

FROM NEUTRALITY TO NATO



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

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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.

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FROM NEUTRALITY TO NATO

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

The following is a *very* preliminary attempt to chart the process by which Sweden has successively abandoned its long-standing policy of neutrality¹ and become ever more deeply entangled with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. That process is the focus of a project entitled “Stop the furtive accession to NATO!”.

According to the original [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 to be treated more fully on the [project website](#).

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: samordna@stoppanato.se

In short, this is intended merely as the start of a public dialogue on issues that are crucial for the future of both Sweden and the world at large. Unless otherwise requested, all *rational* responses will be published on the project website as contributions to that long-overdue discussion.

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, co-ordinator
15 October 2009*

Cold War co-operation

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.)

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.

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

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."²

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."³

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?"⁴

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 hysterics (cont.)

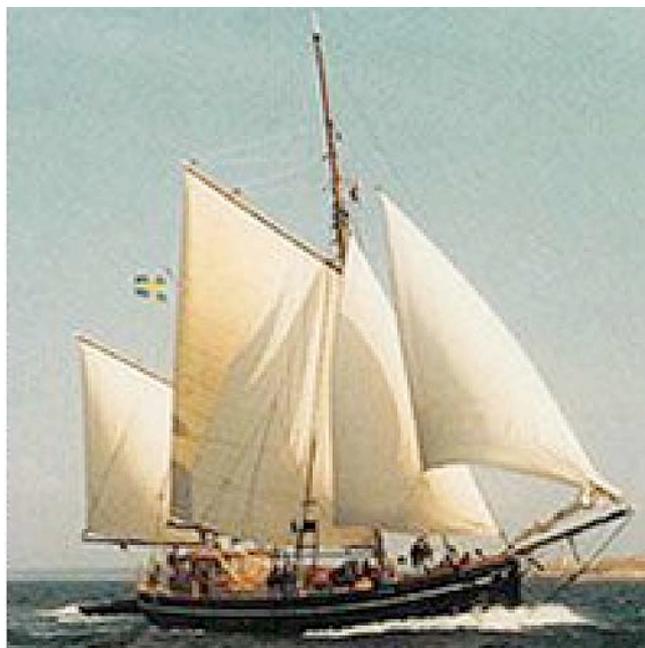
Technical analysis revealed that two of the most incriminating items of evidence had emanated from swimming minks and schools of flatulent herring.

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.

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.

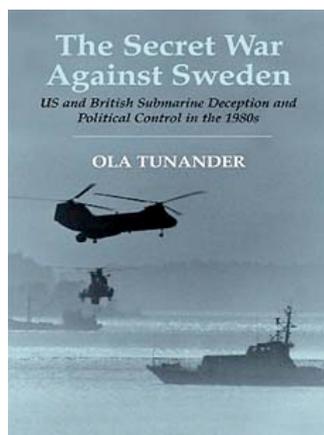


“Soviet submarine” in its guise as a Swedish training ship

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*.⁵



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.⁶

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.^{7,8}

Other analysts have arrived at similar conclusions,⁹ 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?

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

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

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.¹⁰

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:

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....¹¹

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.

— John Pilger¹²

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.¹³ 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 economist¹⁴

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.”¹⁵

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 that Carlsson was genuinely committed to preserving Sweden's independence and neutrality.

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 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.”¹⁶

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 — 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 a also 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

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 ¹⁷

1992

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 Europe'." ¹⁸

* * *

Sweden urged to join USA/NATO

23 June. 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

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.¹⁹

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

1994

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."²⁰

* * *

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.²¹

* * *

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."²²

* * *

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.²³

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.²⁴

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."²⁵

* * *

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.²⁶

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.”²⁷

* * *

“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.²⁸

* * *

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.²⁹

* * *

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 expectations 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."³⁰

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.³¹

* * *

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.³²

* * *

'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."³³

— 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.³⁴

1997

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."³⁵

* * *

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."³⁶

1998

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."³⁷

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".³⁸

* * *

Quiet support for bombing plans

November. 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.³⁹

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”.⁴⁰

1999

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”.⁴¹

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.⁴²

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 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.

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

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.⁴³

“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 1999. 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".⁴⁴

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.⁴⁵

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."⁴⁶

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."⁴⁷

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.⁴⁸

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 by which the major portion of Sweden's defence industry has been acquired by foreign interests.⁴⁹

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.⁴⁹

* * *

Keeping peace the USA/NATO way

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

November. Sweden begins organizing its contribution to the Nordic Brigade, part of the army of 60–80,000 troops that the EU plans to assemble by year 2003. The Brigade 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.

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."

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."⁵⁰

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.

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 aggression 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.⁵¹

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.⁵²

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

* * *

**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*.⁵³

Weapons-buying agreement

December 18. 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.⁵⁴

2001

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.⁵⁵

“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.”⁵⁶

* * *

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*⁵⁹

The superpower issues a decree

4 October. 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 item below dated 17 December.⁵⁷

* * *

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 11th.

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”.⁵⁸

* * *

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.”⁶⁰

* * *

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 that 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.”⁶¹

* * *

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. 29). 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.”⁶²

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.⁶³ 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.'" ⁶⁴

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

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

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”.⁶⁵

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.”⁶⁶

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).

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?”⁶⁷

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 2008 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”.⁶⁸

**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.⁶⁹

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 to take its place at "all the international advisory councils" and "shoulder our responsibility, even in situations where none of the paths is simple".⁷⁰

* * *

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."⁷¹

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".⁷²

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."⁷³

* * *

In defence of mass murder



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

23 March. 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".⁷⁴

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

"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."

*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."⁷⁵

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

13 March. 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"⁷⁶

**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."⁷⁷

"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 scientist⁷⁸

Price of weapons ban is too high

19 March. 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."⁷⁹

* * *

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.⁸⁰

* * *

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.⁸¹

* * *

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."⁸²

* * *

War on Iraq good for business

8 October. 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.”⁸³

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.⁸⁴

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."⁸⁵

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

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

7 May. 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."⁸⁶

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.⁸⁷

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.⁸⁸

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. 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 Henriks-son, 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.”⁸⁹

“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.”

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.”⁹⁰

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. 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.⁹¹

* * *

“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.”⁹²

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.”⁹³

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 (EAPC), 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.”⁹⁴

* * *

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.⁹⁵

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. 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.⁹⁶

* * *

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 2005. 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 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.⁹⁷

* * *

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", is the work of special rapporteur Manfred Nowak.⁹⁸

* * *

First fatalities in Afghanistan

25 November. 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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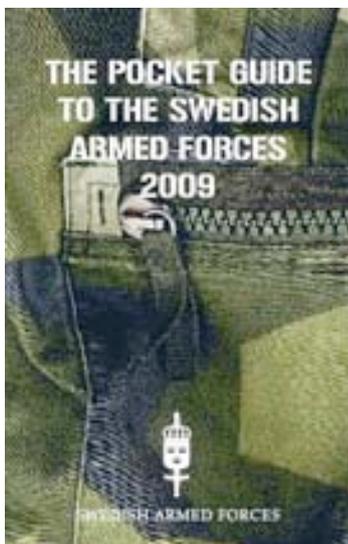
More troops to Afghanistan

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

* * *

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.⁹⁹



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.”¹⁰⁰

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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.¹⁰¹

* * *

**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”, 10 November 2005).¹⁰²

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**More responsibility
for Swedish troops**

15 March. Swedish troops assume responsibility for reconstruction efforts in the four northern provinces of Afghanistan.¹⁰³

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

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

Attacks covered up

27 May. 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.¹⁰⁵

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....¹⁰⁶

— Sverker Åström, 5 March 2006

Nearly as well-adapted as the U.K.

29 May. 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.¹⁰⁷

* * *

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.¹⁰⁸

* * *

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 1997.¹⁰⁹

* * *

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.¹¹⁰

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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.¹¹¹

* * *

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."¹¹²

* * *

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.¹¹³

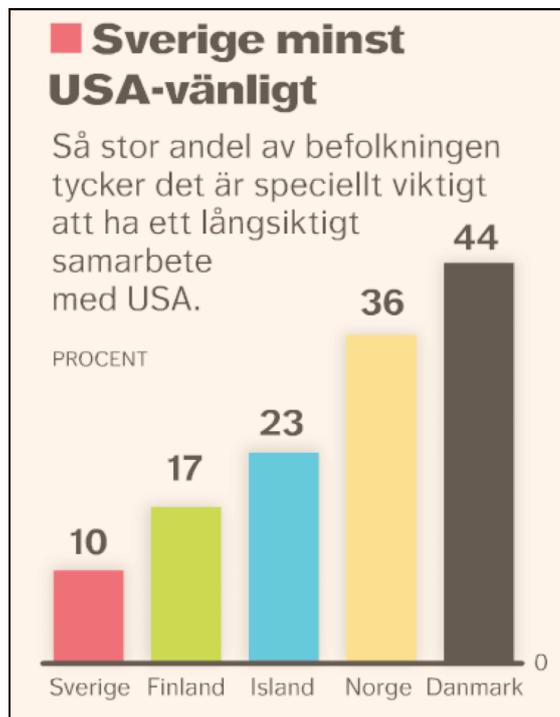
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Swedish people not keen on ties with U.S.

25 October. 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.¹¹⁴

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.¹¹⁵

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.¹¹⁶

2007

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,¹¹⁷ 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

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.

“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.”

“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’.”¹¹⁸

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.¹¹⁹

— 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.¹²⁰

* * *

Peacekeeping with intent to kill

8 March. 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.¹²¹

* * *

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.¹²²

*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."¹²³

**Foreign minister
and war lobbyist**



*A few victims of
the Bush-Bildt war*

19 March. 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'."¹²⁴

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

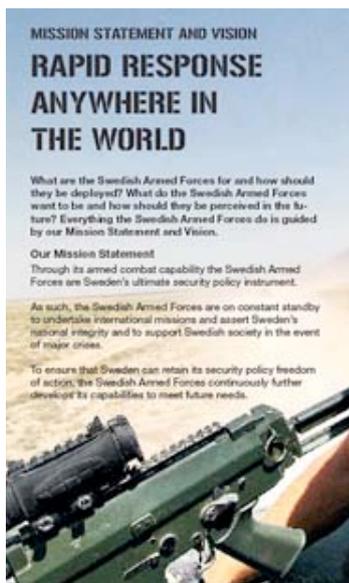
**Joint research on
national security**

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.¹²⁵

**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.¹²⁶

Major naval exercise based in Göteborg



Page from Pocket Guide to the Swedish Armed Forces

10-13 May. 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."¹²⁷

Another jovial audience with Bush

The very, very U.S. president is not confronted with a single word of criticism about his policies.

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."¹²⁸

With USA/NATO for secession of Kosovo

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.

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

Via Norway to USA/NATO

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

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 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.¹²⁹

* * *

31 August. 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.¹³⁰

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."¹³¹

* * *

USA/NATO inspection

11-13 September. 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.¹³²

* * *

Fighter planes over northern Sweden

26 September 2008. 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.¹³³

* * *

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.¹³⁴

* * *

Change in Sweden is greatly appreciated

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

Photo: Regeringskansliet/Diana Jansen

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

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.”

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.¹³⁵

* * *

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”.¹³⁶

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.¹³⁷

* * *

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!"¹³⁸

* * *

"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 2015.¹³⁹

* * *

Sweden legitimates Kosovo independence

4 March. Following the lead of the United States and the European Union, the Swedish government 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.



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.¹⁴⁰

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 recognizes Kosovo (cont.)

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.

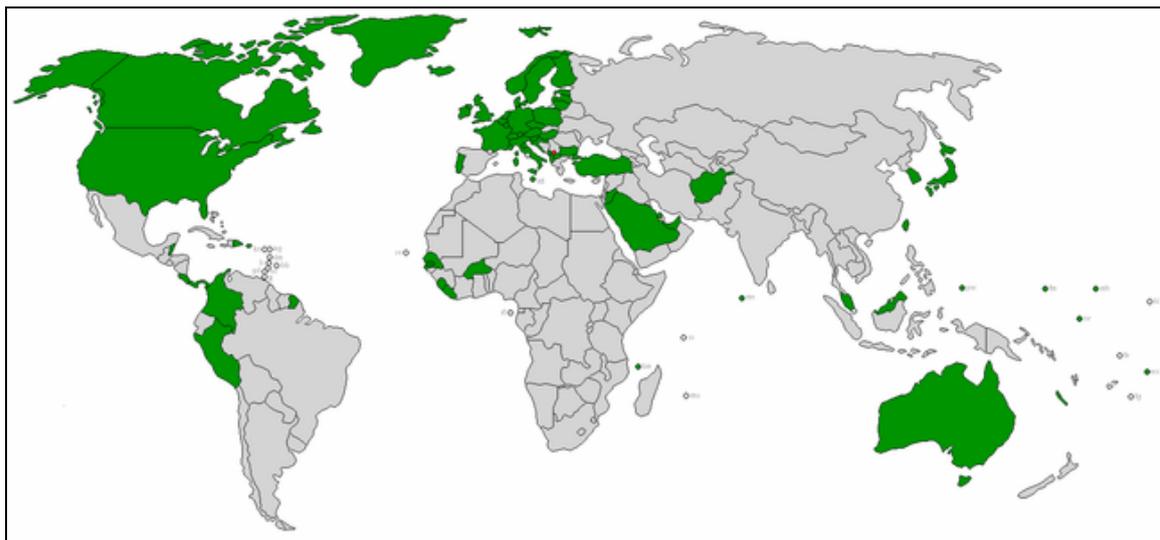
Foreign Minister Carl Bildt concedes that there is scant basis in international law for recognition of Kosovo, but explains that “our decision must first and foremost be seen as part of a common European assumption of responsibility” for a difficult situation.¹⁴¹ But he neglects to mention that even 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.

Bildt “squirms like a worm on a hook” in his rhetorical efforts to justify the government’s decision.

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.¹⁴²

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."¹⁴³

* * *

Finland & Sweden proposed for 'Nordic bloc'

6 May. In a speech to the Atlantic Council of Finland, Finnish Defence Minister Jyri Hakamies 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."¹⁴⁴

* * *

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.”¹⁴⁵

* * *

**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.

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

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.¹⁴⁶

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.”¹⁴⁷

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.¹⁴⁸

“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.”¹⁴⁹

* * *

**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.¹⁵⁰

* * *

“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.¹⁵¹

— 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.¹⁵²

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."¹⁵³ Georgia is a USA/NATO "partner" and is expected to become a full member in the near future.

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

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."¹⁵⁴

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.¹⁵⁵

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.

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"¹⁵⁶

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.¹⁵⁷

— Prof. Robert Nilsson

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

Computer linkage

24 September. 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.¹⁵⁸

* * *

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.

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.)*

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.¹⁵⁹

“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.”¹⁶⁰

* * *

**Sharing giant aircraft
with USA/NATO**

October. 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.¹⁶¹

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.”¹⁶²

* * *

**“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.”¹⁶³

* * *

**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.¹⁶⁴

* * *

Joint initiative with U.S.

3-14 November. "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."¹⁶⁵

* * *

**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 above, "Swedish 'advisors' assist in killing raids: 4 October".)¹⁶⁶

* * *

**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."

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

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 "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."¹⁶⁷

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.

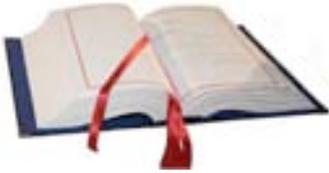
Sarkozy should know, as the French were one of the three EU populations initially granted a referendum on the treaty. They rejected it by a comfortable margin, as did the Dutch and the Irish. The first two annoyances were dealt with by arranging for the French and Dutch parliaments to rubber-stamp a "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 Lisbon
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.¹⁶⁸

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 George¹⁶⁹

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.¹⁷⁰

* * *

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.”¹⁷¹

2009

P.M. Reinfeldt visits Afghanistan

Fredrik Reinfeldt (far right) speaks to Swedish troops at memorial ceremony for fallen comrades. (Försoarets 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 Afghans, 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.”¹⁷²

* * *

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.¹⁷³

**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.”¹⁷⁴

**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 northern 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."¹⁷⁵

* * *

**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.¹⁷⁶

* * *

**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.¹⁷⁷

* * *

**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."¹⁷⁸

* * *

**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.¹⁷⁹

* * *

**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."¹⁸⁰

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."¹⁸¹

* * *

'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."¹⁸²

"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.¹⁸³

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."¹⁸⁴

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?"¹⁸⁵

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."¹⁸⁶

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."¹⁸⁷

'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."¹⁸⁸

* * *

'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. 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.¹⁸⁹

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."¹⁹⁰

* * *



“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.¹⁹¹

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.¹⁹²

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.”¹⁹³

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.¹⁹⁴

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."¹⁹⁵

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 incorporation into 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.¹⁹⁶

Swede accepts delivery on behalf of USA/NATO

5 October 2009. 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.¹⁹⁷



**“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 UN 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.¹⁹⁸

— *Paul Craig Roberts*
Asst. Secretary of the Treasury in Reagan administration

ENDNOTES

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