

1980

The Naval Defense of Sweden in the 1980s

John B. Hattendorf

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Hattendorf, John B. (1980) "The Naval Defense of Sweden in the 1980s," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 33 : No. 1 , Article 3.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol33/iss1/3>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

22 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

Not surprisingly, most discussions and analyses of navies have as their subject the navies of the United States and the Soviet Union or the navies of their allies. Too often overlooked but, for their purposes, no less important are the navies of smaller, nonaligned nations. Sweden is an ideal example for an examination of this latter class.

THE NAVAL DEFENSE OF SWEDEN IN THE 1980s

by

John B. Hattendorf

The Royal Swedish Navy is of great interest to students of naval affairs as an important example of a small but effective navy. However, most naval writers have concentrated on the problems of the great powers at sea, and as a result there is no body of naval writings that fully explains for us the functions of small navies. The smaller nations have been left to their own devices in developing a pattern of strategic uses for their own navies. In this process, the navy of a neutral and not aligned nation is a rare example of a small naval force designed to be independent of other navies and alliances in performing its functions. The manner in which this is carried out in the context of the present strategic situation has some important ramifications today. In particular, the strength and credibility of Swedish defense is a critical factor in international stability in Northern Europe. As such, the Royal Swedish Navy plays an important role in the Scandinavian security pattern that we have come to call the Nordic Balance.

Sweden and the Nordic Balance. In Scandinavia, the relationship of the various nations of the superpowers has been determined on the basis of particular national interests. Norway, Denmark, and Iceland have chosen a relationship with NATO; Finland has a special relationship with the Soviet Union that has been created by her geographic position. Lying between these two Scandinavian groupings, Sweden has chosen not to ally herself with any nation or group and to pursue a policy that would allow her to be neutral in wartime. A medium-sized, democratic nation, Sweden desires to retain her historic character as a nation and, at the same time, to live in freedom and independence. However, Sweden lies at the crossroads between East and West. She has strong economic and cultural ties with the West, but she lies close to the areas of great military, economic, geographic and maritime importance to the East. While neutrality is an obvious choice for a nation in this position, it is a neutrality that is somewhat different from that of other self-

proclaimed neutral states. It is a policy that has a long historical tradition and wide, popular support in Sweden, but it is a chosen policy of successive governments—not something that is an essential characteristic of the Swedish state. It is something that has grown and developed in different directions in the last century and a half, and it is something that could conceivably change as events outside Sweden change.¹

Sweden has clearly understood in the past that her policy of neutrality must remain credible through her own actions and not merely through the neglect of stronger states or the legal privilege of neutral rights. On the one hand, Sweden takes a public stand and expresses an opinion on a wide variety of international issues that include *détente*, disarmament, free trade, social and economic justice, national independence movements, human rights and international cooperation. On the other hand, she has developed one of the strongest and most modern defense forces of any European country. It is used both to deter aggression against Sweden and to support United Nations peacekeeping operations in various areas around the world. Through these actions Sweden asserts her neutrality through involvement in the world community and, at the same time, underscores her primary objective in preserving Sweden and Swedish independence of action.

At the present time the Nordic Balance is based on the superpower relationship that dominates Europe, the credibility of NATO's presence in Norway in periods of crisis, the stability of the individual Scandinavian states and their policies, and the strength and credibility of Swedish defense. Each of these factors could change,² but the essential problem of Swedish defense will remain the same.

Swedish Strategy and Geography.

Whatever the international political situation, Sweden is tied to her geo-

graphical position. Sweden comprises one-half of the Scandinavian peninsula, and by that very fact she is tied to Norway. From a modern military viewpoint it would be extremely difficult to defend Sweden without Norway. It was only a matter of chance that this was not demonstrated by the events of World War II.³ To the East, Finland has a cultural and historic tie as well as a critical, strategic relationship with Sweden. For this reason, Sweden is unlikely to take any action that would compromise Finland's integrity in her relations with the Soviet Union or that would jeopardize Finland's position as a buffer between Sweden and the Soviet Union.

In terms of Swedish neutrality and its relationship to geography, the Baltic Sea is a critical factor. It is essential to Swedish neutrality that the Baltic remain an international sea open for use by all nations. As long as freedom of that sea can be maintained, Sweden is in a far better position to remain neutral and to develop her economic ties with both East and West. However, complete maritime domination of the Baltic by the Soviet Union could lead to a shift in Swedish political and economic policy that would prevent her from maintaining neutrality. Even without any steps being taken by the Swedish Government, complete Soviet control of the Baltic would seriously reduce the credibility of Swedish neutrality.

The two most important international agreements that affect the Baltic today, the agreements concerning the international status of the Baltic Straits and the neutralization of the Åland Islands, are both rooted in the assumption that the Baltic would remain a free sea. The right of nations to traverse Danish and Swedish waters while entering the Baltic becomes an academic question if the sea itself lies under the control of one power. So, too, the agreement on the Åland Islands was founded on the assumption that neu-

24 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

SCANDINAVIA AND THE BALTIC SEA



tralization would reduce the threat to Sweden from the East and facilitate the free flow of maritime traffic on the eastern coast of Sweden, in and out of the Gulf of Bothnia.⁴ In the absence of an international and free Baltic, the possibility is reduced of maintaining distance from mighty neighbors, whether they be Germany as in the past or the Soviet Union today. The Soviet Union is particularly sensitive to the use of the Baltic and maintains a clear zone of interest within it, while at the same time claiming that the Baltic is a *mare clausum*. Ironically, Sweden supported the idea of the Baltic as a closed sea in the 17th century, as an effective way to prevent states outside the Baltic area from threatening her. The situation is reversed today. As long as the Baltic is an open sea, even if a Soviet zone of interest is tacitly respected, Sweden can retain the Baltic as a water barrier. If the Baltic is allowed to come completely under Soviet control, it could easily become a hindrance to Sweden, much in the same manner that the close proximity of the Soviet Union hinders Finland.

An important new development in Swedish policy in the Baltic has been her extension of territorial waters from 4 to 12 miles and her inclusion of a requirement of prior notification for warships making passage through her waters. This claim was made by an act of the Riksdag that entered into force on 1 July 1979. The extensions of territorial waters presents difficulty in the waters on either side of international straits. Before the Act went into effect, however, the Government issued an Ordinance that created a passage zone in the Sound and in the strait between the Danish island of Bornholm and the coast of Skåne. This change allows foreign vessels to pass through these areas on the basis of the time-honored concept of "innocent passage" rather than on the basis of the new concept of "free transit passage." In

December 1979, the law was modified by the reduction of Swedish territorial waters from 12 to 9 miles in the areas on either side of the Sound and the Bornholm strait.⁵

While these events present a new development, the exercise of the right of passage in the Sound has been previously modified. In this respect, its history is somewhat different from that of the Straits of Gibraltar and Magellan. During the First World War, the right of transit and overflight was not denied in Swedish waters, but was channeled along narrow routes defined by minefields. In that situation, the belligerents were given tactical freedom of movement, but the surface, strategic threat to the German base at Kiel was minimized.⁶ At the present time, of course, traffic separation zones are in use.

Another important geographical consideration in Swedish defense is the archipelagos which, by chance, are located in the most strategic positions for coastal defense against maritime invasion. There are three important strategic areas within Sweden. The first is the political, economic and industrial center that stretches directly across the country in a broad belt from Göteborg in the west to Stockholm in the east. On both coasts, the large urban area lies behind an archipelago of low-lying, rocky islands that present a natural obstacle to invasion. Major Swedish naval bases are located in both areas.

In the south and southwestern corner of Sweden, the low-lying coast invites invasion in an area that could be used to dominate the Baltic Straits. It includes also the major industrial city of Malmö, directly across the Sound from Copenhagen. In this general area another archipelago lies off the coast of Blekinge. Here the major Swedish naval base at Karlskrona is in a position to defend the rest of the area and to control the sealanes, east of the Sound.

The third major strategic area for Sweden lies in the far north. It is an area

26 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

that contains one of the last remnants of wilderness in Europe as well as rich iron ore, low-grade uranium and other mineral deposits. At the same time it lies directly between Soviet military bases in the Kola peninsula and the Norwegian coast. In terms of Swedish territory in this area, the key to it is the port city of Luleå on the Gulf of Bothnia, at the eastern terminus of the railway that serves the iron mines and extends across the Scandinavian peninsula to the Norwegian port of Narvik. On the seaward side of Luleå lies an archipelago that stretches from the Swedish-Finnish border toward the south.

Weapons and Natural Conditions. Situated at strategic locations, these archipelagos are important factors to consider in the Swedish defense problem. Their fortunate location makes them useful as bases from which operations can be effectively conducted. The way through these areas can be defended through an effective coastal artillery system based on both fixed and mobile batteries. Sweden presently has 25 mobile coastal artillery batteries and 45 static batteries armed with 75mm, 105mm, 120mm, 152mm, 210mm guns and Rb08 missiles⁷ that are concentrated in these general areas.

These areas as well as the waters around Sweden in general are well suited to mining operations. Although mines are often considered only a weapon for the weak, their use is particularly important as a second line of defense if an overwhelming attack force cannot be stopped. In this role, Sweden employs nine coastal and three large minelayers, 18 coastal minesweepers and 18 inshore minesweepers. The force is also augmented by helicopters and diving patrols. While some attacking forces could come by air and avoid these defenses, heavy transport equipment would probably still need to come by sea. For this reason, mines are

seen as essential weapons in preventing the use of harbors and coasts for landing.

The archipelagos present an extremely useful base for small, fast missile carrying boats that can strike quickly at their targets in the open sea and return to cover behind the shelter of the islands at the seaward side of the most important strategic areas. Presently there are 35 fast attack boats and 27 coastal patrol boats maintained by Sweden.

Another important factor in favor of Swedish defense is the nature of the water around Sweden that gives her a submarine advantage. The fresh water flowing eastward from the high western land mingles with the salt water in the Baltic in changing patterns. The alternating salinity of the water makes it difficult for an enemy to obtain good ranges using active sonar. At the same time, the temperature gradients of the water are good for submarines attempting to avoid detection. However, passive sensors have proved very effective in following shipping activity. In this environment, the Swedish Navy finds a particular value in the use of quiet submarines for defense and for this purpose she employs 14 of them. Along with strike aircraft, the submarines form the most advanced line of defense. Closer to shore, but still in the open sea, they can be used with advanced minefields and in conjunction with destroyers and missile gunboats. All of the submarines can be used for minelaying operations and some are also intended to serve in an antisubmarine role.

Complementing these operations, a marine force can perform a variety of roles that include the use of some 25 helicopters for ASW and torpedo launching as well as the transportation of commandos and other troops. In addition, 9 medium landing craft and 86 utility landing craft are available. The Swedish Navy's weapons are specifically

tailored for use within the geographical and strategic situation in which Sweden finds herself, but the ability of the nation to use weapons as an effective force in wartime or as a useful conventional deterrent in peacetime is largely determined by its ability to maintain the quality of its weapons technology in conjunction with its strategic planning for the future.

Strategic Planning for the 1980s. At the present time in Sweden, defense issues have not become important politically. Although comment and reporting on the subject became more lively in the winter of 1979-80, the subject was scarcely raised in the general election of September 1979. Despite a small percentage of Social Democrats and Communists who oppose defense expenditures on ideological grounds, the majority of the Swedish electorate appears to be sensitive to the fact that the overall strategic situation in Scandinavia has been changed radically in the past 10 years by two quite separate developments. Most seem to realize that the Soviet Union has expanded its military position and that its most powerful fleet is based in close proximity to Sweden. At the same time, Swedes are aware that the area has been transformed by recent development of the gas and oil resources in the North Sea. The political reper-

cussions of these two developments reflect the increased sensitivity of the Soviet Union about the security of its Northern Fleet base and the rising concern in the West for the value of local sources of gas and oil. While there is something resembling consensus on the potential threat that this creates for Sweden, there is a variety of opinion within the country over how much money should be spent on defense and how it should be allocated among the various services.

The present Swedish defense policy is based on a 5-year program that was decided upon by the Riksdag in the spring of 1977, designed to cover the period from 1977 to 1982. The next defense planning decision will be taken by the Riksdag in the spring of 1982 and will apply to the period from 1982 to 1987.

In the process by which this decision will be taken, there will be two important factors to consider: inflation and the Government's political stability. On the one hand, the problem of inflation makes it extremely difficult to proceed on the basis of previous expenditure levels. While the total amount spent on defense has been increasing, the overall percentage in relation to expenditure has declined. Along with inflation, the considerable rise in salaries has made it impossible for Sweden to

SWEDISH DEFENSE EXPENDITURES^A
(figures in millions of Swedish kronor)

	1960/61	1978/79*	1979/80**
Defense Expenditure:	2,820	14,800	15,900
Total Expenditure:	17,130	160,880	171,870
Defense Percentage of Total:	16.46%	9.19%	9.25%

Average rate of exchange in 1978: 1 U.S. dollar = 4.52 Skr.

*Preliminary

**Forecast

obtain the same effective strength for its navy, today, that it obtained at lower cost in 1960. In 1978/79 the distribution of the defense appropriations in the operating budget gave the Air Force the highest percentage with 36 percent of the total; the Army, 35 percent, and the Navy, 15 percent, with 14 percent allocated to other defense activities.⁹

The apportionment of the budget is part of a long-range trend in which the Navy's allocation has remained nearly the same for more than 20 years. However, there is a new element that now must be considered in the equation. The most recent election in September 1979 produced a fragile coalition government of three parties with only a one-seat edge over the opposing two parties. The forthcoming national referendum in March 1980 over the use of nuclear power for domestic purposes may provide a new political basis for the Government, but the current outlook seems to project a series of cabinet crises and governments without any broad political basis.¹⁰ In spite of a general consensus on the defense problem, it may well be difficult for such governments to make the necessary decisions that would alter the present budgetary allocations and planning in order to keep abreast of inflation, to continue to develop new technology and to stay attuned with changing international events. Continued cabinet crises could conceivably force the government in power to avoid further internal controversy caused by any changes in defense posture or expenditure. At the same time, however, this consequence of domestic politics could inadvertently be interpreted as a weakening of Sweden's ability to maintain a credible neutrality.

In June 1979 the Defense Committee issued its first report.¹¹ In it the Committee examined the broad objectives of Swedish security policy and made recommendations for the future

development of Swedish total defense after 1982. In general, the Committee recommended that the goals formulated and approved by the Riksdag in 1968, 1972 and 1977 remain unchanged.

In considering Sweden's position in Europe, the Committee noted the potential threat to peace that has been created by the basic difference between the superpowers and the maintenance of large standing forces in Europe and concluded, "the possibility of a war in Europe can therefore not be excluded in the now foreseeable future. Whether or not we were attacked, the consequences for Sweden should be so serious that the risks of such a war must influence our security policy."¹² In attempting to analyze the nature that such a war might take, the Committee was fully aware of the uncertainty involved in such a prediction, but it concluded that, for various reasons, a war in Europe would be conducted only with conventional weapons, at least in the opening phase. A conventional war, they believed, would be characterized by restraint in order to allow time for negotiations for an armistice and a political settlement. The specter of total destruction would also restrain the superpower's selection of military targets. Under such circumstances it would be doubtful that either power would attempt to conquer large portions of the other's territory in central Europe. However, it is conceivable that one of the superpowers might attempt to force political concessions by making a limited push forward on one of the flanks of Europe.

In examining this possibility the Defense Committee could not imagine any area within Sweden that would be of primary strategic interest to one of the great powers. As demonstrated by Germany in World War II, the control of areas of strategic interest in the Nordic area does not necessarily depend on control of Swedish territory.¹³ With this in mind, the Committee came to

the conclusion that the superpowers would be unlikely to make an isolated attack against Sweden. However, in wartime, the superpowers are quite likely to seek military control of the strategic areas around the Baltic Straits and the Northern Calotte, the area of Scandinavia north of the Arctic circle. In that event Sweden might become attractive as a transit area for land, sea or air forces. For example, if NATO were very strong in the Norwegian Sea, Warsaw Pact forces might be interested in passing through Swedish territory to obtain their military objectives.

In its overall judgment the Committee upheld the importance of maintaining a Swedish military force that would be able to defend the country against an attack from wherever it might come. In broad terms, it should be a force that could operate under different and changing political-military conditions. This calls for strength that would allow effective concentration of force at coastal and border areas, the exploitation of natural defense conditions and the ability to continue to resist, even if areas of the country or central command and control were lost. In doing this the first priority for the armed forces is to maintain Sweden's neutrality during a war near her borders by having a force that could deter another power from exploiting Swedish territory. At the same time, it would be necessary to detect and to repel violations of her borders as well as to safeguard neutral traffic in accordance with international law.

Sweden's experience as a neutral state has shown that she cannot rely entirely upon the rights and privileges of neutral states provided for in international law. There is something of a similarity to the military problems of World War II that have been projected for a future crisis in the Nordic area. In that war, the great powers held more regard for their own interests than for the principles and rules of neutrality. At

any given time Sweden was obliged to pay heed to the most powerful nation. Thus, a neutral country wishing to live in freedom and independence found that she was forced to adopt in full measure a scale of values that corresponded to that of the great powers.¹⁴

However, in looking at the present circumstance the Committee believed that practical considerations make it necessary to select priorities for the various tasks that the armed forces might face. In doing this, the Committee placed emphasis on two areas: the defense of northern Norrland and the southwestern area along the Baltic Straits.

Special importance was attached to the defense of northern Norrland because it is the area in which both the superpowers would quickly deploy forces and occupy key positions. In responding to this situation Swedish forces would have to act swiftly and with enough strength and tenacity to deter the use of Swedish territory as a transit area or as a forward defense position.

While the Baltic Straits are an area of great strategic importance, strategic control of them does not necessarily require the use of Swedish territory. For that reason the Committee did not attach quite so much importance to it, but concluded that it was necessary to deploy enough strength in that area to deter belligerents from involving Sweden in a contest for control of that area.

The Committee realized, however, that even if Swedish territory could be kept inviolate in a war there would still be a great temptation for the belligerents to use Swedish airspace and territorial waters in their combat operations. These threats would need to be adequately countered by a credible air and sea defense. Additionally, it is conceivable that the central and most densely populated part of Sweden could be attacked as a means of preventing

mobilization, obstructing reinforcements or attempting to force the Swedish Government into making political concessions that would be strategically advantageous. The middle portion of Sweden is a natural transit route to the main military objectives of the superpowers in the Nordic area and it would be particularly attractive in a long war. However, under the present political-military situation the members of the Committee felt that it was feasible to deter an invasion in this area with a slightly lower level of strength than that required in the northern or southwestern areas of the country. Nevertheless, the force level could not be so low as to invite invasion and it should be a force that could be re-deployed in a changing situation.¹⁵

While these general views were agreed by the Defense Committee, an important criticism and reservation about them was made by the Chief of the Defense Staff, Vice Adm. Bengt Schuck. In a comment appended to the Committee report,¹⁶ he pointed out the danger of attempting to plan an effective defense on the basis of a single scenario. In particular, he was highly critical of a recommendation that placed a greater emphasis on the northern half of the country as opposed to the central and southern regions that contain the center of industry and population.

The Defense Committee's report is interesting for what it says as well as for what it does not say. Its overall strategic considerations reveal the most important considerations for Sweden, but its recommendations on the implementation of that strategy should raise considerable discussion. First of all, the deployment of forces in accordance with the Committee's priorities, whatever the appropriateness of them to the projected scenario, carries with it the dangers implicit in playing one's military strategy in advance. Not only does it tip one's hand, it denies the flexibility

of capability that would follow planning based on a variety of future circumstances. More importantly, however, it deals with the defense of a nation in terms of its geographic parts, and perhaps in terms of single service; not in terms of the use of all the nation's forces, complementing one another, in defending the entire nation.

For example, if a military strike were to cut Sweden into two segments, Norrland would naturally fall by itself leaving the other sections relatively undefended. Moreover, the Defense Committee dealt with maritime and naval defense only in terms of defense in the case of intrusion into territorial waters. This, of course, is only an elementary form of naval activity and it fails to take into account the advanced defensive position that a capable maritime defense force can provide by using the water barrier that surrounds more than half of the country.

Even if used only in terms of the priorities set by the Defense Committee, proper attention to the naval element would fill much of the gap left by concentrating other forces in Norrland. More importantly, however, it could provide an advanced anti-air, surface and subsurface defense and surveillance that could effectively complement a defense based on an overall, national concept rather than on an attempt to second-guess the actions of the superpowers by establishing a priority in defense areas.

Swedish Naval Force Planning for the 1980s. Some years ago the Swedish Navy appeared to change dramatically when its aging cruiser-destroyer force began to be replaced by a surface force of small patrol boats. Some observers mistook this for a downgrading in effectiveness of the navy and a substantive change in its function and mission. In fact, it was a change brought about by the application of the latest technology to the basic problem of naval defense in Swedish waters and resulted in sub-

stantial improvements. The use of fast, missile-carrying boats exploits the possibilities of tactical maneuverability, the characteristics of the area, and the increased range of surface-to-surface weapons while keeping costs in fuel, manpower, maintenance and construction lower than would be possible through the use of conventional ships. When deployed in conjunction with submarines, mines and naval aviation, they present a credible defense force.

On 31 August 1979 the Chief of the Swedish Navy, Vice Adm. Per Rudberg issued his plan for the 1980-1985 period.¹⁷ This is the third and next to last annual plan that comes under the 1977 defense decision. However, it is the first report to reflect the course that the navy would take during Rudberg's 6-year term of office. For some time the navy's financial situation has been a difficult one, but the plan makes it apparent that this is being brought under control through stringent economic cuts and a rationalization of resources in the light of a realistic outlook, while at the same time, attempting to maintain adequate preparation for war. Essentially this is being done by decreasing the shore establishment as much as possible and placing more emphasis on fighting units.¹⁸

In the administrative area, the conscript system will be streamlined and the naval service made into a more unified force by integrating fleet and coast artillery personnel in order to provide a common, service-wide base. The maritime school organization will be modernized and greater emphasis given to sea training.

Substantial technical improvement is planned in each of the navy's seven material areas: helicopters, surface, submarines, mine warfare, fixed and mobile coastal artillery, management-base and maintenance. The implementation of new equipment in the field of electronic warfare and communications is planned. Fixed mines will be modernized and a

modern sea mine will be introduced in limited quantity. Three new *Näcken*-class submarines will be placed in service, and several of the *Draken*-class will be modernized. Antiaircraft defenses will be improved and new weapons will be placed in service for the coastal artillery.¹⁹

All of these are substantial and important contributions that increase material readiness and maintain a potentially useful fighting force. At the same time, however, minesweeping forces will be sharply reduced while studies are in progress to develop a more effective organization and to employ new technology. The remaining destroyers will be phased out, and the frigates will be retired without replacement. The delivery of new patrol boats with the *Penguin* missile will be completed. In short, during the next 5-year period in naval force planning, new programs will have to be developed quickly to maintain the navy's position and to carry on with new improvements from the point where the older plans have left off.

The navy is in a critical position as it approaches the 1982 defense decision. It has cut back sharply in its peacetime organization in order to maintain an effective edge in material development. However, the rapidly rising costs of manpower, administration and technological development are quickly showing that the navy has insufficient economic resources to carry out its necessary defense task. The navy's proportion of the national defense budget can be dated as far back as 1958 when its share was reduced in relation to the other services.²⁰ In the 1960s and 1970s, the political defeat that lay at the basis of that decision has been balanced by technological developments in weapons and the substitution of smaller and less expensive boats for ships. The navy, however, has reached the limit of its ability to use this method to maintain its effectiveness. As clearly expressed in the navy's 1980-1985 plan, increased

32 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

expenditure is essential if the navy is to retain its credibility as a functioning element of the Swedish defense plan.

There are several indications that suggest that the navy may have difficulty in obtaining the support it needs. The first and most important indication of this is the lack of understanding of maritime matters demonstrated by the Defense Committee's Report. Secondly, the navy has been at the low end of the defense allocations for a considerable amount of time. A change in the relationship might well require considerable political adjustment. Thirdly, the present political situation in which the Swedish Government finds itself is one in which it must maintain itself by a coalition of three parties based on the narrowest of majorities in the Riksdag. This situation could prevent any substantial alteration of previous policy.

Although the internal political situation is a difficult one, the strategic situation in Northern Europe has changed so dramatically in the past 10 years that many in Sweden believe that it, alone, argues for a reexamination of the nature of the Swedish defense problem.²¹

As pointed out earlier, the Baltic is an important element in the geographic position that allows Sweden to maintain her neutrality. Yet, like the Norwegian Sea and the North Sea, it has also been changing its political character. It has become an increasingly sensitive area to the Soviet Union that will become even more important if it becomes a permanent patrol area for ballistic-missile submarines. Since 1976 six Soviet *Golf*-class ballistic-missile submarines have been reported on station in the Baltic, but their presence has not been regarded as a serious alteration to the present situation unless they are a signal for the permanent stationing of newer, more capable ballistic-missile submarines in that area.

Through its domination of the southern and eastern shores of the Baltic,

the Soviet Union may be seen to have a clear zone of interest within the Baltic, east of a line running from Rügen and Bornholm north to Gotland and the southwest corner of Finland.²² This area has been established by the facts of geography as well as usage, but at the present time it does not include the entire Baltic area. In recognition of Soviet interest in the Baltic, however, the Western nations have been reluctant to do anything that would increase tension in the area. Even nations bordering the Baltic, such as the Federal Republic of Germany and Denmark, as well as other NATO forces, while maintaining interest in the area, have been gradually decreasing their activities in the Baltic in order to avoid confrontation. At the same time, discussion over NATO's strategic planning in this area seems to be centered on closing the Baltic approaches to Soviet naval use rather than on obtaining a balance within the Baltic.

A possible decline in Swedish interest in maritime defense and in her naval capability would be of relatively little interest outside Scandinavia in nearly every situation but the one that presently appears to be developing. In this case, this decline joins a number of other factors that suggest a trend toward allowing the Baltic to come under the complete domination of the Soviet Union. While this alteration may be completely agreeable to the Soviet Union and tacitly acceptable to other nations, it seems to suggest a serious consideration in terms of the credibility of Swedish neutrality in the event that Sweden can no longer deploy an effective naval force and in which other nations decline to assert the international character of the Baltic.

In terms of maintaining an effective naval defense for Sweden, an ideal plan would emphasize development along several lines. It would point to a substantial fleet of fast boats armed with long-range missiles that could capably

defend the important areas of the Baltic for the purpose of maintaining the sealanes of communication, defending territorial waters, providing antiaircraft defense with air and sea surveillance, and thwarting an invasion. In a supporting role, air forces with antisubmarine capability and quiet submarines that could operate with an endurance of at least 2 weeks without the necessity to recharge batteries and armed with missiles having a range of around 200 km would be extremely effective in the Baltic. In addition, an effective mine warfare capability would be extremely difficult to counter and could block nearly all areas to which an enemy might come by sea. In the archipelagos that lie to seaward of the main strategic areas, a mobile defense in-depth supported by some fixed artillery positions would allow an effective defense when complemented by commando teams trained to retake islands lost to an enemy in an invasion attempt. Most importantly, an effective navy would present a ready, flexible and real deterrent to any aggressor that would attempt to attack or to intimidate Sweden.

With a force of this general description, Sweden will be able to achieve her objectives as well as to maintain effec-

tively the maritime element in her key contribution to the Nordic Balance. The foundation for such a force has already been laid, but the future of it depends on whether the Swedish Government considers the change in the strategic, technological and economic situation sufficient to warrant an alteration in defense spending allocations and to carry out the necessary decisions at a time of difficult, internal political circumstances. The failure to do this will certainly be noted by the superpowers.

BIOGRAPHIC SUMMARY



John B. Hattendorf is a professor of strategy at the Naval War College. He was educated at Kenyon College, Brown University, and Oxford University, receiving the D.Phil. degree in history from the

latter. He is coeditor of *The Writings of Stephen B. Luce* and has written a number of articles on the history of naval thought. Another area of his interest is Swedish history and affairs. Professor Hattendorf earlier served as an officer in the U.S. Navy, his assignments including sea duty in destroyers, historical research in the Naval History Division, and teaching at the Naval War College.

NOTES

1. For detailed studies in English which illustrate some of the wartime pressures put on Swedish neutrality in different circumstances, see W.M. Carlgren, *Swedish Foreign Policy during the Second World War* (London: Ernest Bean, 1977) and Steven Koblik, *Sweden, the Neutral Victor: Sweden and the Western Powers, 1917-1918* (Lund: Läromedelsförlagen, 1972).

2. The Swedish view of the Nordic Balance is expressed by Nils Andrén in "The Nordic Balance: An Overview," *The Washington Quarterly*, Summer 1979, pp. 49-62; *The Future of the Nordic Balance* (Stockholm, SSLP Ministry of Defence, 1977), and "Sweden's Security Policy" in J.J. Holst, *Five Roads to Nordic Security* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1973), pp. 130-153, 208-227.

3. Carlgren, pp. 227-229.

4. For some of the earlier considerations see Carl Hallendorff, *Konung Oscar I:s Politik under Krimkriget* (Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademiens Handlingar, del. 41:2, 1930) and for the most recent Åland agreement, *Naval War College International Law Documents*, vol. 24 (1924), pp. 56-60.

5. For a general study of the Baltic in international law, see Bo Johnson, "The Baltic," in *New Directions in the Law of the Sea* (Dobbs Ferry, NY: Oceana, 1973), vol. III, pp. 209-218. On the extension of Swedish territorial waters, see SFS 1978:959 (Lag om ändring i lagen 1966:374 om Sveriges sjöterritorium); SFS 1979:549 (Förordning om tillfälliga passagezoner

34 NAVAL WAR COLLEGE REVIEW

inom svenskt territorium); Prop. 1978/79:27 (Regeringens proposition om utvidgning av Sveriges sjöterritorium) and newspaper reports, "Internationellt Tryck mot Sveriges sjögräns," *Svenska Dagbladet*, 10 October 1979; "Politisk strid om ny sjögräns," *Svenska Dagbladet*, 31 October 1979; "Territorialgräns dras tillbaka," *Svenska Dagbladet*, 19 December 1979; Fredrik Sundberg, "Sjöterritorium och neutralitet," *Tidskrift i Sjöväsendet* December 1979, pp. 280-95.

6. D.P. O'Connell, *The Influence of Law on Sea Power* (Manchester: University Press, 1975), p. 99. Erik Brül, *International Straits* (Copenhagen: Nyt Nordisk Forlag, 1947), vol. ii, pp. 11-115 and pp. 79-82, 106-108, in particular.

7. These and the following military statistics are taken from International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 1979-1980* (London: 1979), p. 34.

8. Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken, "Basic Facts about Sweden, 1979."

9. The Swedish Institute, "Facts About Sweden: the Swedish Defence," January 1979.

10. "Sweden Votes for Confusion," *The Economist*, 22 September 1979, p. 51.

11. *Vår Säkerhetspolitik: Betänkande om svensk sakerhets och försvarspolitik av 1978 års försvarskommitté* (SOU: 1979), p. 42.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

13. N. Rich, *Hitler's War Aims: Ideology, the Nazi State and the Course of Expansion* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1973), pp. 132-145.

14. Calgren, p. 229.

15. *Vår Säkerhetspolitik*, pp. 14-15.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 141-142.

17. Marinstabens Pressavdelning, *Programplan för Marinen, 1980-85* (Aktuell Orientering-79 nummer 6, 1979-08-31).

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 3-9.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 10-12.

20. "Perspektiv på sjöförsvaret: sammandrag av föredrag vid Sveriges Flottas Årsmöte 18 april 1979 av chefen för Kustflottan, konteramiral Bengt Rasin," *Sveriges Flotta*, Nr. 6-7 (juni-juli 1979), p. 3.

21. See for example the statement by Defense Minister Eric Krönmark, "Vårt försvar i fred och krig," *Svenska Dagbladet*, 1 December 1979.

22. "Säkerhetspolitisk syn på Östersjöutloppen," *Marin Nytt*, Nr. 2 (1979), p. 31.

Ψ