superseding every law of the 27 member states.

There is no single text — you must cut, paste and collate the hundreds of pages for yourself. The very least one should require of a treaty that will dictate at least 80 per cent of all future legislation throughout Europe is that it be comprehensible. But complexity can be an effective weapon against democracy....

Common security and defence policy places Europe firmly under the tutelage of NATO "which remains the foundation of the collective defence of its members". We are signing on blindfolded for whatever NATO's future policies may be — we only know for sure that the U.S. will remain in command. The treaty also obliges members to "progressively increase their military capacities".

This Lisbon Treaty is a model of failed neo-liberal economic nostrums, and of misplaced confidence in the market and competition as universal panaceas. Europeans deserve better, beginning with an elected convention for drafting a constitution, time for full debate and a popular ratification process.

— Susan George<sup>169</sup>

### **Sweden abstains from vote on DU weapons**

**2 December 2008.** Sweden, formerly a leader in disarmament efforts, is one of 33 nations that choose not to vote on a resolution of the U.N. General Assembly which calls for an inquiry into the effects of depleted-uranium weapons. Voting in favour are 143 nations, including USA/NATO member-state Norway. Voting against are the U.S., France, U.K. and Israel.<sup>170</sup>

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### **Defending Sweden in Afghanistan & Sudan**

**11 December.** Pointing to Sudan and Afghanistan on a world map, the friendly adult host of a popular children's programme on Swedish Public Television explains to her youthful audience that

### *Defending Sweden in Afghanistan (cont.)*

*War propaganda directed to children is a sign that Sweden is on the wrong path.*

Swedish soldiers have been sent to those distant lands in order to prevent the spread of war to Sweden.

“When propaganda for Swedish war efforts abroad is directed to children by public television, this country is definitely on the wrong path,” protest former defence minister Thage G. Peterson and Anders Ferm, another close associate of Olof Palme. “When the Swedish people voted on EU membership, politicians promised to defend Sweden’s freedom to pursue its own foreign and national security policies. That promise has not been kept. Silently, silently, that solemn commitment has been buried.”<sup>171</sup>

## 2009

### **P.M. Reinfeldt visits Afghanistan**

*Fredrik Reinfeldt (far right) speaks to Swedish troops at memorial ceremony for fallen comrades. (Försvarets bildbyrå)*



**19-20 January.** Prime Minister Reinfeldt visits Afghanistan to inspect military and civilian activities which according to the government “are being conducted out of concern for the well-being of Afghanis, Swedes and others. If we abandon Afghanistan, it will increase the risk of more war, greater instability in the region and the re-establishment of a base for international terrorism that, in one way or another, will affect the entire world.”<sup>172</sup>

\* \* \*

### **Torture victims remain in Egypt**

*One of the victims is kept under surveillance in an Egyptian village and forbidden to meet journalists.*

**20 January.** While Prime Minister Reinfeldt is visiting Afghanistan to support the so-called war on terrorism, it is reported that two of its victims remain stuck in Egypt, more than eight years after they were transported to that country — by the C.I.A. in collaboration with Swedish officials — for torture and other abuse (see “Delivering political refugees to torturers” on p. 32).

Since then, the Swedish Ombudsman for Justice has determined that the human rights of the two men were seriously violated. As a result, one of them has received financial damages in the amount of SEK 3 million from the Swedish government and the security agency that collaborated with the C.I.A.

But he is not allowed to return to Sweden, to the dismay of his Swedish attorney: “It is incomprehensible that the centre-right government does not apply human rights law, which says that we are obligated to let him return to this country. He has a right to the



### *Torture victims remain in Egypt (cont.)*

*"The question is whether the government is afraid to challenge SÄPO or if it is still listening to the C.I.A."*

restoration of his health [after being tortured in prison] and he needs rehabilitative treatment that he cannot get in Egypt."

Instead, he is confined to an Egyptian village where he is kept under surveillance by security police and is forbidden to meet journalists. "The Swedish Security Service ("SÄPO") does not want him back in Sweden.... The question is whether the government is afraid to challenge SÄPO or if it is still listening to the C.I.A."

The extradition warrant of the other kidnap/torture victim was rescinded by the government in 2007. But that is of little current use to him, as he is serving a 15-year sentence handed down by an Egyptian military court of highly doubtful probity. His wife and children have been allowed to remain in Sweden and have become citizens.<sup>173</sup>

\* \* \*

### **Nordics vs. the Russians**

*"The Russians have become more and more active in both the Arctic and the Baltic Sea, so we in the Nordic Region need to pull together."*

**9 February 2009.** Thorvald Stoltenberg, a former Norwegian foreign minister, presents 13 proposals for closer co-operation among the Nordic countries on military, security and foreign policies. A key element is a mutual defence agreement (i.e. military alliance) between the five countries, of which three are already members of USA/NATO and the remaining two — Sweden and Finland — are being manoeuvred into place by such means as this report.

Swedish foreign minister Carl Bildt strongly approves, of course: "We have already stated that, as far as Sweden is concerned, if another Nordic or EU country is attacked or threatened, the neutrality that we previously observed would not be an option."

Equally positive is Sinnika Bohlin, a Social Democratic member of the Swedish parliament and current president of the Nordic Council: "Closer co-operation on foreign and defence questions is clearly the way forward."

Another enthusiastic Social Democrat is Niels Sindal, a member of the Danish parliament, who notes that, "If this had been proposed a decade ago, people would have shaken their heads. But Nordic co-operation is so close nowadays, and the geopolitical situation has changed so much, that working more closely together on defence policy in the region is now an obvious progression. The situation in the North Atlantic requires action and the proposals put forward are very sensible. The Russians have become more and more active in both the Arctic and the Baltic Sea, so we in the Nordic Region need to pull together and solve the challenges faced in the adjacent areas."<sup>174</sup>

\* \* \*

### **USA/NATO exercise in northern Norway**

*Once again,  
the subject is oil*

**16-25 March.** Sweden and Finland participate in "Cold Response", a USA/NATO exercise in northern Norway involving more than 7000 troops from 14 countries. Once again, the subject is oil:

"The scenario for the exercise is that an oil discovery outside Midland at the end of the 1990's led to a conflict between 'Midland' and 'Nordland' because of the large Nordlandic population in the area where the oil was found. Nordland claimed the right to the oil and the conflict increased in 2008 when Nordland attacked and occupied Midland. After a cease-fire Nordland withdraws its forces

*USA/NATO exercise  
in Norway (cont.)*

and there is a power vacuum which NATO has to fill.... The participants will be trained at deploying military quick reaction forces into an area of crisis. They will have to handle situations ranging from high intensity warfare to terror threats and mass demonstrations."<sup>175</sup>

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**Sweden under  
USA/NATO command**

**2 April 2009.** It is reported by *Svenska Dagbladet* that:

- Two thirds of Swedish military exercises are conducted jointly with USA/NATO member-states.
- Nine of ten Swedish soldiers serving abroad do so under USA/NATO command.
- During the Cold War, some 2000 Swedish troops served in U.N. operations. Now there are only around 30 that do so, compared with 636 under USA/NATO command.<sup>176</sup>

\* \* \*

**Swedish institute for  
USA/NATO propaganda**

**15 April.** The Swedish Institute of International Affairs conducts a seminar, entitled "NATO's Anniversary — Life begins at 60?", which illustrates the extent to which the publicly subsidized institution functions as a channel for USA/NATO propaganda.<sup>177</sup>

\* \* \*

**Briefing at USA/  
NATO headquarters**

**19 May.** Defence Minister Sten Tolgfors visits USA/NATO headquarters to brief the alliance's secretary-general "on the upcoming transformation of Sweden's defence capabilities, which should make Swedish forces more efficient, more deployable and more capable of conducting international operations. The Secretary-General thanked the Minister for Sweden's partnership with NATO."<sup>178</sup>

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**U.S. accreditation  
for aerial warfare**

**5 June.** The government approves a programme in which Swedish personnel are to be trained and certified as "as joint terminal attack controllers" by the U.S. Joint Forces Command. Their task will be to call in air strikes on selected targets. The training will conform with USA/ NATO standards, and the certified Swedes are expected to apply their skills in such places as Afghanistan, together with colleagues from the U.S., the United Kingdom, The Netherlands and other countries.<sup>179</sup>

\* \* \*

**Sweden hosts  
major naval exercise**

**8-19 June.** The annual BALTOPS naval exercise, this year with 43 ships from twelve countries, is launched for the first time from a Swedish port, Karlskrona. "This was an excellent opportunity for training together," said Jörgen Bergman, a Swedish Lt. Commander assigned to control ship USS Mount Whitney. "This is the first time Sweden has taken such an intensive role in an exercise like this."<sup>180</sup>

Hosting the festivities in Karskrona is the head of the Swedish Navy, Rear Adm. Anders Grenstad, who is much appreciated by U.S. colleagues. "There is a longstanding respect between the United States and Swedish navies," according to U.S. Navy website. "That mutual respect and partnership was a conduit for the United States'

*Sweden hosts major  
naval exercise (cont.)*

use of one of the Swedish diesel submarines for two years of training in San Diego recently. The lending of the submarine, as well as many other cooperative efforts between the Swedish Navy and the United States, earned Grenstad the U.S. Legion of Merit.”<sup>181</sup>

\* \* \*

*‘Loyal Arrow’ aimed  
at Russia in the North*



U.K. Royal Navy

*Helicopter and fighter planes of the British aircraft carrier Illustrious, which participated in the “Loyal Arrow” war game from the waters of the northern Baltic.*

*It is the largest display  
of foreign air power in  
Sweden’s history.*

**8-16 June 2009.** Simultaneously with the BALTOPS naval exercise (see foregoing item), the largest display of foreign air power in Sweden’s history is taking place in the skies above northern Sweden. The occasion is “Loyal Arrow”, a war game with 50 planes from Sweden, Finland and ten USA/NATO countries. Some 2000 military personnel are involved, including 1000 on a British aircraft carrier in the northern Baltic.

*SDP: “It is the NATO  
standard that applies all  
over the world.”*

At least outwardly, the war game is the result of an initiative by Social Democratic M.P. Fredrik Lundh, an officer in the Swedish air force who resides in the area. Such initiatives are fully supported by the SDP’s foreign policy spokesman, Urban Ahlin, who rejects criticism of Loyal Arrow by noting that, “The Social Democrats have clearly stated that we want Swedish co-operation with NATO so that Sweden will be able to participate in international actions.... It is the NATO standard that applies all over the world. Therefore, Sweden needs to co-operate and conduct exercises with NATO. It is not a question of ‘sliding in’ to NATO.”<sup>182</sup>

*“Choosing this place for war  
games reflects the growing  
strategic importance of the  
Arctic, which is estimated  
to contain a quarter of the  
Earth’s oil and gas.”*

Apart from the fact that “all over the world” in Mr. Ahlin’s conception appears to exclude that large majority of nations which are not striving to conform with the “NATO standard”, or that Sweden is already sliding into NATO with the eager assistance of Ahlin and his SDP comrades, the question is what sort of international action he has in mind. In the case of Loyal Arrow, it is (yet again) all about oil: “The exercise’s scenario is centered on a conflict over oil and natural gas with Bothnia, a fictitious neighboring NATO country, with some presence of nearby neutral fictitious countries ‘Nordistan’ and ‘Suomia’, which refer to Norway and Finland, respectively.”

“Choosing this place for war games reflects the growing strategic importance of the Arctic, which is estimated to contain a quarter of the Earth’s oil and gas,” observes a leading U.S. newspaper.<sup>183</sup>

Political opposition to the aerial war game comes mainly from the Green and Left parties. According to Peter Radberg, Member

*'Loyal Arrow' aimed  
at Russia (cont.)*



*Official emblem of the  
Loyal Arrow war game*

*Swedish Defence Minister  
Sten Tolgfors claims not  
to see the connection.*

*"The timing of the Swedish  
government's approach to  
NATO may be the worst  
imaginable."*

of Parliament for the Greens, "With this exercise, Sweden no longer has any security policy or non-allied status remaining. Sweden is now in a national security vacuum — a vacuum that is being filled by NATO."

Radberg contends that the war game is a step toward increased militarization of the North for the purpose of securing fossil fuel resources and the Northeast Passage, a lucrative shipping route that global warming is expected to open up in the waters north of Siberia.

The purpose of the war game, writes Radberg, is "to serve notice on Russia that NATO is interested in the potential oil and gas resources.... The government has decided that Sweden shall participate in this scramble for resources and thereby contribute to a military build-up in the region. What is now happening with this NATO exercise is something new in Swedish foreign policy."<sup>184</sup>

The potential for conflict created by the war game and related activities is also highlighted by numerous other critics, including Anna Ek of the Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society: "These exercises increase the risk of a conflict. They send out offensive and aggressive signals. Should we really be planning for a conflict with Russia while there is still a window of opportunity for cooperation in the Arctic?"<sup>185</sup>

Her point is underlined during the Loyal Arrow war game by Russia's announcement that it is planning a major military exercise in August near its border with Finland.

But Swedish Defence Minister Sten Tolgfors claims not to see the connection. "No, this is a completely open exercise in international crisis management," he asserts. "This is about the fact that ours is a country which takes international solidarity seriously, and that the government is determined to increase our capacity to... spread peace and security."<sup>186</sup>

This is a deliberate falsehood, of course. Tolgfors and his colleagues have frequently cited the "threat" and "challenge" of Russia as justification for military alliance with USA/NATO and the other Nordic countries (see "Nordics vs. the Russians" on page 69), and he repeats that theme in connection with Loyal Arrow.

Tolgfors's bland denial of any Russia connection is "an expression of either extraordinary naiveté or dishonesty on the part of the defence minister," concludes Mikael Nilsson, military historian at the Swedish Defence College, who warns of the increasing tendency to demonize Russia which he says, "is once again being labelled as the bad boy, which is as simple-minded as placing the entire blame for the Cold War on the Soviet Union...."

"The notion of the European Union as preserver of the peace is also highly doubtful. The image of 'the other' (Soviet Union) was more important for the cohesion of Western Europe after World War II than the Coal and Steel Union ever was. Now, a caricature of 'the other' is being painted once again, and with the same broad brush. The timing of the Swedish government's approach to NATO may be the worst imaginable."<sup>187</sup>



***'Loyal Arrow' aimed at Russia (cont.)***

*Russia is being surrounded by a Western cordon sanitaire that stretches from the Arctic to the Black Sea.*

As a leading U.S. expert on USA/NATO has explained: "The full integration of Finland and Sweden poses [a serious] threat to a Russia that is being increasingly surrounded by a Western military *cordon sanitaire*, with U.S. and NATO air, naval, surveillance, missile and infantry deployments that are increasing from the Barents to the Baltic to the Black seas.

"Russia and Finland share a 1,200 kilometer border and Finland is located on or near three northern seas — the Baltic, Barents and Norwegian — which currently host permanent NATO air patrols, the European Union (NATO-linked) Nordic Battlegroups, other new and expanding military formations that face Russia to the east, and the new global battleground at the top of the world — the Arctic, to the north....

"[Since the start of January 2008] an unbroken succession of statements — and actions to match them — has issued from the mouths and pens of major Finnish and Swedish government and party officials, and has been supported by NATO functionaries and U.S. government officials....

"More than the temperature is heating up at the top of the world, and NATO is recruiting Scandinavia's former neutrals, Finland and Sweden, to be at the very center of it."<sup>188</sup>

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***'NATO standard' may explain odd decision***

*A Finnish model is purchased, even though the Swedish alternative is found to be superior in several respects.*

**26 June 2009.** The Swedish army purchases 113 armoured vehicles and related equipment from a Finnish manufacturer for the sizeable sum of SEK 2,600 million. This, despite the fact that two separate technical reviews have found that a Swedish alternative is technically superior, more environmentally friendly, and has the potential to acquire a sizeable international market share.

One consequence of the decision is that more than SEK 1,000 million in development funding for the Swedish vehicle is written off as a loss. Another is that some 320 of the Swedish firm's 1000 employees are laid off, which will result in an additional heavy burden on the national budget for unemployment benefits, etc. All this in the midst of a global recession and rising unemployment in Sweden.<sup>189</sup>

One suggested explanation for this seemingly inexplicable decision is that USA/NATO countries have already purchased some 1200 of the Finnish model. It thus offers economies of scale and has become part of the "NATO standard", regardless of the Swedish alternative's technical superiority.

A related theory is suggested by the head of the IF Metall, the industrial union whose members are primarily affected by the redundancies. "The government wants to take Sweden into NATO eventually," notes chairman Stefan Löfven. "It therefore wants to ensure that we lack a defence industry of our own and become dependent on others."<sup>190</sup>

\* \* \*



*"Yesterday's tasks — and today's" is the headline of this presentation by the commander-in-chief of the Swedish armed forces. Contrasting with "yesterday's" focus on national defence (left half of illustration), "today's" Swedish military perspective reaches as far away as China and Africa.<sup>191</sup>*

### U.S. approves Swedish plans

**21 July 2009.** With Sweden serving as the revolving "presidency" of the European Union, Defence Minister Sten Tolgfors visits Robert Gates, his counterpart in Washington, to discuss future co-operation between the EU and the United States. A related issue is that of Sweden's deepening ties with USA/NATO.

"NATO itself says that Sweden is its most important partner country," says Tolgfors, who informed Gates of his government's plans for conversion of the current popular army of conscripts to one based on voluntary recruits who can be quickly deployed anywhere in the world.

"Robert Gates thought it was the right way to go," reports Tolgfors.<sup>192</sup>

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### More Swedish targets to Afghanistan

**25 August.** The Swedish government announces plans to send more troops to Afghanistan, in response to attacks made on those already there. The problem is explained by Major-General Berndt Grundevik, head of army tactics: "Due to changes in our pattern of movement with the [Afghan] army and police, we are exposed in a different way than previously. Consequently, there is a risk of close engagement during encounters."<sup>193</sup>

The Swedish government's announcement is presumably good news for Afghan resistance forces. "The more they [i.e. the USA/NATO occupation army] send, the more targets for us," says one of their leaders.<sup>194</sup>

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## USA/NATO gets Nordic administrator

*It is probably no accident that the new secretary-general has been chosen from a Nordic country at this particular time.*

**6 September 2009.** Conservative Anders Fogh Rasmussen, former Danish prime minister and current secretary-general of USA/NATO, explains why he is keen to reinforce the alliance's presence in the Arctic region: "The fact that the melting ice cap will open a new sea route in the polar regions, and make mineral resources in this part of the world accessible, will also affect the security in the area. This is what NATO and our Nordic partners must address."

It is probably no accident that the new secretary-general has been chosen from a Nordic country at this particular time. Birgitta Ohlsson, Member of Parliament for the Swedish Liberal Party, hopes that the appointment of the Rasmussen as nominal head of USA/NATO will facilitate her own country's formal entry into the military alliance:

"It's disingenuous to have so few Swedes aware of the fact that their country is in practice already part of NATO. Sweden has a lot more soldiers under NATO command than under the U.N. flag, and many Swedes are unaware that we have a NATO ambassador with her own secretariat at NATO headquarters in Brussels.... We must face up to reality. If we really want Sweden to take joint responsibility for Europe's security, then Sweden needs to play an integral role in the context of European and trans-Atlantic defense."<sup>195</sup>

Of course, it is disingenuous of the Liberal M.P. to ignore the fact that no serious effort has ever been made to educate the Swedish public about the process of incorporation into USA/NATO. Now that the process is nearly complete, it is time to talk about it, apparently.

\* \* \*

## Toxic training in venerable Uppsala

**11-15 September.** The ancient university town of Uppsala is the scene of "Toxic Trip", an exercise in which 170 participants from 18 countries practise how to protect themselves against injury from chemical, biological and nuclear toxins. It is the 20th installment of the annual exercise, and the first time that it has been held in a country that is not a member of USA/NATO.<sup>196</sup>

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## Swede accepts delivery on behalf of USA/NATO

*Sweden is the second largest investor in the resource-sharing project.*



**5 October.** At a ceremony in California, the Boeing Company delivers one of the C-17 transport planes for the Strategic Airlift Capability, based in Hungary (see "Sharing giant aircraft with USA/NATO" on p. 63). Accepting delivery on behalf of the USA/NATO organization is colonel Fredrik Hedén of Sweden, which is the second largest investor in the resource-sharing project.<sup>197</sup>

## 'No peace to keep in Afghanistan'

**10 October 2009.** Swedish participation in ISAF is sharply criticized in an opinion piece by former SDP minister Pierre Schori and co-author Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh. They point out that the USA/NATO force has hardly contributed to peace in Afghanistan and cite retired U.S. colonel Douglas Macgregor who has said that, "We proclaim moral principles when justifying our actions, but we wreak havoc and destruction on a backward, ancient world we do not understand.... The result is mutual hatred."

The two authors note that the government's increase in the Swedish contribution to ISAF has been supported by the Social Democratic Party and state that "the short-sighted objective of military victory undermines peace and long-term nation-building. Thus do the U.S. and NATO violate one of the U.N.'s fundamental principles for a successful peacekeeping operation: there must be a peace to keep. The war also violates the other principles: impartiality, a clearly defined purpose, and a clear division of labour between the civil and military sectors.... Many Afghans see the international force as a party to the war."

For these and other reasons, the authors draw the conclusion that "militarily non-aligned Sweden should conduct an analysis of the geopolitical reality before increasing its military involvement, which is made at the cost of crucial support from the civilian population of Afghanistan."<sup>198</sup>

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## Participation in ISAF to be extended

**23 October.** The Reinfeldt government announces its intention to extend Swedish participation in ISAF at the current level of 500 troops to at least the end of 2010, and is assured support by all parliamentary parties except the Left.

The Social Democrats' foreign policy spokesman, Urban Ahlin, rejects demands that the troops be brought home. "This is not a U.S. war," he explains. "It is mandated by the U.N. and involves 42 nations. There is nothing odd about the fact that the U.S. has great influence, considering how many troops it contributes."<sup>199</sup>

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## Military-industrial forum in Stockholm

*"Assessing the influence of Russia in region and the challenges this poses."*

**28-29 October.** The Nordic military-industrial complex holds its second annual "Nordic Defence" forum in Stockholm, with military leaders from Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland. The language of the forum is English.

The first item on the agenda is "Assessing the influence of Russia in region and the challenges this poses." Among the other main themes: "The United States' defence relationship with the Nordic nations"; "The development of training, capability improvement, command and control and planning operations between the US and Nordic nations"; and "What new missions can Sweden's Army expect to face in the years ahead".<sup>200</sup>

\* \* \*

## ISAF force is doubled

**19 November.** The parliament approves the extension of Swedish participation in ISAF, with nearly a doubling of troop strength to a maximum of 855. The Left is the only party to vote against.<sup>201</sup>



## Obama nullifys the rationale for Sweden's ISAF involvement

*"It all began with a hunt that was the largest and most extravagant punitive expedition to Asia since Agamemnon sailed for Troy."*

*Afghan women are not going to be liberated. Corruption and the drugs trade are not going to cease. The only good news for the Afghan population is that the mass murder of civilians by occupation troops will stop.*

**6 December 2009.** Writer Jan Guillou observes that the rationale for Swedish participation in ISAF has been nullified by President Obama in a speech to the U.S. army university at West Point, New York.

It all began, notes Guillou, with a hunt "for Usama bin Ladin that was the largest and most extravagant punitive expedition to Asia since Agamemnon sailed for Troy.... Soon the word was that 'we' were in Afghanistan to liberate the women of that country and bestow democracy upon it.

"The Afghans have certainly demonstrated profound ingratitude for our noble ambitions. That may be due in equal measure to their country's completely undemocratic traditions and our peculiar methods for marketing the least imperfect of all known political systems. Relatives of the civilian Afghans who have been bombed—whether during wedding celebrations, in the fields or in their villages — seem to become even more hostile as a result of such democracy-building efforts.

"But now that hypocritical and politically impossible argument has been discarded. After Barack Obama's big speech to the cadets at West Point on Wednesday morning, 'we' are no longer going to establish democracy in Afghanistan, and there will be no more talk of 'nation-building'. On that point, Obama was crystal clear.

"The new primary rationale for 'our' war in Afghanistan is security for the peoples of the United States and its allies. The idea is that terrorism must be vanquished in Afghanistan and Pakistan in order to prevent attacks on Washington and London. Thus, the war has nothing to do with Sweden, however much Liberal Party leader Jan Borland wants to believe and hope that it does....

"As everyone realizes, democracy is not going to break out in Afghanistan as soon as the U.S. troops depart. Afghan women are not going to be liberated. Corruption and the drugs trade are not going to cease. The only good news for the Afghan population is that the mass murder of civilians by occupation troops will stop....

"We are no longer going to catch Usama bin Ladin. We are not going to liberate the women of Afghanistan or help its young girls go to school. We are not going to build up democracy. We are certainly not going to protect ourselves against terror attacks by Afghans or Pakistanis. So as far as Sweden is concerned, there is no reason for war.

"We therefore find ourselves in a bloody war without knowing why, and definitely without a chance of winning.... And as recently as November 19th, the centre-right government, together with the Social Democratic and Green parties, decided to double the number of Swedish troops in Afghanistan — without debate, which of course may be due to the fact that no one knew what to say on the subject. It was a rather frivolous way to deal with an issue of life and death, not only for the people of Afghanistan, but also of Sweden.

"In addition, it occurs to me that... if Olof Palme were still among us as an ageing pensioner, his party's unprincipled war policy would be causing him many a sleepless night."<sup>202</sup>

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**“Europeans should demand withdrawal from NATO,  
as it serves no European interest.”**

[President] Obama represents the same ideology of American ‘exceptionalism’ as other recent presidents.... Nothing is any different under Obama. Obama has escalated war in Afghanistan; started a new war in Pakistan; tolerated or supported a military coup that overthrew the elected president of Honduras... is going forward with various military projects designed to secure U.S. global military hegemony... intends to encircle Russia with U.S. bases in former constituent parts of the Soviet Union; has suborned NATO troops as mercenaries in U.S. wars of aggression.

How should Europe react? Europe should disassociate from the United States and go into active opposition to U.S. foreign policy. Europeans should demand that their governments withdraw from NATO, as it serves no European interest. The two aggressive militarist powers, the U.S. and Israel, should be sanctioned by the U.N. and embargoed. Instead, Europe is complicit in U.S. and Israeli war crimes.... In effect, Western European countries [have become] U.S. puppet states.

How does Europe escape from a subservient relationship of many decades? Not easily.... The U.S. government uses financial sanctions and threatened leaks of sensitive personal information gathered by its worldwide spy networks to discipline any independent-minded European leader.

Europe is essentially captive and forced to put U.S. interests ahead of its own. Consequently, unless Europeans find their courage and discard their servile status, Europe will be badgered into more wars and eventually led into a devastating war with Russia. One European country can do little, but concerted action would be effective....

“Terrorist threat” is the excuse for Gestapo practices. However, there have been no domestic acts of terrorism in eight years. The few “plots” that led to arrests were all instigated by FBI agents in order to keep the non-existent threat alive in the public’s mind....

Europe must look beyond the empty American political rhetoric about “freedom and democracy” and recognize the emerging Brownshirt American State. Democracy is slipping away from America. Its place is being taken by an oligarchy of powerful interest groups, such as the financial sector, the military/security complex about which President Eisenhower warned, and [the U.S. Zionist lobby organization] AIPAC....

Americans need criticism from Europe to compensate for the absence of an independent American media. Americans need outside help in order to reach an understanding of the immorality of their government’s policies, because they receive no such help from their own media. Without Europe’s help, Americans cannot regain the spirit of liberty and tolerance bequeathed to them by their Founding Fathers. America herself is a victim of the neoconservative and liberal internationalist pursuit of U.S. hegemony....

The United States cannot pretend to be a guarantor of liberty when the U.S. government takes away liberty from its own citizens. The United States cannot pretend to be a guarantor of peace and democracy when the U.S. government uses deception to attack other lands on false pretenses.

Europe... has a right to its own voice. America needs to hear that voice.<sup>203</sup>

— Paul Craig Roberts  
Asst. Secretary of the Treasury in Reagan administration

**Sahlin stimulated to closer ties with USA**

**10 December 2009.** During a visit to Washington, Social Democratic Party leader Mona Sahlin expresses a desire for closer co-operation with the United States. According to *Svenska Dagbladet*, Sahlin felt “stimulated after conversations with decision-makers In the U.S. foreign ministry, congressmen, think-tank experts and friends of Sweden such as former foreign minister Madeleine Albright”.<sup>204</sup>

Albright is among the growing number of “Sweden friends” who have committed grave crimes against humanity and international law (see “In defence of mass murder” on p. 37).

(Continued...)

## FROM NEUTRALITY TO NATO

# UPDATE & ANALYSIS

September 2012

THE FOREGOING ACCOUNT of Sweden's furtive accession to USA/NATO followed developments to the close of year 2009. From then until September 2012, the process has continued in the same direction, i.e. toward an ever-closer relationship with the military alliance.

In 2011 Sweden contributed aircraft and associated personnel to the USA/NATO war against Libya. That military effort was approved by an overwhelming majority of the Riksdag (Swedish parliament), including most representatives of the Left Party — indicating that Swedish participation in USA/NATO wars has now become established practice.

For approval of that participation, there is evidently no requirement for an independent Swedish analysis — the United States takes care of that. The basic procedure nowadays is as follows:

- Based on its conception of "the national interest", the U.S. government decides which regime in which country is to be deposed.
- A destabilization process is launched or intensified in the targeted country by, among other things, stirring up internal conflicts and agitating discontented groups, of which there is usually no shortage in most countries.
- When the threatened regime strikes back, an intensive propaganda campaign is conducted via the Western world's dominant media concerning human rights violations that may very well be exaggerated or even invented. Crimes committed by USA/NATO allies or of its temporary instruments in the threatened country are explained away, covered up or even blamed on the targeted regime.\*
- The U.S. and its allies exploit their dominant position on the Security Council to arrange some sort of U.N. mandate for intervention. The mandate may well be limited in scope and then deliberately misinterpreted for any purpose, including aggressive war and long-term occupation. If a mandate cannot be procured on the first attempt, an attack is launched anyway. Then the Security Council is persuaded/pressured to approve a resolution which legitimates the war of aggression — the supreme crime against international law. Sweden and other vassal-states consent without a word of protest against this misuse and corruption of the U.N. system.

\* Of course the regime under attack may be undemocratic and guilty of abusing elements of the population. Alas, there is no shortage of such regimes. The question is: Who decides which regimes are to be attacked and on what grounds, while other regimes that are just as brutal or even worse may be granted support and protection. It is also necessary to ask whether a military assault will improve the situation or make it worse.



- The threatened regime is subjected to additional pressure with various forms of economic warfare which, like the military war, afflict the entire population.
- Eventually, the regime collapses under this concentrated pressure. To paraphrase Tacitus: USA/NATO makes a wasteland and calls it democracy.

That is how it worked in the case of Libya,<sup>205</sup> and at present the same sort of catastrophe is unfolding in Syria. Developments appear to confirm the plan of conquest described by General Wesley Clark, whose duties have included serving as NATO's chief military commander: "We're going to take down seven countries in five years. We're going to start with Iraq, then Syria, Lebanon, then Libya, Somalia, Sudan; we're going to come back and get Iran in five years" according to the memorandum from U.S. war planners that Clark was allowed to read in 2001.<sup>206</sup>

The timing and sequence may have changed since 2001 — most likely due to setbacks in Iraq and Afghanistan — but the basic plan appears to be on the way to fulfilment.

### *Proud humanitarian warriors*

One consequence of this process is that "humanitarian warriors", with essential support from influential media, are given a boost and urge additional war-making in the service of USA/NATO.<sup>207</sup> Swedish warriors express their pride at playing a role in this effort on behalf of "peace, democracy and human rights", and look forward to the next call from USA/NATO.

"They think we are effective and are pleased with the results we produce," reported Fredrik Bergman, head of the Swedish contribution to the war against Libya. "We carry out our missions with quality and speed. We are certain that they will ask for Sweden's help again."<sup>208</sup>

Meanwhile, the Swedish contributions to the USA/NATO wars and occupations in the Balkans and Afghanistan continue (pp. 27-28) — also approved by large majorities of the Riksdag.



*"I want to stress the importance of your participation" is the headlined message of NATO Secretary-General Rasmussen regarding the Swedish contribution to the war against Libya. (Aftonbladet, 2011-03-31)*

The decisive factor has been the transformation of the Social Democrats from a peace-making to a war-making party under the leadership of Göran Persson (p. 21).

Participation in the wars of USA/NATO is justified with arguments that originate outside of Sweden, a circumstance that has been noted by observers who include journalist Göran Rosenberg: "The government has launched a website that is supposed

to explain to the Swedish people why Sweden has troops fighting in Afghanistan.... 'The people of Afghanistan are suffering great hardship due to war, oppression and poverty, and Sweden's assessment is that the situation would become much worse if it were not for the presence of the world community.'

"I note that this is stated to be the Swedish assessment of the situation. I also note that it is necessary to search through the website in order to find the largely non-Swedish assessment that is the basis for the presence of military forces in Afghanistan, that ISAF is subordinate to NATO, that the military operation in Afghanistan rests on political and military considerations that originate in the United States.... If the U.S. should change its assessment tomorrow, Sweden would likely do so as well.

"In any event, Sweden has in a short period of time altered its defence policy, its assessment of external threats, and also its basic world view — all without it being made clear that these are policies which we no longer formulate, ourselves."<sup>209</sup>

### *Practising for future wars*

While some Swedish troops participate in wars and occupations under USA/NATO command, others participate in a continuing series of military exercises whose evident purposes are to link Sweden more closely to the military alliance, display the alliance's strength, and prepare for future wars.

Currently, most such activities are aimed at Russia, as part of the ongoing effort to encircle the old competitor of Sweden and USA/NATO (p. 58). For that purpose, yearly exercises with names like Cold Response, Northern Coasts and Baltic Operations are conducted in the northern regions of Sweden and Norway, the Baltic Sea and the Baltic States.<sup>210</sup>



*"Units from Norway, Sweden and a number of other NATO and Partnership for Peace countries participate in the Cold Response exercise," is the text accompanying this photo in Forum, the journal of the Swedish Armed Forces (Nr. 9 • 2011).*

A large area of northern Sweden has been made available for various kinds of air force exercise relating to USA/NATO,<sup>211</sup> and Sweden plays an increasingly important role in the military alliance's planning for cyberwar.<sup>212</sup>

In short, Sweden's military and political elites seem to be doing everything possible to expand and deepen collaboration with USA/NATO. That was underscored in May of 2012 when Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt, Foreign Minister Carl Bildt and Defence Minister Karin Enström all participated in the military alliances summit meeting in Chicago. It was a clear indication of the government's uncritical engagement with the alliance, and aroused anxiety even among some elements of the coalition.

"Our close collaboration with NATO has in many ways developed without any broad discussion of the issue within the context of the political or the general public debate," noted Kerstin Lundgren and Staffan Danielsson, members of parliament for the Centre Party. "The Centre Party believes that this silence must end. When [the three Conservative ministers] participate in the NATO summit in Chicago this weekend, we therefore assume that they will clearly underline Sweden's military non-alignment, which has broad democratic support in Sweden. We assume it is understood that closer collaboration with NATO will not take place until analyses and a broad debate have been conducted and, it is hoped, broad agreement on the issue has been reached."<sup>213</sup>

Many others have expressed similar concerns over the years, without any noticeable effect. Nothing thus far has halted the onward march into the embrace of USA/NATO, and it has involved an escalation of Swedish participation of various military actions in the Balkans, Afghanistan, North Africa, etc. As previously noted, Sweden is also assisting with the encirclement of Russia, and all indications are that China and Latin America will be next.<sup>214</sup>

Thus, it is far from inconceivable that, in a not-too-distant future, Swedish troops will be fighting under USA/NATO command in Ecuador, Taiwan *et al.*

### *Partnership for war*

These developments have occurred despite a consistent public opinion against membership in USA/NATO. As a research institute based in Göteborg reported in May of 2012: "During the nearly 20 years that the SOM Institute has studied the Swedish people's attitude toward NATO membership, opinion has remained stable. The proportion of those who do not want Sweden to seek membership in NATO has generally been two to three times greater than of those who want Sweden to seek membership.... Only in the Liberal Party do NATO adherents outnumber opponents."<sup>215</sup>

Nevertheless, Swedish military and political elites continue to make decisions that draw the country ever deeper into USA/NATO's embrace. This democratic impropriety has been commented upon by, among others, Anders Ferm and Thage G. Peterson, former U.N. ambassador and defence minister, respectively. They point out that, "The surrounding world regards Sweden as an appendage to NATO — but only one of five Swedish citizens feels that we should join the organization."<sup>216</sup>

The explanation for this remarkable state of affairs consists largely of four factors that have facilitated both the furtive accession to USA/NATO and participation in its wars: Partnership for Peace, blind faith in U.N. mandates, the notion of "humanitarian war" and, perhaps most important of all, Sweden's pathological relationship with the USA.

Sweden joined USA/NATO's so-called Partnership for Peace in 1994, and since then it has functioned as the principal mechanism for Swedish participation in the wars and military exercises of the alliance (see for example pp. 19-22, 34, 42, 68). In fact, PFP is a

partnership for war and threats of war; but with the collaboration of the media, the establishment has managed to convey the message that it is a peace-keeping organization. The clever thing about Partnership for Peace is that it permits the pretence that Sweden has not joined USA/NATO, while at the same time the nation's armed forces are adapting to and collaborating fully with the military alliance.

A logical consequence has been the transfer of Swedish military resources from the United Nations to USA/NATO. "Sweden was once the foremost contributor of troops to the U.N. Today, Sweden does not have a single armed soldier serving under the U.N. flag," noted former U.N. ambassador in 2010. "The operation in Afghanistan — which is not directed by the U.N. Security Council, but by NATO and the Pentagon — absorbs all of our military peace-making capacity."<sup>217</sup>

This in turn is a logical consequence of a secret agreement that Ban Ki-Moon, current secretary-general of the U.N., quite illegally made with USA/NATO in 2008. Essentially, it makes USA/NATO the United Nations' chief instrument for "peace-keeping" operations around the world, thereby undermining genuine peace-keeping activities based on the U.N. Charter and conducted under the direction of the organization.

### *The superpower decides*

It has been argued that only USA/NATO has the necessary resources to carry out U.N. peacekeeping missions. But there is, of course, nothing to prevent those resources from being placed at the U.N.'s disposal — except that the superpower's control and right of interpretation would thereby be reduced.

Ban Ki-Moon has never provided any reasonable explanation for his arbitrary action in signing the agreement. But that and much else tends to confirm the perception that he was appointed with the decisive support of the USA in order to lead the U.N. in accordance with the superpower's interests.

Whatever the reason, criticism of the agreement with USA/NATO has been harsh. Observes Hans Christof von Sponeck, a former deputy secretary-general: "In these current times of confrontation, one expects from the United Nations secretariat an especially high level of political neutrality. The UN-NATO accord is anything but neutral and will thus not remain without serious consequences...."

"Any assessment of the UN-NATO pact must take into account that NATO is a relic of the Cold War; that NATO, as a Western alliance, is regarded with considerable mistrust by the other 166 United Nations member states; that a primary NATO aim is to assert, by military means, its energy and power interests in opposition to other United Nations member states and that the United States, a founding member of the NATO community, in the most unscrupulous ways, has disparaged the United Nations and broken international law."<sup>218</sup>

The close collaboration between the U.N. and USA/NATO continues nevertheless, despite the facts that Ban Ki-Moon is not empowered to authorize such collaboration and that it violates the U.N. Charter. Apart from a few protests when the secret agreement was disclosed, the other U.N. member-states have not presented any opposition to it. That, if nothing else, demonstrates the extent of U.S. influence over the U.N., which has been documented and described by Phyllis Bennis.<sup>219</sup>

(Continued on page 83)



## Who revoked Swedish neutrality?

On the final day of school last year, when most people — including politicians and journalists — were preoccupied with flower bouquets and schoolyard crowds, I read in a brief notice that the Riksdag on June 16th, i.e. a few days before the start of its summer break, had approved a new formulation of national defence policy from which the traditional wording on “non-alignment with the option of neutrality in the event of conflict” had been eliminated....

It was the same procedure as when the proposal to sharply increase the thus far modest size of the Swedish troop contingent in Afghanistan was introduced in the Riksdag on 12 June 2002 — while the Swedish football [soccer] team was competing in the tournament for the European championship.

Those two decisions, of which the general public was hardly aware, have now resulted in their combined effect:

Today, the bodies of young fallen soldiers are being packed in coffins in Afghanistan, while at the same time new young Swedish soldiers are packing their trunks to go off to the same war in order to fight for — for what, exactly?

Sweden? USA? The U.N.? The rights of Afghan women? Afghan democracy?

Or perhaps it is not to fight for, but *against* something? The Taliban? Opium farmers? Terrorists?

The reasons given by the Swedish government and armed forces change constantly. When one explanation doesn't work, presto, another one pops up....

The only thing that can be stated with certainty is that the Swedes do not travel to Afghanistan in order to defend the traditional Swedish policy of neutrality — because it no longer exists. It disappeared like the last snow on a warm spring day, without those responsible for such a fundamental change of course putting the obvious question to the people: “What do you think about this?”

... The method has been to gradually obscure the previously clear policy with a series of barely noticeable changes, with the consequence that public opinion has been disarmed before it has realized what has been happening....

Swedish neutrality has been criticized on a number of grounds, but always in essence respected. It has enabled Sweden to play a much larger role in world politics, and with credibility, than its size would indicate.

Now, much of that potential has been discarded. Today, both in theory and in practice, Sweden is an ally of the United States and regarded as such by the surrounding world.

This transformation has occurred almost unnoticed. How is that possible? We conduct a lively debate on the threat of nuclear energy, while at the same time we march to war together with countries that threaten with nuclear weapons.

Why are Swedish soldiers equipped with noble motives that lack any basis in the war plans of U.S. leaders? Who are the driving forces behind the lengthy process that ended with the abandonment of Swedish neutrality on that warm spring day last year? And why?

— Richard Hobart, film director<sup>220</sup>

(Continued from page 81)

In short, the current procedure is that the Security Council, which is dominated by the United States, approves military action in Afghanistan and Libya, for example, and assigns the task to an alliance that is also dominated by the USA. In such cases, therefore, a "U.N. mandate" is in fact a U.S. mandate.

In fact, there is no need for any mandate. That was clearly demonstrated in 2003 when the U.S. launched an unprovoked attack on Iraq, after a failed attempt to get its way in the Security Council. As the knowledgeable and respected diplomat Sverker Åström has pointed out: "The U.S. attack on Iraq and the entire strategic doctrine of the United States that was declared last September... indicates that the U.S. aspires to complete global hegemony. The only function of the U.N. and international law is to legitimate U.S. acts of aggression."<sup>221</sup>

Similar thoughts are allowed expression in the public debate now and then, but they have not had any significant effect on government policy. Swedish military and political elites persist in justifying Swedish participation in USA/NATO wars and occupations by referring to "U.N. mandates". Among those who have often exploited that option is Jan Eliasson, the Social Democratic diplomat who was recently appointed to serve as deputy to the USA-loyal Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon. This, despite the fact that as noted by Eliasson's party colleague, Pierre Schori: "There is now not a single Swedish armed soldier in a U.N.-led operation. The NATO/ISAF operation [in Afghanistan] is not even on the list of U.N. operations, and all Swedish soldiers in Afghanistan wear the NATO emblem, not the U.N.'s."<sup>222</sup>

### ***Responsibility to make war***

It was in connection with the latest Balkan wars during the 1990s that the notion of "humanitarian war" had its major breakthrough. With heavily slanted propaganda that was mindlessly spread by influential media, USA/NATO drummed in the message that its clearly illegal war of aggression against one party in a conflict was necessary in order to protect the human rights of the other parties.<sup>223</sup>

In an attempt to address such problems, the *responsibility to protect* ("R2P") was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in 2005 as a general guideline. It suggests that national sovereignty, in very exceptional circumstances, may be set aside to permit military intervention in order to protect a mistreated population. But as a number of Swedish activists have pointed out:

"Well aware of the risk that powerful states would abuse this provision for their own purposes, the General Assembly circumscribed this 'obligation' with a number of strict conditions.... The resolution emphasizes that any such intervention shall be carried out in accordance with the UN Charter. Thus R2P is not above the Charter and must be subject to continual negotiation.... The Security Council is not above the UN Charter."<sup>224</sup>

As noted above, however, the Security Council has ignored the Charter when it serves the interests of the United States, while the other members of the Council either consent or quietly submit.

This is justified with the R2P principle, even though the evidence of alleged abuses is generally weak or non-existent. In Sweden, however, there are many loud voices that enthusiastically urge participation in the Security Council's "humanitarian" warfare via USA/NATO. A typical utterance is the following by the Swedish U.N. Association's

chairman regarding the war of aggression against Libya: "The U.N. has an obligation to protect civilians. The U.N. principle of 'responsibility to protect' was adopted after the mass killings in Rwanda and the Balkans during the 1990s, and requires the surrounding world to take action when a nation's leader cannot or will not protect the country's population."<sup>225</sup>

Even the world's oldest peace organization, the Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society, has embraced the R2P justification: "I believe that it was entirely necessary to stop Gaddafi's onslaught against Benghazi," reasoned chairperson Anna Ek with the support of associated propaganda ("Gaddafi's' onslaught against Benghazi"). "Fortunately, the need to protect civilians was quickly recognized by the international community. The idea of a central international legal order was clear and human rights were to be protected."<sup>226</sup>

Needless to say, the fact that not even presumptive peace-makers agree on whether it is justified to attack Libya or occupy Afghanistan makes things easier for USA/NATO supporters in Sweden. In that circumstance, it matters little that, as retired military psychologist Karl-Yngve Åkerström

has pointed out: "Prior to September 11 [2001], the U.S. showed not the slightest interest in the [Afghan] people's human rights. Instead, it supplied money and weapons to groups that supported U.S. interests in the region."<sup>228</sup>

### *Propaganda value of women*

That it has to do with something entirely different than human rights was underlined by Lars Lökke Rasmussen, prime minister of Denmark, a NATO member that has been among the most enthusiastic participants in the wars of the military alliance. "We are there to ensure that the country does not again become a refuge for terror. That is the basic reason for our presence, neither more nor less. We are not in Afghanistan to bring enlightenment to the people," explains Rasmussen.<sup>229</sup> That is also the clear message of U.S. president Barack Obama (p. 77).

Even so, it has been an effective PR strategy to market the war as a humanitarian effort, not least with expressions of concern for oppressed women — a constantly recurring

### **Swedish Peace & War Society**

If we abandoned neutrality and territorial defence, there would be less rumbling of cannons in the land. So reasoned some innovative thinkers at the Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society a few years back.

The strategy paid off. Soon, the venerable pacifist organization was collecting generous grants from the Foreign and Defence ministries for, among other things, participation in so-called civil-military exercises with NATO armed forces. Government grants increased from a negligible component of the budget to nearly 40 percent.

How did it turn out with the rumble of cannons?

Northern Sweden has become an exercise area for NATO soldiers. NATO aircraft drop bombs on Västerbotten County, and now foreign warships are to begin firing live ammunition in the Göteborg archipelago....

The affected local residents can be pleased that the cannon rumblings now promote peace — as certified by the Foreign and Defence ministries

— Mikael Nyberg<sup>227</sup>

motif in the Swedish public debate. The propaganda value of women was stressed in a C.I.A. memo disclosed by WikiLeaks in March of 2010:

"The fall of the Dutch Government over its troop commitment to Afghanistan demonstrates the fragility of European support for the NATO-led ISAF mission. Some NATO states, notably France and Germany, have counted on public apathy about Afghanistan to increase their contributions to the mission, but indifference might turn into active hostility if spring and summer fighting results in an upsurge in military or Afghan civilian casualties and if a Dutch-style debate spills over into other states contributing troops....

"Afghan women could serve as ideal messengers in humanizing the ISAF role in combating the Taliban because of women's ability to speak personally and credibly about their experiences under the Taliban, their aspirations for the future, and their fears of a Taliban victory. Outreach initiatives that create media opportunities for Afghan women to share their stories with French, German, and other European women could help to overcome pervasive skepticism among women in Western Europe toward the ISAF mission."<sup>230</sup>

There is probably no need to mention that this memorandum does not refer to the many Afghan women who are opposed to USA/NATO's occupation of their country. One of the foremost among them is Malalai Joya, a former member of her country's National Assembly who maintains that "... women's rights in Afghanistan have not truly been safeguarded — our situation was just invoked to justify the war.

"In fact, it is important to remember another document that WikiLeaks exposed earlier this year: a CIA paper assessing western public opinion on the war that recommended using 'testimonials by Afghan women' expressing fear about a Taliban takeover in the event of Nato pulling out. A *Time* cover story featuring the disfigured Bibi Aisha was a clear example of using the plight of women as war propaganda. The headline — 'What happens if we leave Afghanistan' — could have, or should have, been 'What happens while we are in Afghanistan', because crimes of mutilation, rape and murder against women are commonplace today....

"The only change that can make us hopeful about the future is the strengthening and expansion of a national anti-fundamentalist and democracy-loving movement. Such a movement can be built only by Afghans. And while we want the world's support and solidarity, we neither need nor want Nato's occupying forces."<sup>231</sup>

### *Pathological relationship*

These three factors — Partnership for Peace, U.N. mandate and the R2P principle— have promoted closer relations with USA/NATO and the consequent participation in its wars and occupations. But there is another factor which is probably more crucial — Sweden's relationship with the United States. It can be characterized as pathological in that it leads to decisions and actions which grossly violate fundamental Swedish values and principles, including those related to the promotion of peace, international law and global justice. A relationship that has such an effect can hardly be regarded as healthy.

One Swede who has expressed warm feelings for the superpower is former Defence Minister Sten Tolgfors who, according to a cable from its embassy in Stockholm, "went to school in the U.S. and told the ambassador that he loves the United States".<sup>232</sup>

(Continued on page 87)



## Safe in the Arms of Uncle Sam, Again

Sweden was the first neutral country to officially recognize the United States when that country was founded over 200 years ago. Since then, attitudes toward the emerging superpower have generally been quite positive, and affections deepened with the mass emigration that reached its height during the latter part of the 19th century. The "dream of America" was and is a common experience....

It therefore came as a rude shock in the Home of the Brave when a young Social Democratic leader named Olof Palme began in the 1960s to loudly and persistently condemn its protracted rape of Indochina....

Palme is no longer around to stir up trouble, and the wing of the Social Democratic Party that he represented has been marginalized.... The current leadership has exerted itself to patch up the temporarily strained relationship with the United States, demonstrating its fealty to Pax Americana in every possible way. Among other things, it has "regrettably understood" unprovoked bombing attacks by the U.S. on Sudan and Afghanistan, and has supported the Kosovo catastrophe — even to the point of lending its voice to U.S./NATO war propaganda. If the Vietnam War were to occur today, it is very likely that the current Social Democratic leadership would hold its tongue and go along. It would probably even try to explain why dropping all those bombs and all that napalm was necessary from a humanitarian standpoint....

There can be no doubt that the United States has, with characteristic enterprise, laboured to prevent the emergence of another Palme. In a country like Sweden, this need not necessarily require direct intervention: The sophisticated, and far more effective, way to produce the desired result is to create conditions which ensure that most key positions in society are occupied by individuals who can be relied upon to say and do the right thing out of personal conviction and/or self-interest.

For this purpose, a favourable climate of opinion is essential. That is a commodity routinely delivered by the dominant mass media, which for the most part function as reliable cogs in the United States' global propaganda apparatus....

Naive or wilful ignorance of superpower behaviour appears to be widespread even among the so-called intellectual elite. Far from analysing the effects of superpower power on their own society, they have almost entirely ignored it, allowing their attention to be diverted instead to priorities set and catastrophes created by the United States. The psychological mechanisms of this syndrome are, in themselves, an eminently worthy subject of study.

One consequence is that the most powerful single political force affecting Sweden and many other countries is freely granted the protection of invisibility as it goes about the business of world domination. This means, for example, that the influential news programmes of Swedish state television can broadcast lengthy reports on the recent history of Nicaragua or East Timor without once mentioning the United States, whose tragic impact on those two little countries is well documented.

As a result of these and related tendencies, Swedish society at the start of the 21st century is permeated by images and messages whose effect, if not always whose intent, is to legitimate U.S. dominion over the planet....<sup>233</sup>

(Continued from page 85)

It is questionable whether Tolgfors has ever expressed equally strong feelings for his native land, but he is hardly alone in his love for the United States. Although that affection seems to be especially intense among Swedish military personnel (p. 4), a significant portion of the entire population is evidently smitten with it.

Of course there are critical voices, just as in the United States, and the above noted resistance to NATO membership indicates a cooler attitude among the general public than among the national leadership (see also p. 49). But especially when it comes to foreign and defence policy, military, political and media elites display a clear tendency to interpret the world from the superpower's point of view.

That is reflected in the debates and decisions of the Riksdag, and in the view of the surrounding world conveyed by leading media. As media researcher Stig Arne Nohrstedt has noted. "The eyes and ears of the Swedish news culture are turned toward the only remaining superpower."<sup>234</sup>

The result has been a striking double standard to the advantage of the United States, which has most likely facilitated Sweden's furtive accession to its global military alliance.

It seems to make no difference how many millions of lives are destroyed in consequence of U.S. policies, how many grave crimes against humanity and international law are committed, or how often the motives for all that turn out to be false: Everything can be disregarded, minimized, interpreted as efforts on behalf of freedom and democracy — or, best of all, not even noticed.

In comparison, it is not difficult to predict how an invitation to a Russian "partnership for peace" would be greeted, or the reaction if China were to urge Sweden to wage "humanitarian" war against Saudi Arabia, for example, with reference to a U.N. mandate that China has forced through the Security Council and then interpreted as it pleases in its own interest.

That may change in a conceivable future when China is the only superpower. But for now, it is the United States that benefits from the Swedish double standard.



"Monuments to loss" is the headline in *Dagens Nyheter*, Sweden's leading newspaper, for which it is perfectly natural to illustrate some reflections on "our" losses with a photo of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington. The violated country and its people, whose losses were inconceivably greater, are nowhere to be seen.<sup>235</sup>

### *Actors and interests*

Sweden's furtive accession to USA/NATO has been a lengthy and complex process to which many different actors with diverse interests have contributed. To what extent those contributions have been co-ordinated is a question that remains to be answered. What is already clear, however, is that many different efforts have resulted in the same tendency, i.e. toward an ever closer collaboration with the military alliance. Among the most powerful forces involved in that process are:

- United States
- Swedish Armed Forces
- Intelligence agencies
- Industry & commerce
- Political parties
- Propaganda apparatus

## **United States**

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Sweden's connection with USA/NATO — for the time being via Partnership for Peace — has provided an addition of military resources to the alliance which of course is appreciated, not least due to the high level of quality. As previously noted, USA/NATO evaluators have concluded that the Swedish military is better adapted to the alliance than its counterparts in many of the countries that are formal members (p. 35).

But Sweden is a small country and, however proficient and well-equipped its troops may be, they can never comprise more than a small cog in the superpower's enormous military apparatus. If they were to lay down their weapons and withdraw tomorrow, it would not have any significant effect on USA/NATO's military capacity.

All the more valuable, therefore, is what remains of Sweden's reputation as a peace-seeking, non-aligned and righteous country. As recently as June of 2012, a U.S. diplomat and "liberal" academic referred to Sweden as "a neutral country with a long tradition of harboring American draft dodgers and deserters".<sup>236</sup> But as indicated by the foregoing account, that Sweden no longer exists. Its "tradition" of harbouring defectors from the U.S. military did not last very long, in any event, and such types are definitely not welcome today.

Yet, the image of a peaceful, independent Sweden still lives in much of the world, and it has been of some use to the superpower. In 1996 the U.S. ambassador to NATO thanked Sweden and Finland for their help with the incorporation of the Baltic States into the military alliance, over the objections of Russia. "You can do it better and less provocatively than we Americans can," explained Robert Hunter. "Russia has never protested against anything that Sweden or Finland has done in the Baltic" (p. 22).

### *War-legitimizing trademark*

Sweden's good name also proved useful for selling the Iraq war to Europeans in 2003. Recruited to assist with that effort was former prime minister Carl Bildt, because "Someone of Carl's stature, with his background — and from Sweden to boot — was of course very important" (p. 36). More than "and from Sweden to boot" was not necessary to say — so strong and well-known was the Swedish trademark.

The peaceful image of Sweden which has been used in this way to market war was largely a creation of Bildt's direct opposite — Olof Palme, whose eloquent and persistent condemnation of the war of aggression against Indochina had a powerful worldwide impact, not least in the United States. According to the Swedish foreign correspondent, Sven Öste, Palme's critique was very important to the "doves" in Congress and for the entire anti-war movement in the United States, especially at the universities.

That has been confirmed by Bob Musli, chairman of Physicians for Social Responsibility, the U.S. branch of the international organization that received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985: "Palme was a beacon of plain truth and courage for those of us who were struggling against the war.... When one considers the enormity of the destruction and suffering that the U.S. was inflicting everywhere in Southeast Asia, no criticism could possibly be too harsh. It is especially significant when it comes from the leader of a respected country."<sup>237</sup>

Under Palme's leadership, Sweden was also known for other efforts that challenged U.S. policies on disarmament, environmental protection, South Africa, Latin America, and more.

It was the Vietnam War, however, that caused the greatest damage to the superpower's reputation and, fully three decades after the last invader was chased out of Vietnam, the strong Swedish opposition to the war was still a bitter memory at the United States' diplomatic outpost in Stockholm. Upon completing his term as ambassador in 2004, Charles Heimbold complained that many Swedes' image of the U.S. is still stained by



*"Olof Palme, we miss you" reads the message in this protest march in Stockholm against the impending U.S. war against Iraq in 2003. It was a sentiment presumably not shared at the U.S. embassy, some 100 yards distant.*

that war: "I think that they have not forgotten those wonderful days with demonstrations and marches. I hope they will mature as time goes by, along with the rest of us."<sup>238</sup>

Accordingly, it may be assumed that a high priority for the U.S. in Sweden has been to prevent the emergence of a new Palme and the sort of politics that he pursued. The immediate problem was solved in 1986, of course, when Palme was eliminated with a gunshot.



### *Inevitable suspicions*

The murder of Olof Palme remains unsolved and, considering how abysmally the investigation has been conducted, it probably never will be (see "Untenable theory" on p. 120).

Inevitably, there have been suspicions that the assassination was an initiative of the United States and / or its allies in Sweden, especially those within the police, the intelligence agencies and the military.<sup>238</sup> That possibility has been a taboo subject among Swedish elites, but the obvious context has been explained by Kari and Pertti Poutiainen in their book *Inuti Labyrinten* ("Inside the Labyrinth") which is a standard work on the murder and its investigation:

"When Palme was murdered, he had just won his second election of the new decade, and his international reputation and authority had never been greater. His star in world politics had not yet passed its zenith, but was still clearly on the rise.... It cannot have been especially encouraging to the spycatchers — obsessed with the idea of pushing back world socialism, in the spirit of Ronald Reagan — to see the most 'dangerous' socialist of them all, Olof Palme, spreading unimpeded his 'anti-American' socialist message all over the world. Much would be gained in the battle against socialism if he were to disappear from the world political arena. (For example, the 'Marxist-Leninist' Sandinista regime in Nicaragua, with which the Reagan administration was obsessed, would thereby lose one of its most important supporters in the West.)

"There are three other important considerations, as noted previously:

- (1) Within the Swedish branch of the western intelligence complex, there was a well-known hatred of Palme.
- (2) It is impossible to get a clear picture of the secret service's activities during the night of the assassination.
- (3) The police failed to conduct an organized hunt for the killer during the night of the assassination.

"Given these facts, it is difficult to avoid the suspicion that, on a dark February night in Stockholm, Olof Palme was gunned down on the front lines of the Cold War."<sup>240</sup>

Whether or not the U.S. was involved in the assassination of Palme, it may be assumed that reasonable suspicions of the possibility have influenced his successors, consciously or subconsciously. Even if it may not be said out loud, most observers of world politics presumably understand that any national leader who defies the superpower is living dangerously.

### *Goodwill capital invested in war*

A few years after Olof Palme was murdered, his successor Ingvar Carlsson began to lead Sweden into the European Union, which is dominated by NATO member-states. Adaptation to USA / NATO began soon afterwards, long before Sweden formally joined the EU (p. 15). The militaristic development since then has been documented in the preceding pages.

For the reasons noted above, it is probably not possible to exaggerate the public relations value of Swedish participation in USA / NATO wars (preferably with a "U.N. mandate", of course). For, what can be wrong with a war if even the peace-loving Sweden actively participates in it?

Eventually, the world will most likely realize what has happened to Sweden since Palme's assassination; parts of the Arab world already appear to understand it. For the time being, however, USA/NATO may continue to exploit Sweden's good name in order to dampen resistance to its wars, and perhaps even to recruit additional allies.

In short, previous Swedish leaders — Olof Palme, in particular — have built up a capital of trust in matters of peace, international law, disarmament, etc., which current leaders are investing in war on behalf of the superpower's pursuit of global hegemony.

It is difficult to determine in which ways and to what extent the United States has contributed to that development. However, there is an extensive body of knowledge — consisting of leaked government documents, academic research, congressional hearings, disclosures of disillusioned officials, etc. — which demonstrate how the superpower generally exercises influence in various countries.



Foto: Saul Loeb / AFP

## Bildt tog emot Clinton

Den amerikanska utrikesministern Hillary Clinton landade vid 18.30-tiden på lördagen på Arlanda och inledde därmed sitt Sverigebesök. ▶ [Läs mer.](#) 07

▶ [Världens mäktigaste kvinna.](#) Syrien högst på agendan under besöket. 29

*Olof Palme is dead and Sweden's foreign policy is in the reliable hands of Carl Bildt, seen here giving a hearty welcome to Hillary Clinton on her visit to Stockholm. "Syria tops the agenda" notes Aftonbladet (2012-06-03).*

to raise and train, with Swedish assistance, an army of about 13,000 and carry on other unprecedented activities on its soil.... Resistance movements in Norway and Denmark would have been difficult without Swedish neutrality's shield and aid.... Winning the 1940/45 war would have taken longer and been more costly had Sweden been occupied."<sup>242</sup>

That collaboration continued and expanded after the war — mainly in secret due to consideration of the official policy of neutrality, according to which Sweden would only join a military alliance if it were attacked and invaded. Meanwhile, the Cold War began to intensify and Sweden, with its strategically important location, found itself in the firing line. It would therefore have been irresponsible if precautionary measures against

One proven way to become influential is, of course, to become powerful. Humans are, in varying degree, flock animals that are drawn to and attempt to ingratiate themselves with power. That tendency is quite evident in the behaviour of many Swedes (and others) toward the United States,<sup>241</sup> and it facilitates the superpower's work of building its networks in Sweden.

The foundation of the NATO-related network was laid during WWII, with various forms of more or less secret collaboration with anti-Nazi forces — though Sweden's formal neutrality was also valuable according to a British naval attaché who served in Stockholm during the war:

"By 1944, Sweden's neutrality had so changed that she had become a non-belligerent. Never before had any state allowed a government in exile, Norway's,

a possible attack from the east had not been taken, concluded the public commission appointed in 1992 to study that history (p. 2).

This was the frame of reference for a largely secret collaboration with USA/NATO during the Cold War. How extensive that collaboration actually was, and whether or not the secrecy was justified, are questions that have been hotly debated during recent years. In any event, the process enabled a relatively small number of Swedes to gradually and furtively move the country closer to USA/NATO, without the knowledge or consent of the general public.

An important nexus for relevant discussions, co-ordination, etc. was of course the U.S. embassy in Stockholm which, among other things is believed to house one of the largest CIA. offices abroad. The significant role of the superpower's embassies is suggested by an old joke that is especially well known in Latin America:

"Why has there never been a *coup d'état* in the United States?"

"Because there is no U.S. embassy in that country."

In addition to the embassy, there are other important channels and meeting places, not least of which are those connected with the military collaboration.

## Armed forces

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During the past 60 years, tens of thousands of Swedish military personnel have participated in a variety of activities that have intensified co-operation with USA/NATO.<sup>243</sup> This has naturally led to numberless personal encounters that have strengthened ties between the Swedish participants and their counterparts in the U.S. and other NATO member-states. As for example Lieutenant Colonel Michael Andersson has related on his time with the U.S. Central Command in Florida: "Among other things, we celebrated Thanksgiving with a normal American family. On other occasion we were invited to a baseball game by the mayor of St. Petersburg" (p. 5).

After Sweden joined Partnership for Peace in 1994, all of that could take place openly and routinely, although it may be assumed that some contacts and activities are still kept secret. Prior to 1994, however, most such activities were conducted informally and out of sight; even for military personnel, it was not always clear who decided or on what basis.

Anders Jallai, who served as both a marine commando and fighter pilot during the 1980s, has described certain indications that some one among the troops had been chosen to work directly with USA/NATO: "A distinct clue was that they often made rapid advances in their careers. For example in the air force, in which I served, a few chosen ones were selected for special training at an early stage. They were admitted to more advanced courses than the others and they got to travel abroad for training, most often in the U.K. or the U.S. It could be anything from test-pilot training to courses in intelligence work or national security policy. Sometimes it also involved special technical courses, usually in the U.S.

"When I now reflect on it, several of those who were chosen had parents that had careers in the armed forces or intelligence services. So it was inherited, precisely as is usually the case with spying.... A military branch that had especially good contacts with NATO during the Cold War was the Coast guard, and later the Navy."<sup>244</sup>

If one is to believe General Bengt Gustafsson, even the head of the armed forces could be kept in the dark. Gustafsson has written that, when he became commander-in-chief in 1986, his predecessor withheld important details of the secret collaboration with USA/NATO: "Lennart Ljung evidently did not think that I needed to know that such preparations had been made. He had destroyed the command control's documentation — the NATO file as I called it — in 1984. I found it difficult to understand the lack of orientation. ... Neither did my subordinates in the navy mention how extensive the preparations were."

Gustafsson relates that he gradually came to understand that contacts with USA/NATO were especially extensive with the Swedish Navy. He describes naval officers as belonging to a sort of "international Freemasonry", concerning whose activities he was not always informed: "During my time as commander-in-chief, I was told on one occasion that a joint exercise was being arranged with some U.S. ships sailing from Stockholm harbour. I have since learned that such exercises were more the rule than the exception. Similar exercises may of course have been arranged in connection with Swedish visits to NATO countries."<sup>245</sup>

### *Popular army dismantled*

With or without the commander-in-chief's knowledge, collaboration was expanded during most of the Cold War — often indirectly via neighbouring Denmark, and especially Norway, both of which are NATO members. It eventually became so extensive that, when Sweden joined Partnership for Peace in 1994, its armed forces were already well adapted to USA/NATO in terms of technology, organization and ideology.

The army at that time was based on universal conscription, and its purpose was still that of defending the country against invasion. However, that purpose was of little use to NATO which following the Cold War became the United States' principal instrument for attaining global military dominance.

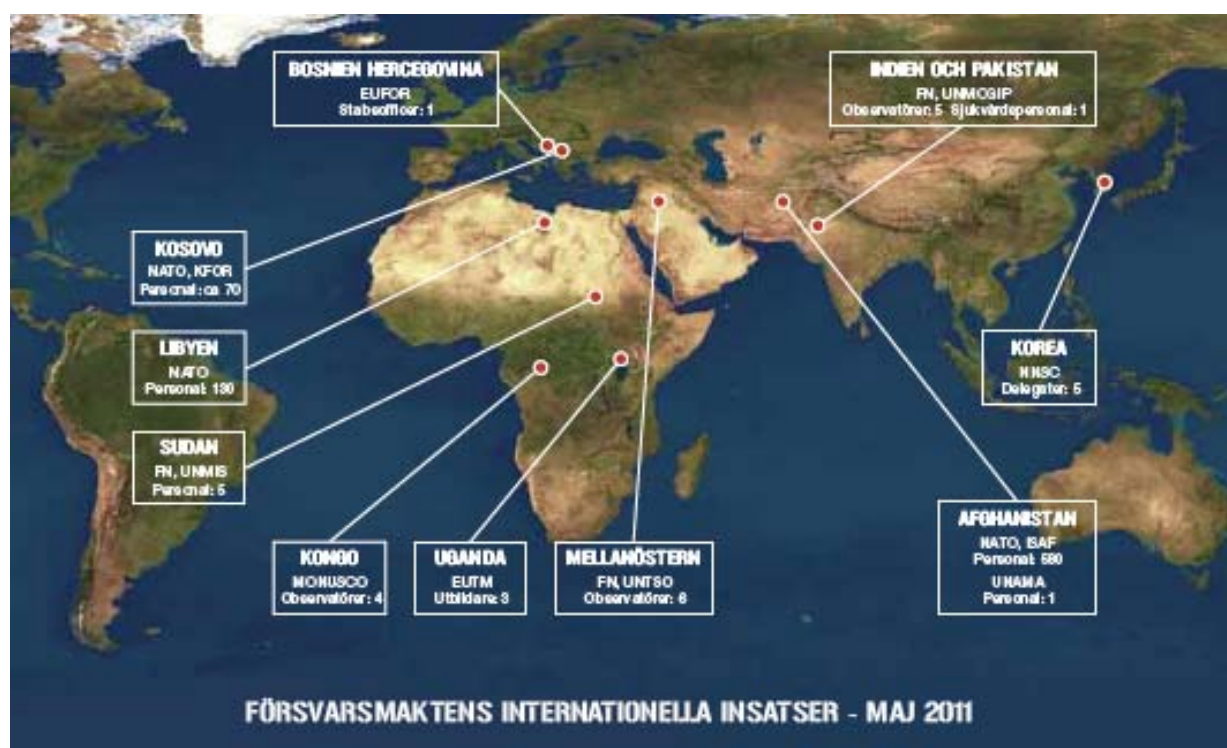
Accordingly, the next step was to dismantle Sweden's popular army and replace it with a much smaller attack force which could be sent off to war anywhere on Earth at short notice. This transformation lacked the support of the Swedish people<sup>246</sup> and was approved only by a small margin in the Riksdag; nevertheless it became final on 1 July 2010.

The main justification for dismantling the popular army was that the threat from the East had disappeared when the Cold War ended. Yet, Sweden participates in military exercises and other activities directed at "the Russian threat" — although that threat, to the extent that it exists, is obviously a reaction to the threatening encirclement strategy of USA/NATO.<sup>247</sup>

Thus, there is much that does not make sense, not least with regard to Sweden's capacity to defend itself against an eventual attack. Among those who have questioned the new order is military historian Mikael Nilsson: "The new defence doctrine has not been democratically anchored, and there is a very poor fit between ambition and

(Continued on page 95)





Swedish Armed Forces International Activities — May 2011

capability.... The nation can be defended, says [Defence Minister] Tolgfors. Defended against what?... One can only hope that the defence minister does not seriously believe that an attack force the size of Sundsvall's population [ca. 50,000] suffices to defend the country whose area is the third largest in the European Union."<sup>248</sup>

Another critical voice is that of Per Blomquist, retired colonel and fellow of the Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences: "It seems to me that Swedish political and military leaders have been led astray by USA/NATO's military thinking, which is based on a strategy to satisfy the global interests of the United States (and to some extent its allies) by means of overwhelming attack forces and advanced technology.

"Even during the Cold War, I felt that it would be both wrong and dangerous for Sweden to adopt the USA/NATO's attack concept based on rapid deployment forces, not least because it would lead to what has now happened — the dismantling of the Swedish conscript army that is a basic precondition for an effective and economical national defence. That has left a vacuum which, in combination with USA/NATO's clearly provocative expansionist policy and the great military significance of Sweden's geographic location, strikes me as almost impossible for Russia to tolerate.

"One need not be a pacifist to be deeply concerned about a defence policy that is governed by USA/NATO and invests everything in rapid deployment forces that are not capable of defending our own country. The ongoing furtive accession to USA/NATO is exposing the Swedish nation to great peril, and I find no good reason for it. Furthermore, it clearly increases the risk that we will become complicit in grave crimes against humanity and international law."<sup>249</sup>

Such reasoning is not unusual among retired officers who served in the defunct popular army.<sup>250</sup> But it appears to be quite rare in the new Swedish military. According to another retired colonel, Arvid Croneman, today's officer corps is "largely focused on NATO, since that offers better career opportunities, etc."<sup>251</sup>

Another motive which is probably involved, at least for the more bloodthirsty, is that USA/NATO provides opportunities to participate in real wars, instead of constantly preparing for an attack that for nearly 200 years has never come. As a Norwegian soldier has frankly explained: "One does not volunteer for Afghanistan in order to save the world, but to participate in a real war."<sup>252</sup>

In short and precisely as intended, Sweden now has a professional army with entirely different attitudes and ambitions than its predecessor. In that connection, the troops and the general public are being indoctrinated in USA/NATO's world view and war propaganda. There are even signs that a warrior culture is being established as Jan Guillou, for one, has noted:

"[Jan Eliasson says] that we must 'continue working for peace in Afghanistan' — that is, to make war — in order to honour our fallen soldiers: 'At this juncture it is extremely important to support our troops to the fullest extent possible... to show that the Swedish people stand behind their continued efforts on behalf of peace and development in Afghanistan'.

"That patriotic argument for continued war is not only cynical and shameless. It is a new element in the Swedish political discussion, a sort of Americanization. Wave the flag, wave new medals, outfit the true patriots with yellow ribbons, and dismiss all criticism of the war as a betrayal of our boys over there. This is a style of a argument which [the gutter tabloid] *Expressen* now employs consistently every day, but it is unworthy of a former and prospective Swedish foreign minister."<sup>253</sup>

However, it is not only *Expressen* that plays on such sentiments, as indicated by this increasingly typical item in *Aftonbladet* (below), published the day before Guillou's critical views in the same paper.

In short, Sweden's military has become a sort of special interest which, together with like-minded souls in politics, mass media, etc., aims propaganda at the Swedish people in order to legitimate the ever-closer collaboration with USA/NATO. It may therefore be expected that any attempt to extricate Sweden from that collaboration would be strongly resisted.

It is especially within the navy and the air force that the strongest ties to USA/NATO have developed. A driving force has been anti-communism, which appears to be almost fanatical among some elements of the Navy. It was, for example, thirteen naval officers who via *Svenska*

## KRIGET I AFGHANISTAN



### "Ni är våra hjältar"

► [Läsarnas hälsningar har nått soldaterna i Mazar-e-Sharif](#) Över 500 läsare har skickat stödande ord till de svenska trupperna. "Känns fantastiskt."

► ["Fortsätt kämpa!"](#) Läs ett urval av de över 500 hälsningarna till soldaterna



### "Vi kan göra skillnad för Afghanistan och världen"

CHATT Svenska soldaterna John Ekersund och Fredrik Karlsson i Mazar-e-Sharif svarade på läsarnas frågor Läs chattsammandraget här.

### Svenskarna som gett sina liv

► [Vi glömmer inte deras insatser](#) Läs mer på Aftonbladets minnessajt

*Aftonbladet* 2012-02-12:

"You are our heroes"... "Keep fighting"... "We can make a difference for Afghanistan and the world"... "Swedes who gave their lives: We will not forget their contributions."

*Dagbladet* in November 1985 accused Olof Palme of placing a higher priority on “normalization” of relations with the Soviet Union than on the defence of Swedish territory, as a result of which they had no confidence in the Social Democratic government and especially not in Prime Minister Palme.<sup>254</sup>

It was a sort of mutiny and attracted much attention, both in Sweden and abroad. Journalist Jan Hägglund is far from alone with his judgement that, “If anything similar had occurred in the USA or France, for example, the government would have immediately dismissed all of the officers. In addition, the most prominent among them would most likely have been tried for treason.”<sup>255</sup>

There were no such consequences for the Swedish naval officers, however. Barely four months later, Palme was dead and the vain hunt for presumptively Soviet submarines could continue with increased budget allocations for over two decades (pp. 5-10).

## Intelligence agencies

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For the most part, Sweden’s various intelligence agencies have managed to remain in the shadows; not much about their activities has been exposed to public scrutiny. The little information that is available indicates that at least three agencies have had extensive contacts with their counterparts in USA / NATO: the National Defence Radio Establishment (“FRA”), the Military Intelligence and Security Service (“MUST”) and the Swedish Security Service (“SÄPO”).

### National Defence Radio Establishment

Sweden’s proximity to the Soviet Union / Russia has been decisive for the development of FRA’s principal task, which is to gather and analyse various kinds of ether transmissions and telecommunications. It is done primarily for Sweden’s own use, but there have also been exchanges of information with the U.S. and other NATO countries.

“In no other area have Sweden’s contacts with the West been so intimate as in monitoring and collecting intelligence from the Soviet bloc,” states Mikael Holmström, national security reporter at *Svenska Dagbladet*. “It is also that part of the hidden security system which is shielded by the most classified stamps — even today.”<sup>256</sup>

Again, it is a question of informal intimacy. “By avoiding formal collaboration, knowledge of its true extent could be restricted,” explains researcher Mikael Alenius.<sup>257</sup>

Of particular importance is the fact that about 80 per cent of all Internet and other telecommunications to and from Russia pass through Sweden. Together with the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA), FRA has also invested heavily in the monitoring of signals from radar, navigation and weapon systems. According to Mikael Holmström, collaboration with NSA during the Cold War was “so sensitive that Sweden could not even be named in secret internal documents relating to U.S. decisions. Instead, our country was assigned the code name, ‘Sardines’.”<sup>258</sup>

## Military Intelligence and Security Service

The activities of MUST are many and varied, relating to three main tasks: to collect and analyse intelligence on assignment from the armed forces and the government; to protect the armed forces against potential threats, both in Sweden and abroad; and “individual-based intelligence gathering”, the exact meaning of which is top secret, but which may include infiltration of suspect organizations.

Intelligence is gathered from many different sources; but according to researcher Hans Abrahamsson, those sources often originate in the United States: “[It is] basically only Swedish military personnel who have access to international intelligence via their networks. That security information, which influences strategic decisions and apparently also the choice of police tactics, is in turn largely based on U.S. sources.”<sup>259</sup>

Those sources are not always reliable and the result can be like that of the 2001 EU summit meeting in Göteborg, when protest demonstrations were suppressed by Swedish police “with unusual brutality”. In that case it was MUST, misled by colleagues from the U.S., that was responsible for the inaccurate intelligence which led to the brutality (p. 30).

Pierre Schori has written of another case of inaccurate intelligence, which influenced a Swedish government’s position on one of the United States’ wars of aggression: “In the late autumn of 2002, the head of MUST reviewed the intelligence on Saddam Hussein’s weapons of mass destruction for the entire government. Not until much later did it become quite clear that Iraq had no such arsenal of mass-destruction weapons, and that the information about nuclear weapons was based largely on falsehoods. Afterward, MUST expressed its regret to the government for the inaccurate picture. ‘It was probably due to feedback circulating among the intelligence agencies of the West,’ says former defence minister Björn von Sydow.”<sup>260</sup>

## Swedish Security Service

SÄPO is probably the best-known Swedish intelligence agency, and its intimate relations with USA/NATO have been previously noted (p. 3). The appropriateness of those relations is an issue that was brought into sharp relief in 2001, in connection with the case of two asylum-seekers who were turned over to Egypt for torture and other mistreatment. The government of Göran Persson made its decision on the basis of questionable intelligence from the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) which had been passed along by SÄPO, as usual.

That profoundly immoral action has been the subject of devastating criticism from many sources, including Thomas Hammerberg, the Council of Europe’s former Commissioner for Human Rights: “The CIA’s conduct encourages the very worst tendencies within the network of security organizations. In several countries they are essentially above the law. The political authorities protect them — or they have lost control and are incapable of offering resistance. Serious crimes are never investigated, a culture of impunity has developed.

“We hear that the Swedish security police also exchange information with the CIA and other security agencies; but due to secrecy, we know little about the nature of that collaboration, or to what extent it is subject to democratic controls.... The U.S. administration’s offensive in its war on terror, the liberties taken by the CIA to operate



without regard to national borders and jurisdictions, its dramatic regression in relation to previously self-evident principles of justice — all that means that collaboration with the CIA now has a completely different character.”<sup>261</sup>

Mats Melin, the Parliamentary Ombudsman at that time, observed that SÄPO had displayed “obvious submissiveness” and had allowed the U.S. agents to “take official measures on Swedish territory”.<sup>262</sup>

During the Cold War, SÄPO was at least as hostile toward the Soviet Union as were its counterparts in USA/NATO, which may have directly or indirectly contributed to the assassination of Olof Palme according to Anders Jallai. That is because Palme was suspected of being a Soviet agent and traitor:

“The West was imprinted with a deep paranoia regarding communism; but the most interesting question is not whether the suspicions [about Palme] were justified. The crucial fact is that a number of scarily competent individuals in the

*“The message was that Olof Palme was a Soviet ‘agent of influence’ and that the purpose of his conduct was to earn the good graces of the Soviet Union.”*

in the security service quite seriously suspected Olof Palme of being a traitor to his country. Also, several previous attempts to arrange his removal from power had failed — the “Harvard tax-avoidance scandal”, rumours about his many love affairs, mental problems, that he had been brainwashed by the KGB, to name but a few....

“Olof Frånstedt, former head of SÄPO, has told me exactly which individuals conveyed the details to SÄPO and SSI (the secret military intelligence agency):

- CIA, from the legendary and notorious James Jesus Angleton, who was in charge of the CIA’s counter-espionage
- MI6, from intelligence analyst Peter McKay....

“The message was that Olof Palme was a Soviet ‘agent of influence’ and that the purpose of his conduct was usually to earn the good graces of the Soviet Union!”<sup>263</sup>

The basis for that assessment was, of course, that Palme pursued policies — for disarmament, common security, international law, etc. — which defied the United States. It may be assumed, but due to secrecy not yet proven, that SÄPO spread its denigrating gossip about Palme via its influential network in Sweden, thereby contributing to the intense hatred of him that is often mentioned as a probable cause of his assassination.

That assumption is related to SÄPO’s assigned function as assessor of security risks in Sweden — a power that gives the agency great influence over hirings and promotions to various positions, not least within the media (more on this below). One individual who was subjected to that power was Sverker Åström, whose promotion to under-secretary of the foreign ministry was blocked by SÄPO for five years due to suspicions that he was a Soviet agent.<sup>264</sup>

Thus, SÄPO is able to influence appointments to key positions in society, and thereby exert influence over which political decisions are made, which news is reported, etc. It may be, for example, that every potential new Palme is sifted out at an early stage, or that only journalists with “appropriate” views may be employed by public service media.

In that case, which views are appropriate according to SÄPO? That question has never been thoroughly elucidated; but judging from the little that is known, they may not deviate very far from the world view and policies of USA/NATO.

### *Confidential relations*

There are additional intelligence agencies — the Navy, Air Force and Army all have their own variant, for example — and it is not an especially daring speculation that all have the same sort of relations with USA/NATO. They often co-operate among themselves, and deliver intelligence that can influence the policy positions and decisions of both the government and the armed forces — quite possibly on false grounds, as in the case of MUST's routinely conveyed U.S. propaganda about Saddam Hussein's non-existent weapons of mass destruction (see above).

The question is how often that kind of false trail is laid down, with what motives, whether it is intentional or unintentional, etc. No one knows, at least no outsider.

However, it can be stated with relative certainty that Swedish intelligence agencies, along with a large segment of the armed forces, have much more confidential relations with USA/NATO than with their own government, the Riksdag or the Swedish people.

As the retired military officer Karl-Yngve Åkerström has explained: "There are many well-informed individuals, both within and outside of the armed forces, who... fear a furtive accession to NATO, which is the instrument of an aggressive security policy that runs counter to Swedish interests. Swedish personnel who have close relations with colleagues from the United States may, intentionally or unintentionally, perform services that are incompatible with their professional roles and with Swedish law."<sup>265</sup>

## **Industry & commerce**

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In the spring of 1986, when Colonel Per Blomqvist was commander of the West Sweden military region, he was invited to a meeting with Per G. Gyllenhammar, head of the Volvo Company and one of the most powerful figures in Swedish industry at that time. Blomqvist explained the logic of the current military strategy and answered questions.

"It was a very incisive discussion," recalls Blomqvist, "because P.G. Gyllenhammar was interested and posed thoughtful questions. Afterwards, he thanked me with words that included something like, 'Yes, that is also our understanding of the situation'. As I was surprised and wondered who those 'we' might be, I asked and was told in reply: 'The company leadership, Kissinger and several NATO generals'. My astonishment was great...."<sup>266</sup>

Researcher Ola Tunander has also mentioned the Volvo president's close relations with Kissinger and other leading figures in USA/NATO: "The Swedish state was not a uniform actor. Commander-in-Chief Lennart Ljung wrote in his diary in 1984 that SACEUR [NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe] General Bernard Rogers, had told Volvo President P.G. Gyllenhammar that he was concerned about Sweden's 'political attitude'. Henry Kissinger had said the same to Gyllenhammar. According to Kissinger, Sweden would now 'be denied crucial information'. The problem was the government — 'the political Sweden', not 'the military Sweden'."<sup>267</sup>

It is presumably within that context to interpret Gyllenhammar's forceful exhortation to abandon the policy of neutrality (p. 13).

Gyllenhammar was among the pillars of Swedish society who were to be whisked off to exile in London or Washington in the event of invasion. To make preparations for a possible attack from the East was the purpose of the so-called Stay Behind networks that were established at the United States' initiative at the start of the Cold War in Sweden, and in other Nordic and European countries. Leading the effort in Sweden on behalf of the United States was William Colby, a young intelligence officer who later became head of the C.I.A.<sup>268</sup>

The main tasks of the network would be to place an exile regime in safety and to organize a resistance movement in an occupied Sweden. It was a secret and informal network of respected individuals in business, labour unions, politics, etc. who had extensive personal contacts and presumably would be able to move about somewhat freely even if the country were occupied. The central co-ordinator was Alvar Lindencrona, head of an insurance company, and the core group consisted of no more than 400 individuals around the country, most of whom were unaware of each other's involvement.

Little is known about the activities of the Stay Behind network. The only participant who has publicly spoken of his participation is Reinhold Geijer, a hotel director who travelled in secret to England several times for training: "I met Americans, Canadians and others on those occasions. But we dealt mainly with Englishmen. They were our teachers in the art of building up a secret resistance."<sup>269</sup>

### *Swedish weapons lobby*

There have of course been more routine business reasons for contacts between Swedish corporate leaders and USA/NATO, especially in connection with the weapons industry. Most of the Swedish weapons industry was acquired by British and U.S. interests several years ago (p. 47) and, even before that, there was a lively arms trade to and from Sweden. Among other things, Swedish manufacturers have made sizable profits on sales of war materiel to the U.S. and its allies (pp. 28, 39); and the freedom to purchase high-tech components from the U.S. has been a top-priority security issue since the 1950s.

Thus, there have long been strong ties between important segments of Swedish industry and USA/NATO. What it can lead to has been explained in a report on the "symbiotic relationship" between the weapons industry and decision-makers within the entire EU:

"The arms industry has become an integral player in the European Union, where military issues have become increasingly important. [This gives rise] to serious questions about the EU policy-making process, with decisions made by a small elite of policymakers and industry representatives, effectively hidden from public scrutiny. This system, which lacks transparency and public accountability, sits uncomfortably with the common understanding of how legitimate democratic decision making should work.

"This close alliance between policy makers and industry has also contributed to a worrying expansion of the EU's defence and security structures in terms of decision-making powers, staff and organisational capabilities, and to the overall militarisation of its foreign policy."<sup>270</sup>

There is little doubt that developments in Sweden are leading in the same direction, and occasionally there emerges a glimpse of the interests involved — as for example when strong public opinion developed against the export of Swedish weapons to the United States during its war of aggression against Iraq. Then, the Swedish Trade

*It is hardly a coincidence that the client country is one of the United States' most important allies in the Middle East — rather than for example Syria, which the superpower has long regarded as an obstacle to its plans for the region.*

Council and the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise responded with the assertion that “If Sweden acts against the U.S. and the U.K., we will risk being subjected to trade sanctions and the loss of thousands of jobs. They are entirely serious that Sweden can no longer pursue a foreign policy of its own, if it happens to go against the U.S. and the U.K.”

Apart from the moral aspect of that argument, it turned out that there was no basis for the ominous warning.<sup>271</sup>

Nevertheless, the Social Democratic government of Göran Persson chose to continue exporting Swedish weapons to the United States and its war of aggression, justifying its decision in terms that chimed well with Swedish big business (p. 38).

More recently, there have been fresh disclosures about the lucrative export of assorted military equipment to Saudi Arabia, “one of the world’s most rigid dictatorships — and one that systematically discriminates against women and suppresses their freedom”, as pointed out by Lena Sommestad, chair of Social Democratic Women in Sweden.<sup>272</sup>

It is hardly a coincidence that the client country is one of the United States’ most important allies in the Middle East — rather than for example Syria, which the superpower has long regarded as an obstacle to its plans for the region.

The arms trade with Saudi Arabia is a clear violation of Sweden’s export regulations, but it follows a well-established pattern according to national security expert Wilhelm Agrell: “This is all part of a political culture in the area of national security that is lacking in transparency, and which stretches the rules and political commitments. It can be traced back to the collaboration with NATO during the Cold War.... Sweden’s national security elite is small in number; everyone high up knows everyone else. If you have been a minister, a departmental secretary or a general director, you have a comprehensive contact network. Of course, that is of great benefit to the industry. The pattern is not at all unique for Sweden.”<sup>273</sup>

There are other examples that shed some light on the business sector’s influence on foreign and national security policies. But for the reasons cited by Wilhelm Agrell, it is largely an untold story.

(Continued...)



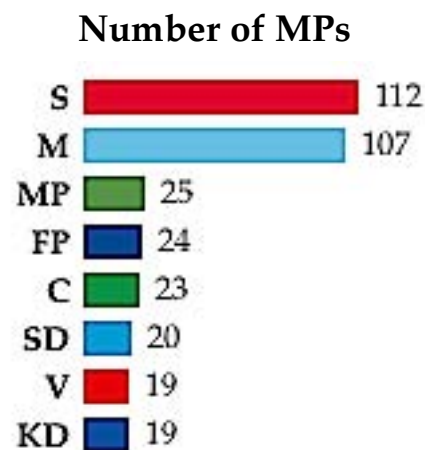
## Political parties

As previously noted, approval for Swedish participation in USA/NATO wars has become almost unanimous in the Riksdag, whose current composition (September 2012) is shown in the diagram below.

Equally important is what has *not* been done: With few exceptions, none of the parties has monitored and focused attention on the furtive accession to USA/NATO that has occurred in recent decades, or made it a high-priority issue. As a result, it has been possible for the process to continue “under the radar” to borrow an apt phrase.

Again, several factors have contributed to this circumstance: Partnership for “Peace”, blind faith in U.N. mandates, the notion of “humanitarian” war, and Sweden’s pathological relationship with the U.S.

The positions of the various parties with regard to USA/NATO<sup>274</sup> may be briefly summarized as follows.



Source: Riksdagen

### Coalition government

**Conservative Party (M)** dominates the current centre-right coalition government. The party favours formal membership in NATO, but only on the condition that the Social Democrats and the general public consent, in order to ensure the long-term viability of such a decision.

As the political domicile of the economic elite and associated anti-communism, Conservatives feel a strong affinity with the USA. All of three Conservative ministers participated in the USA/NATO summit held in Chicago in May of 2012. They included the current foreign minister and former prime minister Carl Bildt, who for several decades has served U.S. interests in Sweden. Among other things, he defended the Vietnam War until it became politically impossible to continue doing so, and assisted in the European marketing of the latest war against Iraq (pp. 6, 16, 20, 35 etc.).

That collaboration has been beneficial to both parties, but hardly on an equal basis — at least not from the superpower’s point of view. That much is clear from a variety of sources, including the following assessment of Carl Bildt which the U.S. ambassador in Stockholm sent to headquarters in Washington in September of 2009: “Medium-size dog with big dog attitude. Wants to play in the first division, even though he does not come from a major country.” The ambassador’s advice to his colleagues is to “play on Bildt’s ambition to be active in the big leagues.”<sup>275</sup>

That and much else in the cables from the Stockholm embassy disclosed by WikiLeaks<sup>276</sup> indicate that nowadays the USA does not have to work very hard to get what it wants from Swedish politicians. They seem so eager to be of service that it suffices with a little flattery, an occasional word of appreciation, a pat on the head.

**Liberal Party (FP)** is the only one in the Riksdag supported by more voters who are positive than negative toward formal membership in NATO, albeit by a small margin. It is probably the most USA-enthusiastic party and urges formal NATO membership,

regardless of what the majority of Swedish people think. In public debate, this relatively small party derives advantage from its connection with *Dagens Nyheter* which is widely regarded as Sweden's most influential daily newspaper. The current party leader is Jan Björklund, an army major on leave of absence.

**Centre Party (C)** was a strong advocate of neutrality during the Cold War, but has become more positive toward USA/NATO as part of the current coalition government. That and other policy shifts were autocratically driven through by Maud Olofsson, who became party leader in 2001 and was forced out in 2011 due to declining membership and poor election results. Among her current enthusiasms is the International Council on Women's Business Leadership, an initiative of the United States bellicose foreign minister, Hillary Clinton. As indicated by the above-noted concerns (p. 83) about the participation of three Conservative ministers in the USA/NATO summit in Chicago, there is still considerable scepticism about formal membership among some elements of the party.

**Christian Democratic Party (KD)** has never concerned itself very much with foreign policy. A clear majority of the party's voters are against NATO membership; but the leadership has supported the deepening involvement with the military alliance, a tendency that has been strengthened in the coalition government.

## Opposition

**Sweden Democrats (SD)** were elected to the Riksdag for the first time in 2010, and have thus far been treated by the other parties as pariahs due to their harsh criticism of Swedish immigration policy.<sup>277</sup> They support the coalition government in most matters, but are opposed to formal NATO membership. Also, the Sweden Democrats were the only Riksdag party that voted against Swedish participation in USA/NATO's war of aggression against Libya — based on arguments that have turned out to more valid than those of the overwhelming majority.<sup>278</sup> However, it is too early to determine whether or not the young party has developed a consistent approach to foreign policy.

**Green Party (MP)** has for the most part emphasized peace and international law in its platform since first being elected to the Riksdag in 1988. Leading figures in the party continue to advocate that policy in speeches and writings. But when it comes to the deciding moment in the Riksdag, the Greens increasingly vote in favour of collaboration with USA/NATO and justify it with the military alliance's propaganda. One of the party's two leadership-sharing spokespersons has, for example, stated that the war of aggression against Libya was actually a "rebellion" whose goals were humanitarian.<sup>279</sup> The party has criticized the Swedish military effort in Afghanistan, but has nevertheless voted to prolong it.<sup>280</sup> The Greens remain opposed to formal membership in NATO; otherwise, there is some confusion about what they want in related matters.

**Left Party (V)** is the new name adopted in 1991 by the Left Communists. Not surprisingly, it is the Riksdag party that is most negative toward USA/NATO. Yet, its leadership has consented to the alliance's military exercises on Swedish territory, and has supported both the war of aggression against Libya and the ongoing destabilization campaign against Syria. On the other hand, its opposition to formal NATO membership and to Swedish military involvement in Afghanistan have been consistent. The party's wavering on such issues in recent years may be related to the fact that it has been subjected by leading media to extremely negative coverage, especially during Lars Ohly's time as party leader (2004-2012).

**Social Democratic Party (S)** is the party that, since World War II, has had the greatest influence on Sweden's foreign policy — formerly because it was the author of the peace and solidarity politics that are especially associated with Olof Palme, and now because it has rejected that heritage and left Sweden without any meaningful alternative to the ongoing incorporation into USA/NATO.

The party's transformation was initiated by Palme's successor, Ingvar Carlsson, with the preliminary adaptation to EU membership (p. 15), and completed during Göran Persson's term as prime minister and party leader (p. 21). Especially under the Machiavellian Persson's leadership, the party's left wing was out-manoeuvred and marginalized; he left behind a party apparatus that was strongly dominated by the party's right wing, with its neo-liberal and war-making tendencies.

In opposition, the party's foreign policy spokesman has been Urban Ahlin who according to Olle Svenning, a journalist with close ties to the SDP, has "long wanted to lead the revolt against Palme's foreign policy". For that purpose, he gladly accepts help from the United States, whose ambassador in Stockholm has related that, among other things, Ahlin appealed for some minister of Afghanistan's puppet regime to be sent to Sweden for the purpose of rendering public opinion more positive toward USA/NATO's (and thereby Sweden's) occupation of that country.<sup>281</sup> Otherwise, there is not much to differentiate Ahlin's politics from those of Carl Bildt (p. 49).

Probably even more important for the transformation of SDP's foreign policy has been Jan Eliasson, whose efforts on behalf of USA/NATO's campaign in Afghanistan has previously been noted (p. 98). Eliasson is an extraordinarily eloquent and clever diplomat whose posts have included that of Swedish ambassador to the United States and president of the U.N. General Assembly. Currently he is Deputy secretary-general of the United Nations — by his own account a long-desired assignment, to which he would never have been appointed without the consent of the United States. (The reverse has been experienced by Eliasson's party colleague, Pierre Schori, who has been blocked from U.N. assignments due to his "red" reputation.<sup>282</sup>)

Both Eliasson (p. 52) and Pär Nuder, finance minister in the Persson government, have chosen to collaborate with former U.S. foreign minister Madeleine Albright, one of the current era's worst violators of international law and human rights.<sup>283</sup> Nuder now works for Albright's consultancy firm in Washington and has explained that it is "a great privilege" to do so because, "She is outstanding — as a human being, politician and business leader."<sup>284</sup>

An issue that clearly illustrates what has happened to the SDP since Palme was assassinated is Afghanistan. Sweden's military involvement in that country was prepared with Prime Minister Persson's interpretation of the U.S. war of aggression in October 2001 as "a further development of international law" (p. 31).

The first Swedish troops joined the USA/NATO occupation force in January of 2002, and their numbers have steadily increased since then, despite widespread criticism within the party.

Persson resigned as party leader after the election defeat of 2006 and was succeeded by Mona Sahlin, who continued along the established path. On a visit to Afghanistan in July of 2010, she proclaimed that, "I can calmly and confidently say that it is good that Sweden is here, and that Sweden responded when the U.N. placed a request".<sup>285</sup> (In fact, the Persson government did not wait for the U.N., but responded to a request from the United Kingdom.<sup>286</sup>)



*Eloquent picture: Mona Sahlin looks up to an evidently content P.M. Reinfeldt after agreeing on Afghanistan policy. The Greens' Peter Eriksson is included on the right. (Aftonbladet 2010-11-01)*

Several months later, the SDP and the Greens reached an agreement with the centre-right government on yet another increase of troops to Afghanistan, with the *possibility* of withdrawal at the end of year 2014. "I have been in Afghanistan," explained Sahlin. "I cannot look those men and women in the eye and say that we have left the responsibility for this in the hands of the government and the Sweden Democrats" — as if that were the only alternative, and as though foreign policy should be guided by the wishes of warriors to believe that their risk-filled efforts are necessary and indispensable.

Among the party colleagues who disapproved of Sahlin's action was former environment minister Lena Sommestad who commented: "What I miss is the lack of a Swedish, Social Democratic voice that stands up to militarization. What does Mona Sahlin want to accomplish in the area of international co-operation? Is it reasonable to prioritize troops in Afghanistan when there is a lack of financial resources in Europe for effective, long-term efforts on behalf of peace and conflict management?"

"... The agreement reached with the government is in many respects a crucial departure from the direction staked out in the party's election platform.... In effect, the agreement provides for the continued presence of combat troops for an indeterminate period.... How well conceived was the party's position on Afghanistan before the election, if it can be changed with a snap of the fingers soon afterward?"<sup>287</sup>

The division within the party was fully visible at the Stockholm Workers' Education Society ("ABF") on 10 October 2009. Held in one meeting room was a seminar critical of the Afghanistan occupation, with former Palme associates such as Thage G. Peterson, Anders Ferm and Maj Britt Theorin. Referring to the Swedish military action, Anders Ferm stated that, "I have been a party member for nearly 50 years, and I thought I would be dead before anything like this could happen."

At the same time in a nearby room, "Palme Days" were being celebrated by Mona Sahlin, Ingvar Carlsson, Urban Ahlin and the like. That event was devoted to other, relatively harmless issues; it was arranged by an institute that was named after Olof Palme, but which for some time has been a channel for USA/NATO war propaganda (more on that below).

A complicating factor is that, included among the prominent Social Democrats who now criticize Swedish involvement in USA/NATO wars, are some who previously

*(Continued on page 107)*



## COLLATERAL DAMAGE: SWEDEN'S LEGACY OF PEACE

THE SANCTITY OF INTERNATIONAL LAW, the resolution of conflict by peaceful means, the protection of weaker nations against aggression by the more powerful, an independent foreign policy based on peaceful neutrality, and related principles have long been cornerstones of Swedish foreign policy.

Not anymore. The dust had barely settled on the rubble of the World Trade Center in New York when Prime Minister Göran Persson announced his "unconditional support" for any measures that the United States might care to take in response to the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001. Two weeks into the massive bombing of Afghanistan, whose responsibility for the attacks has yet to be established, the Swedish prime minister's support for the U.S. remains unshaken.

Maj Britt Theorin, Ambassador for Disarmament in the government of Olof Palme and current member of the EU parliament, strongly opposed the bombings in accordance with traditional Social Democratic ideals:

"It is not possible to interpret the U.N. Charter to mean that it grants the right to retaliation two, three or four weeks after an attack. The Charter has never been interpreted in that way." She says outright that the Persson government is misleading the people, but adds that, "It is necessary to look at the political situation. There has been *enormous* pressure from the U.S. to get approval for what it is doing.

"I am very worried. I am especially worried that people have so readily fallen into the trap of believing that the solution to terrorism lies in military action. That is not at all where the solution is to be found.... I am also disturbed by the meek acquiescence [of the Persson government], when one would have expected a little balance and wisdom in the assessment of the situation. I do not want to see a social democracy that has lost touch with the policy and philosophy of peace that we have upheld for a very, very long time."

Such open criticism by a party veteran is virtually unprecedented. But it is probably too little and too late to have much effect on the present government's policies. Göran Persson and his allies have a strong grip on the party apparatus, and have shown no reluctance to exercise the power it confers. They have also used the power of the purse to reward peace and solidarity organizations which agree with the government's policy, and to punish those which criticize its support for USA/NATO wars.

Open revolt is not something that comes easily to Swedes, and especially not to the membership of the Social Democratic Party. It is more likely that the ideological collapse of the past decade will continue and that, if there is ever to be a revival of genuine social democracy in Sweden, it will probably have to be within the framework of a different structure, possibly under a different banner.

— *Revised excerpt from text published 21 October 2001* <sup>288</sup>

(Continued from page 105)

helped to lay the foundation for that participation. That is the case, for example, with Pierre Schori who upon the end of the Cold War urged the United States to actively work for a new world order. (It has presumably not turned out as he imagined; but the hegemonistic development of recent decades should not surprise anyone who is at all familiar with the history of the United States.)

Schori was also an eager supporter of the war of aggression against Serbia — the chief purpose of which was to justify NATO's continued existence — and referred to the resulting wave of refugees as a "genocide" which he blamed on the targets of the bombing, the Serbs. (See Bo Pellnäs's correct description of that war on p. 124.) Schori was among the most enthusiastic advocates of membership in the EU, which he wanted to equip with "an independent capacity for actions supported by credible military forces.... Peace needs teeth" (p. 26). The EU's teeth are, of course, at USA/NATO's disposal.

Another prominent Social Democrat who has shifted position is Thage G. Peterson, defence minister in the government of Ingvar Carlsson when Sweden was entwined with USA/NATO via Partnership for Peace (p. 20). Despite his harsh criticism of the military alliance's wars of aggression and Sweden's contributions to them, Peterson has not gotten around to regretting membership in either the EU or PFP. He merely wishes that they would instead devote themselves to peaceful efforts, such as assisting the victims of tsunamis in Thailand.<sup>289</sup>

Inevitably, USA/NATO enthusiasts in other parties have attempted to exploit the disarray among the Social Democrats. One example is provided by Alan Widman, a Liberal Party MP who insinuated in an opinion piece that it is only uncomprehending has-beens that are making a fuss: "In the debate on NATO, our largest political party

*A short-lived departure from the prevailing party line occurred when Håkan Juholt became party leader and announced that he wanted to terminate Sweden's contribution to the USA/NATO war of aggression against Libya.*

is represented by two gentlemen [Anders Ferm and Thage G Peterson] who had their careers primarily in the 1980s and 1990s. From currently active and leading Social Democrats is heard not a word. Where is Urban Ahlin...?"<sup>290</sup> (Widman knew very well where Ahlin was — among other places, at the U.S. embassy asking for help in manipulating public opinion to be more favourable

toward the occupation of Afghanistan. Likewise, Widman was certainly aware that it is hardly Ferm and Peterson who nowadays represent the SDP on this or any other issue.)

A short-lived departure from the prevailing party line occurred when Håkan Juholt succeeded Mona Sahlin as party leader in March of 2011, and announced that he wanted to terminate Sweden's contribution to the USA/NATO war of aggression against Libya. The reaction both within and outside the party was immediate and ferocious. Soon he began to retreat, and after a few months withdrew his opposition to Sweden's complicity.

The pressure on Juholt continued nonetheless — fuelled also by his deviations from neo-liberal doctrine. After a mere ten months as party leader, he was forced out in January of 2012. Juholt's handling of the Libya issue and the campaign against him is generally regarded as less than brilliant; but it is doubtful whether anyone, no matter how clever, who attempted to pursue the same kind of politics would have succeeded in today's Social Democratic Party.<sup>291</sup>

Juholt was succeeded by Stefan Löfven, a labour union leader with no experience as an elected official. But the dominant media have been as gentle and cordial in their treatment of Löfven as they were tough and aggressive toward Juholt. The party's opinion rating rose sharply after Löfven's appointment, with hardly any need for him to say or do anything.



*"Good that Håkan Juholt reverses himself on Libya" was the headline of an editorial on 19 May 2011 in Aftonbladet, Sweden's biggest daily and historically linked to the SDP.*

The contrast with Juholt's fate is probably no accident. The union that Löfven led was Metall (Metalworkers), which is male-dominated and linked to the Swedish manufacturing industry, including the branch that deals in weapons. Metall has a long history as a right-wing power centre within the SDP, and according to Olle Svenning, the Swedish labour movement in general has a long history of collaboration with the USA's diplomatic mission in Stockholm: "Social democracy's relations with the gigantic U.S. embassy were largely managed during the post-WWII period by union man Erik Södersten. From the embassy, he directed Swedish folk movements and social democracy, and also conducted some monitoring of political 'non-conformists'."<sup>292</sup>

For these reasons it is likely that Stefan Löfven will follow in Göran Persson's footsteps — and may even be more positively disposed to USA/NATO. That appears to be confirmed by the new party leader's stance on the first major foreign policy issue that he has had to deal with — the scandalous arms trade with Saudi Arabia (p. 104). The most recent disclosures have provoked demands for the cessation of that trade, but Löfven is clearly not of the same mind: "We have to be able to export for reasons of national defence.... We now have a contract, and it cannot be broken just like that.... If one breaks a business agreement, one will never be able to sell again to that client."<sup>293</sup>

It thus appears that neither USA/NATO, its allies in Sweden or Saudi Arabia need worry about the Social Democrats with Stefan Löfven as their leader.

Such is the general attitude toward USA/NATO and its wars in today's Riksdag — an assembly where the only party to vote against Swedish participation in the USA/NATO war of aggression against Libya ("with a U.N. mandate", of course) were the Sweden Democrats, the newcomers who are treated as pariahs by the other seven parties.

Currently, there is nothing to indicate a likely change in that attitude, or even a serious discussion of its basis and implications.

## Propaganda apparatus

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It is, of course, primarily through the leading media that USA/NATO propaganda is disseminated. In Sweden there are six nationwide media that predominate: four daily newspapers — *Dagens Nyheter*, *Expressen*, *Svenska Dagbladet* and *Aftonbladet* — and the programmes of Swedish Public Television (SVT) and Swedish Public Radio (SR).

As Stig Arne Nohrstedt has observed, “The eyes and ears of the Swedish news culture are turned toward the sole remaining superpower.” That is especially evident in relation to foreign policy issues.<sup>294</sup>

*Aftonbladet*, an evening tabloid which currently has the largest circulation of any Swedish newspaper, was previously something of an exception in that it was owned by the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (“LO”), and its editorial profile was left-wing social democratic. That profile has been changed, however, since 91 per cent of the company shares were purchased by Schibsted, a media conglomerate based in the NATO member-state Norway.

*“The eyes and ears of the Swedish news culture are turned toward the sole remaining superpower.”*

With its residual nine per cent, according to the sales agreement, LO is supposed to retain control of basic editorial policy. For whatever reason, however, that provision has not prevented a distinct shift to the right, especially in matters of war and peace. A symbolically important step was taken in 2009 when *Aftonbladet* was moved into the same building as *Svenska Dagbladet*, a conservative broadsheet which is now also controlled by Schibsted.

*Aftonbladet* continues to follow a somewhat traditional social democratic line on domestic issues. But it appears that the editorial leadership, or whoever else may be in charge, has decided to indoctrinate the newspaper’s readers in the warrior culture of USA/NATO.

In 2008, columnist Ira Mallik wrote the following in *Aftonbladet* about a war-glorifying documentary series broadcast by Sweden’s largest private-sector TV channel: “Every Wednesday, TV4 is embedded with the Swedish ISAF contingent in Afghanistan. In ‘The Peace Force’ we are treated to the sort of patriotic, hero-worshipping journalism that we usually deride in that of other countries.... Exactly why Swedish military personnel are ‘working with’ Afghanistan, of all places, is by no means clear. ‘We are doing something good — we are helping other people’, reiterate the frequently appealing Micke, Ami, Mats, Erik and Fredrik....

“It looks good. It is well-made. It conveys emotions in slow-motion. It is soft questions and shared humanity in the midst of war. ‘The Peace Force’ is about constructing images of Swedish heroism and sacrifice. And above all, it is uncritical, patriotic *ersatz* journalism at its very worst — and most effective.”<sup>295</sup>

Nowadays, the same sort of criticism could be aimed at *Aftonbladet*. The perspective conveyed by the example on the following page is now the one that prevails in the pages of Sweden’s largest newspaper. (See also page 95.)

With *Aftonbladet*’s metamorphosis, the basic editorial outlook of all national dailies now largely conforms with USA/NATO propaganda.



Front page of Aftonbladet's website  
9 February 2010

## Fallen Swedes

**They gave their lives —  
in Afghanistan**

**We will not forget their contributions**

**Show your support —  
send a greeting**

**Continued support  
for the troops**

**Wolfgang Hansson writes about the  
Swedish tactics that will win the  
big offensive for Obama**

With *Svenska Dagbladet* and *Aftonbladet*, Schibsted controls around 16 of the total daily newspaper circulation. Even larger is the combined total of roughly 26 per cent for *Dagens Nyheter* and *Expressen*; both belong to the Bonnier media empire which also includes TV stations, local and business journals, weekly magazines, book publishers, etc.

By comparison, the five largest newspapers with somewhat left-wing social democratic profiles have a combined share of about two per cent.<sup>296</sup>

## Necessary exceptions

There are, of course, exceptions to the reigning perspective, especially in debate and commentary sections where contributors who are not employed by the media are granted the opportunity to present alternative information and ideas — although even those offerings are regulated by editorial gatekeepers. It is for example very seldom, if ever, that space is provided for the perspective of the Iranian or Cuban government. The unwritten rule is that all governments designated as enemies by the United States shall, to the fullest extent possible, be denied access to mainstream Swedish media. On the other hand, all sorts of cock and bull stories about such governments may be published as fact, unconfirmed and uncorrected.<sup>297</sup>

In addition to debate and commentary sections, there are columnists who occasionally are permitted to stretch or even cross the editorial boundaries. Among the few independent voices remaining at *Dagens Nyheter* is that of the newspaper's TV critic, Johan Croneman, whose published reflections include the following regarding the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the terror attacks in New York on 11 September 2001:

"SVT's marathon broadcast from the memorial ceremony was a real overdose. It did not lack perspective, but it nevertheless resembled something like a genuflection. Not many critical voices penetrated the noise...."



“The USA lost over 400,000 men and women in World War II, nearly all of them military personnel. The Soviet Union lost 28 million, of which 14 million were civilians. May one not place such numbers beside each other? Are we not compelled to make such comparisons — especially when, in every TV series, every war film and at least every other documentary, it is drummed into us that it was the United States that defeated fascism and suffered terrible agony, both at home and abroad...?”

“Is not about time to point out that Iraq and Afghanistan have experienced a 9/11 at least once every month for several years? Some 90,000 civilians have been killed in Iraq since the start of that war. Is that a blow which simply must be tolerated?”

*“Is not about time to point out that Iraq and Afghanistan have experienced a 9/11 at least once every month for several years?”*

“I will soon become furious if one does not begin to compare numbers, even on TV. Ninety thousand dead Iraqi civilians — do they have faces? No. Not one — at most, a turban....”

“[News reader] Claes Elfsberg is never going to sit in a TV studio wearing a sober dark suit with a view over Baghdad and talk about victims, death, suffering. These days, there is no doubt as to which side Swedish media take in these conflicts. It has been 30-40 years since [the news programme] Rapport was ‘red’ (brrr!).”<sup>298</sup>

In July of 2012 Croneman quoted a Christian Syrian immigrant to Sweden: “‘Swedish news coverage, both in newspapers and on TV, is completely uncritical in favour of the rebels. They don’t know what they are talking about. And to criticize that picture of reality, is to be immediately accused of sympathizing with a murderer.’”

Croneman notes “The extremely simplified picture that Swedish media have conveyed, and convey, about the conflict and the opposition [in Syria].... The hidden agendas, the grey eminences, the tawdry games played under the covers are so subtle and smart, but nothing new for conflicts in the Middle East.... [Is there anything about this] in Swedish TV reporting? Nil, nothing — it is ‘too difficult’. ‘Difficult for whom?’, one many ask.”<sup>299</sup>

For the most part, that sort of perspective is notable for its absence from Swedish news media. Croneman is presumably allowed to carry on in this fashion because he “merely” deals in TV criticism. Also, there have to be some exceptions every now and then, in order to demonstrate that the media are open to all points of view. As Croneman points out, however, that openness is usually limited or non-existent.

### ***Public service***

According to opinion surveys, the Swedish people’s trust in news reporting is, by a wide margin, greatest for the public service companies, SVT and SR. But as Johan Croneman indicates above, the perspective of the public service channels was much broader 30-40 years ago than it is today.

It was back then that Carl Bildt was moved to accuse SVT of spreading “North” Vietnam’s propaganda by reporting on the devastation caused by U.S. bombing in the North. The U.S. government had sworn that no such bombing was taking place, so the filmed evidence and reports broadcast by SVT must be false, reasoned Bildt. But the bombing and the devastation turned out to be all too real.

If the Vietnam War were to take place today, however, it is doubtful that Bildt would feel any need to criticize SVT’s reporting on it. Nowadays, ideas that lean “too far to the left” are evidently not permitted in the news. Asked why the coalition *Global rättvisa*

("Global Justice") was not mentioned in a news item on an event that it had arranged, SVT's reporter explained that "many of the 36 organizations behind [the] campaign are on the margins of the left.... We felt that the Venezuela Friendship Society was problematic."<sup>300</sup>

That attitude is significant in itself, of course. But even more indicative is the casual manner in which it was conveyed, as though it were self-evident. It suggests that people and opinions "on the margins of the left" may only on exception, if that, be granted space in SVT news.

That tendency was evident in public service's coverage of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Vietnam's reunification on 30 April 2000, when not a single Vietnamese was heard. Instead, a couple of U.S. war veterans were given an opportunity to lament their own and their comrades' suffering, and to explain the war of aggression's noble purpose (p.26).

In September 2010 it was time again: The U.S. government declared that the war against Iraq was now ended (even though 50,000 troops would remain in that country, among other things). The SVT news programme *Rapport*'s story on "the end" referred briefly to some problematic aspects of the war, but was devoted mainly to President Obama's misleading speech in that regard, and to the views of a young, well-indoctrinated U.S. veteran of the occupation:

"What I especially liked was how he emphasized not just the sacrifices that the soldiers made, but also the sacrifices their families made," said Roger Deming, visiting Sweden. "And it was absolutely the right thing to do, if only for the fact that Saddam was a brutal dictator, he was oppressing his own people, doing horrible things to them.... While we certainly don't have an obligation to be the world's police to help remove dictators, we do have also as human beings an obligation to see other people suffering and try to do something about it."<sup>301</sup>



*Roger Deming in SVT news*

End of story. That was what *Rapport*'s audience learned about the meaning of the war against Iraq, just as the audiences of SVT and SR had been fed a likewise unchallenged explanation of the Vietnam War's significance from an equally oblivious U.S. veteran in 2000 — without one word from one citizen of the afflicted countries, or from any knowledgeable analyst.

As Johan Croneman has observed: "These days, there is no doubt as to which side Swedish media take in these conflicts." The question is how that has come about. In the current state of knowledge/ignorance, one may only speculate. But is not inconceivable that a significant part has been played by SÄPO whose vetting function within public service has previously been noted (p. 4).

The exercise of that function has been described by Erik Eriksson, whose reports from northern Vietnam were among those which caused an outraged Carl Bildt to accuse SVT of spreading Vietnamese propaganda: "A SÄPO official who was a Social Democrat told me that my telephone was being monitored. He thought it was wrong that I, whose views on Vietnam were pretty much the same as those of Prime Minister Olof Palme,

should be suspected to something forbidden or illegal. My informant at SÄPO told me, as others have also disclosed, that SÄPO gave information to other countries' security police, including the CIA....

"But I was in good company. It has previously been revealed that SÄPO kept an eye on a large number of Swedish journalists, including Dieter Strand and Gunnar Fredriksson at *Aftonbladet*, and also Per Wästberg and Olof Lagercrantz at *Dagens Nyheter*.... The political atmosphere among the secret national police during those years was hardly compatible with the policies of the democratically elected government; the loyalties of SÄPO officials were rather directed to a foreign power."<sup>302</sup>

All indications are that loyalties to the foreign power are just as strong today (p. 102). The question is whether that has induced SÄPO and or other agencies to systematically red- or blackball journalists in the mould of Gunnar Fredriksson or Olof Lagercrantz, and thereby influence the intellectual and ethical tendencies of the Swedish corps of journalists.

Would an Erik Eriksson be allowed to work at SVT today?

### *Institutes and experts*

In addition to mass media, there are institutes and experts who conduct various forms of opinion-making for the benefit of USA/NATO, often in symbiosis with the media.

Among them is the Atlantic Council which was founded in 1961 by two former U.S. foreign ministers to develop support for NATO. Today there are some 40 branches in countries that are members of NATO or Partnership for "Peace".

The main function of the Swedish Atlantic Council is to render public opinion more favourable to both formal membership in NATO, and the wars and occupations of the military alliance.<sup>303</sup> The organization was founded in 1996, but its activities to date have been limited. The steering committee consists largely of right-wing politicians and former military officers.<sup>304</sup>

That the activities of the Swedish Atlantic Council have not been very extensive may be due to the fact that the well-established Swedish Institute of International Affairs performs much the same function. Over a third of its budget is funded by the state, and it proclaims that its purpose is to "to inform and enrich the public debate by promoting interest in and knowledge of foreign affairs and international relations".

*Its perspective is so narrow that the Institute of International Affairs is rather to be regarded as a state-subsidized lobby organization for USA/NATO.*

The "informing and enriching" on offer is, however, extremely limited. The Institute collaborates with the U.S. embassy in Stockholm and arranges seminars on NATO with only supporters of the military alliance as speakers, or on the Palestine question with a former Israeli defence minister invited to speak but no Palestinians. The perspective is so narrow that the Institute is rather to be regarded as a state-subsidized lobby organization for USA/NATO.<sup>305</sup>

The institution that is probably most effective at promoting USA/NATO in Sweden is, oddly enough, the one named after Olof Palme. For, ever since the war of aggression against Serbia in the 1990s, the Olof Palme International Center has functioned as a channel for the military alliance's propaganda — a fact which caused a perplexed Håkan Wiberg to observe:

“Olof Palme sharply condemned the USA’s war against Vietnam and the Soviet Union’s war against Afghanistan. But now the USA’s devastating war against Afghanistan is being supported by the head of the Palme Center who even calls it an expression of ‘solidarity’. What in the world has happened to Sweden during the intervening years?”<sup>306</sup>

A partial answer to that question is that the Palme Center is associated with the Social Democratic Party, and the insult to Palme’s memory lamented by Wiberg reflects the party’s decline (see above). It is probably not possible to exaggerate the propaganda value of this transformation: What can be wrong with a war that is supported by an institution established in Olof Palme’s honour?

*The only honourable thing to do would be to change the name — to “Persson Center” for example. But then it would no longer be possible to exploit Olof Palme’s good name to promote war.*

Of course, the only honourable thing to do would be to change the name — to the “Persson Center” for example. But then it would no longer be possible to exploit Olof Palme’s good name to promote war; a name change is therefore unlikely.

Finally in this context, it may be noted that in most or all countries are various kinds of experts whose presumptive expertise can be useful for opinion-making. This usually occurs in symbiosis with mass media, which gladly cite experts who confirm the wisdom of their editorial positions.

Remarkably often in Swedish reporting on matters relating to international law, it is Professor Ove Bring who is called upon to offer reassurance that there is nothing wrong with the aggressive actions of USA/NATO. Precisely as Prime Minister Göran Persson, he was of the opinion that the war of aggression against Afghanistan was “a further development of international law”.

Toward Russia, however, a different tone applies: “Europe should put down its foot and make it clear to Moscow that aggression is totally unacceptable,” advised Prof. Bring in reference to Russia’s reaction to Georgia’s attack on South Ossetia (p. 59). That, even though, “It was undeniably Georgia’s President Saakasjvili who, with catastrophically poor political judgement, initiated the crisis by attempting to force South Ossetia into the [Georgian] republic with the use of force.”<sup>307</sup> (The “use of force” in question was a full-scale military attack.)

The professor’s attitude toward the rights of USA/NATO is considerably more tolerant, as author Mikael Nyberg has explained: “At the NATO summit meeting during the Kosovo crisis in 1999, the USA pushed through an expansion of the mutual defence obligation. Henceforth, it would not go into effect only in the event of an armed attack from outside of the alliance, but also in response to ‘other risks of an extensive nature’ such as ‘disruptions in the supply of vital resources’.

“This expanded right of self-defence is a privilege for the USA and its allies by which they may attack and occupy foreign countries. Sweden has gone along with that. Prof. Ove Bring summarizes the doctrine that applies: ‘The first barrier of defence now lies abroad, and often beyond the immediate surroundings of the European Union.’

“Thus are non-alliance, territorial defence and universal conscription demobilized.”<sup>308</sup>

Other experts may also be granted space in the media, of course — especially in debate and commentary pages to which even critics of USA/NATO may sometimes be admitted. However, even those pages are subject to an editorial selection process, and there is ample reason to question how impartial they are in this and other contexts.



One of many examples is provided by *Svenska Dagbladet's* handling of a response to an opinion piece by Aleksander Gabelic, chair of the Swedish U.N. Association, who exhorted Sweden to “humanitarian” war against Libya on the basis of dubious arguments. The well-documented response was rejected, but the editors published yet another piece by Gabelic urging still more wars against other countries, including Syria.<sup>309</sup>

## An occupied country

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The foregoing discussion indicates that the ongoing incorporation of Sweden into USA / NATO is being driven by a number of powerful interests that are well organized and have sizable resources at their disposal. To what extent their various efforts are coordinated is a crucial question that is yet to be elucidated. But in any event it is clear that their combined effect is to create strong pressure for ever-closer collaboration with the military alliance.

The resistance consists largely of a resource-poor and divided “peace movement” which cannot even agree on whether wars of aggression can be justified. It is therefore noteworthy that public opinion against formal membership in NATO has for decades been so strong and unshakable. That suggests a potential for halting, and perhaps even reversing, the transformation of Sweden into a warrior society — although it would require some powerful force with the will and capability to drive such a process forward, and that sort of forceful leadership is nowhere in sight.

Meanwhile, the question of whether or not Sweden should take the final step of formal membership in USA / NATO is being discussed. Whether or not it would make any difference can also be discussed, given that Sweden’s adaptation to and collaboration with the military alliance is already so extensive. Membership would, however, have potential significance in some respects. Among other things, Sweden would thereby submit to the alliance’s Article 5, which obligates all members to assist any other member-state that is stated to be under attack. Also, it would probably be more difficult to terminate formal membership than to withdraw from Partnership for Peace.

It may therefore be useful to consider the principal arguments for membership that have been offered. One recurrent theme is that, now that collaboration with the alliance has proceeded so far, it would be just as well to “join and participate in decision-making”. Anyone who truly believes that has clearly not understood how it works. For, it is the USA that decides, even if the superpower occasionally and for various reasons allows one or another ally to pretend that it is leading.

As retired CIA agent Michael Scheuer has observed: “NATO can’t put its shoes on without U.S. help.”<sup>310</sup> Less pointed but equally direct is the message of the German general who in 2010 was responsible for co-ordinating nuclear weapon matters with NATO. Asked how it was possible for German military officers — given the judicial outcome of World War II — to go along with a nuclear weapons policy that violated the Nuremberg Principles, he replied: “Look, we have no alternative but to do what the Americans tell us to do.”<sup>311</sup>

### *“The hidden alliance”*

Another, closely related argument for membership is that Sweden has in fact participated in a “hidden alliance” with USA/NATO for decades, and that consequently the Swedish policy of neutrality was a complete bluff. This issue has been touched upon above — in the sections headed Armed forces, Intelligence agencies and Industry & commerce — and it is the subject of a detailed discussion by Mikael Holmström in his award-winning book, *Den dolda alliansen* (“The Hidden Alliance”).<sup>312</sup>

As a long-time reporter on national security issues for *Svenska Dagbladet* — the armed forces’ most loyal supporter among leading media — Holmström has gained access to numerous military and other sources who participated in various kinds of secret collaboration with USA/NATO during the Cold War. One result is a 600-page book which, as Holmström explains, shows that “Sweden conducted a more extensive secret operation, in both breadth and depth, than has previously come to light....

“It was a double politics, hidden from the Swedish people. Despite Swedish declarations of neutrality in time of war, the surrounding world did not believe in a neutral Sweden. Moscow regarded the policy as a ‘double game’, and Washington counted us as ‘NATO’s seventeenth member’.”

That conclusion is supported by a large volume of facts and testimony. However, the book also contains much that conveys a different picture, including the following:

*Siver Nielsen at Norway’s Defence Dept., 1950-1958 (p. 124)*

“Sweden’s non-alliance in peacetime was regarded as a fact.”

*Major General L. G. Persson, head of operations, 1987-1987 (p. 152)*

According to Lars G. Persson, the attitude among Danes and Norwegians was that Sweden was “counted as one of the gang” in the event of war, but at the same time they respected the policy of non-alliance.

*Finnish politician Jakko Iloniemi (p. 166)*

“While ‘double game’ is regarded as a dirty word in Sweden, in Finland it is almost another term for statesmanship.”

*Ingvar Carlsson, Swedish prime minister, 1986-1991 (p. 206)*

“We knew that there were exchanges with other security services. But we could not review and approved every single case. Rather, it was up to the head of FRA to exercise good judgement and recognize that there were boundaries that absolutely could not be crossed.”

*Major Bo Johnson Theutenberg (p. 209)*

[Theutenberg] was international law advisor to the commander-in-chief. At the same time he served at the foreign ministry as its international law expert....

“NATO were our friends. That was the general atmosphere at the operational level. But we had strict orders from the military not to speak of that at the foreign ministry, with its neutrality-inclined leadership,” relates Theutenberg.

*Author Holmström himself, on foreign policy during the Cold War (p. 283)*

Sweden was outside of NATO and conducted an active foreign policy with peace-keeping actions under U.N. leadership and initiatives on disarmament.

*Thomas Pickering, U.S. deputy foreign minister 1997-2000 (p. 291)*

"Sweden was perceived on two levels. One was the political level. The other was the intelligence and military collaboration that took place in the background. For that, there were military and intelligence back-channels."

*President Dwight Eisenhower (p. 314)*

Eisenhower pointed out that Sweden had no other alternative to a policy of neutrality.

*Kennedy government's perception of Sweden (p. 315)*

"In the event of a general war, the Swedish Government's position cannot be predetermined; if Sweden does not become a cobelligerent with NATO, it is important that it remains a friendly neutral."

### ***"Which Sweden?"***

These and other details in Mikael Holmström's book indicate that "the hidden alliance" was limited to a very narrow circle. If not even the commander-in-chief of the armed forces knew about the extent of the secret collaboration (p. 96), how is it possible to conclude that the "nation of Sweden" was a party to it? And if the surrounding world regarded the policy of neutrality as a big bluff, how to explain President Eisenhower's statement that Sweden "had no other alternative", or the Kennedy government's assessment that Sweden's reaction to an outbreak of war between the East and West blocs could not be predetermined?

Other sources also indicate that the relationship between Sweden and USA/NATO during the Cold War was more complex than the notion of a hidden alliance suggests. Those sources include Thomas Kanger and Oscar Hedin, whose account of the Stay Behind operation includes the following:

"Although the organization was co-ordinated with NATO, the development of the Swedish Stay Behind occurred partly in opposition to the United States.... NATO was the common factor. But the government could not accept U.S. operational involvement in Sweden's national defence....

"We made it clear to [CIA agent William] Colby and the Americans that we would handle this ourselves', relates former head of the army Carl-Erik Almgren....

"One of those active in the highest-level leadership in Stockholm, who wishes to remain anonymous, said that he got the impression that Olof Palme lost interest in Stay Behind when he became prime minister in 1969."<sup>313</sup>

That there was a dual perception of Sweden in the United States has been confirmed by a former head of the CIA. "The Swedish state as not a unified actor," explains researcher Ola Tunander. "Some centrally placed individuals on the military side were kept informed, while vital information was withheld from the government, including the

prime minister. The Swedish power elite was basically divided. During a lunch in 1993 with James Schlesinger, former defence minister and head of CIA, I asked about his perception of Sweden. His reply was brief and concise: 'Which Sweden? The political Sweden or the military Sweden? The military planned to draw in the USA as soon as possible'....

"Indications are that a split developed [during the 1970s and 1980s], between a small military elite which practically identified with the U.S. and Great Britain, and a political elite that became more 'neutralistic' and increasingly sceptical toward the idea of entering a war at an early stage."<sup>314</sup>

That rift between the military and the political Sweden became very clear in connection with the latest public inquiry into the suspected intrusion of foreign submarines into Swedish waters (p. 5). Among those taking the military's side was Mikael Holmström, according to the inquiry's secretary, Ambassador Mathias Mossberg:

"In an interview in year 2000 which attracted much attention, the U.S. defence minister during the 1980s, Casper Weinberger, acknowledged in unequivocal terms that Western submarines often and regularly made intrusions into Swedish waters in order to test Swedish defences, but never without consulting the Swedish and U.S. navies. Even though Weinberg's

remarks were among the more sensational utterances of the entire Cold War, and were the direct cause of the submarine inquiry's establishment, Holmström does not find any space in his 600-page discourse to mention it. That speaks volumes.

"With similar methods the Swedish Church of Foreign Submarine Intrusions has long attempted to defend its positions and keep order in the ranks; cf. for example, Bildt's refusal to submit to questioning by the inquiries....

"The fact is that, in this matter, it is the armed forces which have consistently maintained silence, withheld material, shut the doors to their archives and presented misleading information."<sup>315</sup>

That state of affairs has aroused the following thoughts of Sune Olofsson, who has also covered national security issues as a journalist at *Svenska Dagbladet*: "One possibility worth considering is that, included within the naval collaboration that was unknown to the commander-in-chief or perhaps outside of it, there has been a top-secret collaboration with the West that neither the government nor the Riksdag knew about. An operational [naval agency], one of whose objectives was to sustain the Russian threat. A collaboration set up by a small clique of naval officers and conducted entirely beyond the reach of necessary democratic control."<sup>316</sup>



Montage of news articles about the frenetic and fruitless hunt for suspected Soviet submarines. Sune Olofsson suggests the possibility that the drawn-out affair may have been orchestrated by a small clique of naval officers in order to sustain the "Soviet threat".



### *Prime minister under suspicion*

Perhaps it is within that framework to interpret the thirteen naval officers' mutinous manoeuvre against Olof Palme a few months before he was murdered (p. 97). Palme had challenged USA/NATO and its Swedish allies by, among other things, ordering the armed forces to cease all operational planning with the military alliance and by urging intelligence agencies SÄPO and MUST to expand collaboration with their counterparts in the Soviet Union.<sup>317</sup>

One who has followed that line of inquiry is the former fighter pilot and current author, Anders Jallai, who has arrived at the following conclusion: "Olof Palme knew that the Soviet Union regarded Sweden as an ally of the United States, and that the nuclear-bomb threat against Swedish cities and harbours was very great. He therefore pursued a policy that was perceived as friendly toward the Soviet Union and in direct opposition to the interests of the USA. Increasingly, he was perceived as a threat to Sweden's inclusion in the circle of Western countries."

If so, it would have been no small threat, given that Sweden's geographical location had great strategic significance for both sides during the Cold War, as President Eisenhower explained: "'Think about what would happen to the other Scandinavian countries, and indeed all of Western Europe, if the Soviets went into Sweden'. Sweden was seen as the key to the defence not only of NATO members Norway and Denmark, but 'all of Western Europe', as well."<sup>318</sup>

According to Jallai, Palme's policies had aroused strong suspicions long before he was killed: "As early as the 1970s, Swedish security police and the military security agency received information which suggested that Prime Minister Olof Palme was a traitor to his country. He was said to have abandoned the Western sphere of influence in favour of closer relations with the Soviet Union.... I have found information in both SÄPO's archive and the Military Archives which confirms the existence of those suspicions about Olof Palme. The information came primarily from the CIA and MI6."

*"As early as the 1970s, the Swedish security police and the military security agency received information which suggested that Prime Minister Olof Palme was a traitor. He was said to have abandoned the Western sphere of influence in favour of closer relations with the Soviet Union."*

The suspicions were erroneous according to Jallai: "I believe that Palme, ironically enough, did what he believed was best for Sweden and thereby got on the wrong side of the military establishment and NATO.... His determination to make the Baltic Sea a nuclear-weapon-free zone and exclude NATO's nuclear-armed submarines was an honourable attempt to extricate Sweden from the Cold War.

"Also, he did not allow NATO to place permanent monitoring equipment in Swedish waters, so-called SOSUS facilities, and he rejected plans for groups of NATO submarines to be stationed in the Swedish archipelago at the start of an eventual third world war. That was certainly a major setback for NATO's defence of Europe's northern flank, which in the judgement of military analysts clearly shifted the European balance of power to the benefit of the Soviet Union. Olof Palme had become a security risk, and my thesis is that plans for an assassination with patriotic motives began to be made as early as the autumn of 1985."<sup>319</sup>

## PURE VS. CONDITIONAL NEUTRALITY

In the discussion of Swedish neutrality, confusion often arises due to the existence of at least two different conceptions of “neutral”. One is the textbook definition of, for example, the Oxford Dictionary: “an impartial and uninvolved country or person: *he acted as a neutral between the parties* | *Sweden and its fellow neutrals*.”

Few things in politics are that simple and clear-cut, however. Since its original formulation nearly 200 years ago, Swedish neutrality has seldom if ever been absolute or perfectly consistent (see Footnote 1). Neutrality policy during the Cold War was explicitly *conditional* and provided for precautionary measures to be taken against the risk of attack, presumably by the Soviet Union. Anders Ferm and Thage G Peterson have explained and defended that policy as follows:

“Media and ‘national security researchers’ have systematically slandered the neutrality policy and non-alliance that Sweden maintained during World War II and the Cold War. That policy has variously been called ‘a fraud against the democracies’ and ‘the big lie’. The propagandists in media and ‘research institutes’ think that we other, somewhat simpler folks are unable to hold three ideas in mind at the same time: (1) How one tries to avoid war; (2) What one does if one is nevertheless attacked; and (3) How one during peacetime attempts to prepare for that eventuality.”<sup>320</sup>

In principle, that is or ought to be easy enough to understand. In practice, however, Sweden’s conditional neutrality has not been so easy to apply. For example, at what point do precautionary measures requiring collaboration with one side in a conflict become so extensive that they constitute a “hidden alliance”? And if that collaboration must be secret and informal, how to avoid the risk that some of those involved — for what may be a variety of reasons — take it upon themselves to develop a *de facto* alliance?

Such issues have yet to be resolved, and have only recently begun to be discussed.

### *Untenable theory*

There is much else to indicate that the assassination of Palme may have been planned and carried out by individuals within the military, the intelligence agencies and/or the police. Yet, that possibility has been almost completely ignored by the police who have been in charge of the murder investigation. One chief investigator said straight out: “That is the one theory which I refuse even to consider.” That attitude naturally tends to strengthen suspicions of a murder plot, but nothing has been done about the obvious misconduct of the investigation.<sup>321</sup>

Whatever the case with the assassination of Olof Palme, the suspicions against him clearly refute the notion of a hidden alliance between Sweden and USA/NATO. In the midst of the Cold War, Palme led the country’s largest political party for 17 years and was prime minister for 11 of those years. More than anyone else, Sweden’s policy of neutrality was associated with Palme, and all indications are that he pursued that policy so consistently that it may well have cost him his life.

In short, the hidden alliance theory is untenable. What appears to have taken place, instead, was a hidden collaboration between USA/NATO and a small coterie of Swedish

allies who in many or most cases were ignorant of each other's involvement. So it was with the Stay Behind network that consisted of no more than 400 individuals; for his nevertheless valuable book, Mikael Holmström interviewed 140 informants. The number of people who in various ways were involved in the secret collaboration was considerably larger, of course — but hardly in the vicinity of Sweden's population, which during the period in question was around 6-7 million.

It is also relevant that none of those involved appears to have done anything to inform the general public about the secret collaboration — on the contrary. Thus, to now urge formal membership in NATO on the basis of an informal collaboration that was unknown to the vast majority is hardly valid. It resembles the logic of the man who killed his parents and then begged for mercy on the grounds that he was an orphan.

### *Dubious guarantees*

A third argument for formal membership in USA/NATO is that it is necessary in order to defend the country against an eventual attack, especially now that the popular army has been dismantled. Among those who have developed this argument is retired colonel Bo Pellnäs who, however, begins with a warning about the drawbacks:

"NATO membership would compel greater clarity in our position. Those who advocate NATO membership must be prepared to pay the political and financial price that it entails.

"Another problem is that it means joining an organization whose strongest member has twice launched wars of aggression during the past ten years. The justification for going to war against Iraq was contrived, and was even based on false evidence.

*"NATO is an organization whose strongest member has twice launched wars of aggression during the past ten years. The justification for going to war against Iraq was contrived and based on false evidence."*

"The bombing war against Serbia in 1999 was said to be started in order to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe in Kosovo. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), which had 1380 observers on the scene, should have informed all those concerned that no humanitarian catastrophe was unfolding, that no ethnic cleansing was taking place and even less any genocide.

"The first refugees arrived in Macedonia six days after the start of the bombing. Norway, which was then leading the OSCE delegation, could not bring itself to tell the truth. We Swedes also accepted the U.S. description of events....

"Thus, NATO membership involves the risk of being woven into the USA's political interests, which are not always ours or the EU's."

Despite this warning, Pellnäs concludes that Sweden should join the military alliance, for several reasons: "The most important, of course, is that the world's most powerful democracy can provide us with security guarantees. Even though the guarantees of a great power can not be relied upon, a potential attacker must calculate that they will be honoured, when weighing the advantages [of an attack] against the risk of ending up in an armed conflict with NATO."

Pellnäs also cites Sweden's adaptation to the military alliance's technical standards, the Swedish troops in Kosovo and Afghanistan, the fact that a number of Swedish officers are serving at diverse USA/NATO facilities, and other reasons for joining.

“After several years of indecision, I have reached a conclusion,” announces Pellnäs. “We are in effect already members of NATO and should become so even formally, so that we can participate in deliberations and decisions.

*It is revealing metaphor: In the NATO-Sweden relationship, there is hardly any doubt as to which party is penetrated and “never dares go to the priest”.*

having more children with NATO, but which never dares go to the priest and legalize the relationship.”<sup>322</sup>

“In the end, the double bookkeeping and double morality damage our national security policy. In the long run, we risk becoming the subject of ridicule in Europe — the country that keeps

It is presumably an unintentionally revealing metaphor that Pellnäs employs: In the NATO-Sweden relationship, there is hardly any doubt as to which party is penetrated and “never dares go to the priest”. As for Sweden’s potential influence in “deliberations and decisions”, see page 115.

Apart from that, there are several grounds for questioning this line of reasoning, not least with regard to the presumptive security guarantees. Among those who have pointed out that such guarantees are not especially secure is, oddly enough, the selfsame Bo Pellnäs. Less than ten months before his exhortation to formally join NATO, he issued the following warning:

“Sweden trusts that NATO will fulfil its obligations toward its new members on the Baltic coast. However, and this is the cynical truth, NATO will only do so if it is compatible with the United States’ interests, and if the cost-benefit analysis is favourable.”<sup>323</sup>

### *Threats from both west and east*

Other experienced military officers have also expressed scepticism about USA/NATO’s willingness to come to the rescue in the event of war. Among them is Per Blomquist, also a retired colonel, who believes that Sweden could be threatened from both the west and the east:

“What the current political and military leadership does not seem to understand is that even USA/NATO could very well force Sweden into a war. Why? Because Russia has a significantly greater strategic advantage for war in the Nordic region. In addition, it has probably not escaped the attention of even our mentally shackled military strategists that USA/NATO is already conducting a very aggressive and threatening policy toward Russia.

“In a crisis situation, Russia’s objective could be the Atlantic Coast, from which it could try to prevent USA/NATO from expanding and establishing its forces. In that case, Sweden would be tempting as a valuable base of operations for fighter planes and other military resources.

“Thus, the threats to Sweden include more dangerous powers than Russia. To take but one possible scenario: If USA/NATO should decide to initiate a war against Russia, it would be strategically advantageous or even necessary to first gain control of Swedish territory. In such a situation, the Swedish people would not have much to say about it — especially if Sweden is integrated with USA/NATO or its so-called Partnership for Peace....

“Sweden should instead use its geostrategically important location as a protective wall between USA/NATO and Russia. It should form the basis of an independent neutrality defence.... Such a policy would have great significance for the preservation of peace.”<sup>324</sup>

To this it may be added that, if Russia were to occupy Sweden first, it would almost certainly lead to Sweden becoming the target of attacks by USA/NATO, possibly with nuclear weapons, whether it is a formal member of the alliance or not.

### *Mental occupation*

What is most striking about Colonel Pellnäs's reasoning is its forthright acknowledgement of the USA's serious crimes *and* his willingness to ignore them in exchange for what he himself characterizes as "insecure" security guarantees — even though "NATO membership involves the risk of being woven into the USA's political interests."

Pellnäs witnessed the destructive implications of those interests when he performed a leading role in OSCE's peacekeeping force in the Balkans during the prelude to the war of aggression against Serbia. The well-documented truth that he tells about that war means that Sweden, by assisting in the occupation of Kosovo, is an accomplice to a serious crime against international law. The same is true of Sweden's participation in the wars against Afghanistan and Libya.

It does not fit very well with all the pretty words about "humanitarian" war and R2P (p. 86), but it conforms all the better with reality. In fact, neither the military nor the political leadership has conducted any independent analysis before throwing Swedish troops into USA/NATO's wars and occupations. The analysis is conducted by the United States, and Sweden follows mindlessly along, as Göran Rosenberg has observed: "If the U.S. should change its assessment tomorrow, Sweden would likely do so as well."

One possible explanation for that disgraceful behaviour may be the insight that, if one begins to think for oneself, it will soon become apparent that complicity in the wars of the superpower is morally indefensible. It does not require any great intellectual capacity: If one can fly an airplane to Afghanistan or make a reasonably coherent speech in the Riksdag, one can certainly discover the reality obscured by USA/NATO's war propaganda. But most members of Swedish elites display no inclination to do so.

That and much else indicate that the United States has infiltrated all institutions and elites of any importance in these matters. Exactly how that has been done is a crucial question that awaits a thorough answer. But it seems to have occurred largely at a subconscious level, to the extent that one may with good reason speak of a mental occupation of Sweden.<sup>325</sup>

It is in any event a tragic development in several respects. The sorriest thing about Sweden's transformation into a warrior society is, of course, that it weakens or eliminates its potential for making *genuine* contributions to peace, democracy and human rights.

It is likely that most Swedes realize that humanity is hardly in need of more warriors. On the other hand, there is a desperate need for peacemakers and honest brokers, and in those roles even — or perhaps especially — a small country can make a valuable contribution. For several reasons, Sweden is probably better equipped than most other countries to serve those peaceful purposes.

To instead invest its resources in more wars in the service of USA/NATO, and in the process commit additional serious crimes against the international law and human rights that one claims to be defending....

*Al Burke*  
22 September 2012



## ENDNOTES

1. Wartime neutrality was established as a fundamental principle of Swedish foreign policy by Jean Baptiste Bernadotte, the former field marshal of Napoleon's army who in 1818 founded the current royal house of Sweden as King Karl Johan XIV. Given the realities of European history ever since, it is hardly surprising that Swedish neutrality has been neither absolute nor always consistent. But with the exception of U.N. peace-keeping missions, it did prevent Sweden from becoming actively involved in warfare until 1999 when it began to supply troops to the USA/NATO occupation force in the province of Kosovo after the its war of aggression against Serbia. Increasing numbers of Swedish troops are also serving under USA/NATO command in ISAF, the murderous "peacekeeping force" which the United States somehow managed to get approved by the U.N. Security Council and thus provide a fig leaf of legitimacy for its war of aggression against Afghanistan—and, not so incidentally, thereby unloading a sizable portion of the financial, political and other costs of that aggression onto Sweden and the other collaborating vassal-states.
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18. Bengt Albons, "'Vi behöver USA'". *Dagens Nyheter*, 21 February 1992
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21. For details, see "A Doubtful Referendum". *Nordic News Network*: [www.nnn.se/n-model/eu/eu.htm](http://www.nnn.se/n-model/eu/eu.htm)

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