

## Northern Flank by Göran Haglund

### Did the KGB murder Olof Palme?

*Recent warnings have refocused attention to the Soviet track in the investigation of the murder of the Swedish premier.*

**S**oviet KGB or Spetsnaz elite units may have carried out the Feb. 28 murder of Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme, the European press is again reporting. Meanwhile, police have warned of the imminent danger of new attempts on the lives of prominent Swedes.

"A great uncertainty must have prevailed during the first hours" after the Palme murder. "Nobody knew whether it was the work of a madman, or a spetsnaz attack, or a well-organized terror action against several members of the Swedish government," Per-Erik Nilsson, the chairman of the judicial commission investigating the Palme murder, stated in an interview.

A good friend of Palme, Nilsson was the chief legal counsel of the prime minister's office during 1972-77, and has since figured prominently in upgrading government security arrangements.

In the interview, published in *Dagens Nyheter* on Aug. 21, Nilsson criticized the slow response by Swedish authorities, which assumed the murder was a single event, whereas, *Dagens Nyheter* writes, "it could very well have been part of a terrorist assault or an enemy attack on Sweden."

Ten days after Nilsson's warning, the London *Sunday Express* ran a huge banner headline asking, "Did the KGB Murder Olof Palme?" The article outlines several theories developed regarding the cause of the Palme murder.

"Police say they are investigating the possibility of the killer being a KGB heavy," the *Sunday Express* reports, "sent to end Palme's interference" with "Moscow's multi-million pound diamond deals with the West." These diamonds are mined by Siberian slave laborers and "shipped to the West with the Swedish government acting as the 'middleman' in the deals. Palme was said to be unhappy with the arrangements and Moscow is known to have been angry at his interference."

Other possibilities mentioned are that Palme, "who was often rumored to enjoy the company of women other than his wife," was struck by a lover's revenge, or gunned down by a South American hit-man sent by Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet, who "was said to have held a deep grudge against the Swedish premier."

"Police are reluctant to reveal which line of enquiry is proving most positive. But intelligence sources say that Sweden has long been the playground of the KGB, and to Russia the diamond trade represents a massive flow of hard currency," the paper writes.

These warnings followed a new Soviet threat against Sweden. The subject of the threat was the Swedish government's decision—officially announced the day of Palme's murder—to abide by the so-called COCOM agreement not to export sensitive Western technology to the East bloc.

In an interview for the Swedish

weekly *Ny Teknik* published in late July, the deputy chief of the Western trade department of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Trade, Piskolov J. Vasiljevich, angrily opposed Sweden's COCOM decision:

"But let me once again underscore with all possible emphasis: We are against laws such as the one adopted by Sweden. Their adoption shows how forcefully the U.S. is acting to implement its policy.

"We do not want to act more forcefully against Sweden, as there are so many troubled corners in our world already" [Emphasis in original].

The interviewing journalist added: "I shuddered over the implications of Piskolov J. Vasiljevich's answer. But an extra double-check with both interpreter and Piskolov J. Vasiljevich himself, showed that I had understood him correctly."

Sweden's COCOM decision has previously been identified by the *EIR* as one point of discord between Sweden and the Soviet Union, in connection with Soviet disapproval of Swedish policies before the Palme murder.

During the last week of August, wide coverage occurred in the Swedish press of a renewed danger of political assassinations, as an explicit follow-up to the Palme murder. "I do not want to call it a bloodbath, but there are likely several targeted victims," one police source was quoted in *Expressen* on Aug. 28.

"Sweden faces an immediate and severe crisis," *Aftonbladet* wrote the same day. "The highest police leadership expects an early murder attempt on a leading Social Democratic politician, a policeman, or somebody in the Royal House. The situation is so serious that National Police Chief Holger Romander, who himself has received death threats, now openly admits to this paper: 'There is a grave risk of more attempts.'"