

Northern Flank by Tore Fredin

Behind the myth of Swedish neutrality

The Swedish elites have suddenly begun proclaiming their undying loyalty to the western alliance.

Has the rise of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy in Russia given the Swedish elites cold feet? During the last few months, the Swedish intelligence community has produced a number of reports and leaks, whose goal is to convince the world that Sweden has been a loyal and firm partner in the western alliance.

The truth is a little more complicated.

A few weeks ago, a government-appointed commission published an exposé of Swedish neutrality policy between the end of World War II and 1969. The social democrat Tage Erlander was the Swedish premier during this period. He stayed in power for 25 years and his policy was clearly oriented toward the West. The present Social Democratic Party chairman, Ingvar Carlsson, agreed that his party would collaborate with the non-socialist government coalition in the commission, on the condition that the period after 1969, when one of Erlander's protégés, Olof Palme, was in power, was left out of the investigation. Conservative Prime Minister Carl Bildt accepted this condition.

Except for a few question marks, the commission reported that Sweden was in close coordination with NATO operations during the entire period, and would even join the western alliance in advance if a war were about to break out between NATO and Warsaw Pact forces.

This was a clear violation of a strict neutrality policy. It is one thing to join NATO after a war has broken out, and another to prepare in advance to be part of the NATO alliance. One such advanced preparation was to give

a green light for American U-2 spy planes to fly over Swedish territory, beginning in 1955.

In other words, according to this "impartial" commission, the Swedes were on the "right side" during the height of the Cold War.

Other information which has been out in the media concerning the same period is the more or less official leakage of material from the interrogation of the Swedish spy Col. Stig Wenersström, in the early 1960s. He was caught in the summer of 1962 and had had access to very sensitive material which he had been selling to the Soviets for over a decade. Here, the old story about a Swedish DC-3 reconnaissance plane which was shot down by the Soviets over the Baltic is again leaked. That plane was part of NATO monitoring of Soviet territory, and that is why it was shot down.

More sensational was the leak that the Soviet military had plans for a nuclear attack on Swedish airstrips, because the Swedes were partners of NATO. This information was played up in *Sydsvenska Dagbladet*, the main liberal newspaper in southern Sweden.

Thus the mistaken impression is conveyed that Sweden's pro-NATO policy continued through the 1970s and '80s. The 1980s, however, was the period when Prime Minister Olof Palme conducted his appeasement policy toward the Soviets and did nothing in the face of Soviet submarine intrusions, etc. It seems that someone in the Swedish elite is trying to whitewash the policies of the 1980s by lying through his teeth.

During the 1980s, Sweden be-

came infamous as a transit country for smuggling technology into the East. Part of Swedish industry was deeply involved, and in that respect Olof Palme had a broader backing for his role in decoupling the United States from Europe. This broader backing is what the Swedish elite today wants the western world to forget all about.

Why? It is most likely that we are witnessing a conversion under the threat of being led to the gallows because of the dramatic developments in Russia. The Swedes have been in conflict with the Russians since the 10th century. They have, by necessity, acquired some knowledge on how to read the Russian situation.

They are now seeing a process which makes them shiver, and they realize that Sweden needs to cover its back. An indication of this was the attack by Col. Bo Hugemark (former director of the department for research on military history at the Military Academy in Stockholm) on the political establishment in the West, including the Swedes, for already having struck a new Munich deal. Colonel Hugemark is seen as a close adviser to the present government.

Another indication comes from Foreign Undersecretary Lars Åke Nilsson, who has made clear to certain circles in the West that Sweden does not accept the willingness in the West to go along with the Russian's claim to a sphere of influence. According to Nilsson, the Swedes are particularly concerned about the Baltics and the exposed position of Ukraine.

Then there appeared out of the blue, on Feb. 17, an article in the daily *Svenska Dagbladet* on high-power microwave weapons, pointing out that the biggest test facility for HPMs in Europe is located in Linköping in Sweden. A response to Zhirinovskiy's threat that the Russians have a miracle weapon?