

Northern Flank by William Engdahl

Norway, NATO's northern vulnerability

The re-election of the pro-NATO Willoch coalition is a Pyrrhic victory for the alliance at best.

Incumbent Prime Minister Kaare Willoch and his pro-NATO governing coalition narrowly won a parliamentary majority in the Sept. 9 Norwegian elections, but the circumstances actually expose devastating flaws in the security of the Western Alliance.

Willoch, head of the second largest party in the Norwegian parliament, the Right Party, will form a coalition government with the Center and Christian People's parties. Combined they carry a tenuous one-seat majority over the three-party left opposition, led by the treasonous Labour Party.

No sooner were the results official, than the controversial vice-chairman of the Labour Party, Einar Foerde, called a press conference to announce that the opposition will force key votes on the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative and NATO designed to split the governing coalition.

The opposition can press such matters now because of the composition of the majority coalition. The Center Party is on record opposing the SDI, and is otherwise "soft" on NATO generally. The Christian People's Party chairman has already announced: "The election makes clear that the coalition parties need to leave room for compromise on important issues." He did not say which—but his party and the Center Party prevented a clear Norwegian vote to participate in the SDI this past spring.

Until two weeks before the vote, Willoch was so sure of re-election that he campaigned from the prime minister's office—in other words, did not

campaign. With ten days to go, polls began showing that a Labour victory was possible. Willoch began campaigning—challenging the Labour record on national security, which keeps pace with the pro-Soviet policies of the Social-Democrats in Germany and Sweden. It was Einar Foerde whom Willoch singled out.

But his attack was limp. He declined to emphasize the Soviet buildup in the Baltic and Norwegian Sea from the nuclear submarine base in Murmansk on the Kola Peninsula.

In consequence, although the people of Norway are perhaps the most decidedly pro-Western in NATO, Labour gained more than 3.5% over its previous vote totals—41%, against 30% for Willoch's party.

As with the Reagan administration in the United States, and thus, the West as whole, in Norway, military commitments are contradicted in practice by blind adherence to economic policies that both undermine defense efforts and erode popular support. Labour chairman Gro Harlem Brundtland campaigned on this one issue—the government's conservative austerity policies and the lower living standards brought in their wake. Government economic policy has been shaped by a clique of Freedmanite "free market" zealots associated with the Mt. Pelerin Society—one of the most effective Soviet assets in the West today.

This past June, a certain Norwegian Labour Party official's trial ended with his sentencing to 20 years in prison for espionage on behalf of the

Soviet Union. This was Arne Treholt, a former high-level government official. But, because of a very dirty and stupid pre-election deal, the government coalition parties agreed not to make this an issue! Einaar Foerde himself boasted privately after the Treholt affair: "I thought my entire political career had ended when Arne was arrested. You know, I was his closest friend. [Greek Premier] Papandreu thought the same—but, I spoke with Barbara [Papandreu] and she said that nothing had happened."

In fact, pressure to downplay the matter came straight from the European Affairs section of the U.S. State Department, which warned the government that open debate on treason inside the Labour Party would "embarrass" Washington to improve relations with Greece. Present U.S. Ambassador to West Germany Richard Burt then headed that section of the State Department.

If the Willoch government is to survive now, it must take off the gloves on the traitors in the opposition. Then, it must review and improve a military situation which finds Norway, for example, with 68 F-16 fighter jets, but only 45 pilots—and non-Norwegian military personnel are forbidden on Norwegian soil in peacetime.

The NATO commander for the "Striking Fleet Atlantic," Vice-Adm. Hank Mustin, recently denounced the irrationality of a "military strategy based purely on defense," and called for targeting of Soviet missile installations and the submarine base at Murmansk. After the recent naval maneuvers proved Soviet ability to break through NATO defense lines into the North Atlantic, NATO officialdom is beginning to wake up to Mustin's proposal—and the consequent importance of Norway, the Western territory closest to Murmansk.