

## Northern Flank by A. Borealis

### Can Palme keep Sweden 'neutral'?

*Some among the elites have reached the conclusion that "if it blocks the road of the U.S.S.R., neutrality doesn't exist any longer."*

**P**rominent representatives of Sweden's foreign policy elite have begun openly to question whether the traditional form of neutrality that has heretofore enjoyed the status of a state religion is any longer fit to serve Sweden's interests.

Using examples derived from modern history, both active and retired senior diplomats have pierced the iron curtain of silence imposed by Social Democratic Premier Olof Palme upon the deliberation of Swedish security policy, and have pointed to the unlikelihood that Swedish neutrality would long deter the ruling Soviet marshals from grabbing control of the Scandinavian peninsula, in case of war in Europe.

Ingemar Hägglöf, the 72-year-old retired ambassador to Moscow, paints a vivid picture of Soviet contempt for Swedish neutrality in his just-released memoirs, *My Years with the Russians*. In the fall of 1943, when Hägglöf served as Sweden's second-ranking diplomat in Moscow, Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov demanded that Sweden—then encircled by Hitler's Wehrmacht—be forced to provide air bases for allied attacks against Germany.

Later, Molotov threatened that Sweden would not be able to stay independent, but would soon be forced to follow Finland's path.

The conservative daily *Svenska Dagbladet*, in a review of Ambassador Hägglöf's memoirs published Sept. 3, approved Hägglöf's view that Molotov's conduct is "proof of the Russians' not respecting our neutrali-

ty, except if it serves the interest of the U.S.S.R." Writes Hägglöf: "If it blocks the road of the U.S.S.R., neutrality doesn't exist any longer."

The day before, current Moscow Ambassador Torsten Örn argued in the same newspaper that neutrality may indeed turn out to be an illusion. Örn made his observations in a review of an American study of "The Guarantee of Belgian Independence and Neutrality in European Diplomacy, 1830-1930," by Daniel H. Thomas.

Beginning in the 1870s, Belgium adopted a course of "unarmed neutrality," hoping that a Great Power balance in Europe would ensure Belgian independence. That policy proved bankrupt, Örn reported, when German Gen. Alfred von Schlieffen out of military necessity moved his troops across Belgian territory in World War I.

To make sure that the Swedes—and the Kremlin—do not miss the point, Örn put forward Belgium's later NATO membership as an appropriate lesson of history, and concluded: "Even if Thomas's work deals with a past epoch, it does offer fascinating and thought-provoking reading for anyone who is interested in the specific problems of the neutrality policy of a small state in uneasy times."

The current defense debate was sparked by the campaign for Sweden to join the Western alliance, organized by the European Labor Party. On Aug. 30, at a rally attended by 400 people, ELP chairman Kerstin Tegin-Gaddy was joined in denouncing Palme's plans to Finlandize Sweden

by Alf Enerstroem, the leader of the opposition to Palme inside the Social Democratic Party; Hans Ericson, the former chairman of the National Transport Workers' Union; and Thorwald Arvidsson, a pro-NATO Social Democrat.

However, not all voices are being raised in favor of a closer relationship to the West. Writing in *International Studies*, the journal of Sweden's Institute for Foreign Affairs, Prof. Steve Lindberg of Turku, Finland offers his own formula for appeasement of the Soviet Union.

While dismissing both an alliance with the West and an outright accommodation with the U.S.S.R., Lindberg wants to replace the "status quo" option—traditional neutralism—with a "Finlandized Great Power Sweden," based on a strong defense in combination with a policy of "confidence" vis-à-vis the U.S.S.R. Such a policy of armed accommodation with Moscow would be the best for Sweden, Lindberg says, because "if the U.S.S.R. is displeased with traditional Swedish neutrality, there is a risk that the violations of neutrality will be escalated if Sweden doesn't change."

Indifferent to the capitulation to the current Soviet threat contained in those words, particularly after recent news about Soviet Spetsnaz special commando unit landings in Sweden, Lindberg shamelessly adds that an armed accommodation of Sweden with the U.S.S.R. would be in the best interests of Finland, too.

This in fact is the standard rationalization used by Swedish oligarchical circles to explain why Sweden cannot join the Western alliance: The Soviets would reciprocate by gobbling up Finland, so only by staying clear of NATO can Sweden—self-sacrificing as it is—help keep Finland out of the Soviet bloc!