

CHAPTER II: THE NATO QUESTION IN SWEDEN UNDER THE TRUMP PRESIDENCY - MILITARY NON-ALIGNMENT BETWEEN POWER POLITICS AND FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

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INTRODUCTION: THE LONG FAREWELL TO NEUTRALITY

ONE OF THE striking differences between the Nordic countries is that they came to draw completely different conclusions from their WWII experiences. Although Denmark, Norway and Iceland differed concerning the plausibility of national military defence against invasions, they all recognised that organised support from the West was necessary for security. Finland concluded that foreign assistance could never be taken for granted. Sweden drew the conclusion that neutrality was possible, but that it required pragmatism, or opportunism as a cynic might describe it. Largely these lessons became part of further reinforced national mythologies and the institutional settings of the respective countries in the Cold War period. As it turned out, war experience and not the many cultural and societal similarities in the Nordic countries was a defining factor for security policy doctrine.⁷³

73 There is extensive literature on Nordic security after the end of WWII. For a short overview of the region, see Johan Jørgen Holst, "The Patterns of Nordic Security" *Dædalus* Vol. 113, No. 2 1984; Nils Andrén, "Prospects for the Nordic Security Pattern" *Cooperation and Conflict: Nordic Journal of International Studies* 8:181 1978; and Ciro Elliott Zoppo, "The Issues of Nordic Security: The Dynamics of East-West Politics, Emerging Technologies, and Definitions of National Defence" in Ciro Elliott Zoppo (ed.), *Nordic Security at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992).

The Swedish conclusion about the merits of neutrality was, however, seriously challenged during the Cold War period. The strategic analysis was based on the assumption of a 'Nordic balance', where Swedish neutrality was essential for stability and the status quo for Finland. The emerging security doctrine was non-alignment in peace for the purpose of neutrality in war, and its utility ultimately rested on the respect of the superpowers for Sweden's non-involvement in the event of conflict. However, as the tensions between East and West increased during the first period of the Cold War, Northern Europe became more interesting as a strategic flank in a potential superpower confrontation, and this created a simultaneous logic for strategic cooperation, particularly on the Scandinavian Peninsula. The realities of power politics were impossible to ignore.⁷⁴ Neutrality would be pointless if the Soviet Union were victorious in aggression in the Scandinavian theatre.

This created strategic pressure for a double policy during the Cold War period. On the one hand, the idea of neutrality was publicly praised as doctrine while, on the other hand, a number of secret military initiatives proved to undermine the official logic of neutrality.⁷⁵ Why would the Soviet Union respect neutrality if Sweden prepared to support the West in war? Not only did the double policy widen the gap between the identity of the Swedish public and the actual actions of its government but, more importantly, it made neutrality an unlikely position in the eyes of the

74 See for example Gerald Aalders, *Swedish Neutrality and the Cold War 1945–1949* (Amsterdam: Nijmegen University, 1989); Paul M. Cole, *Neutralité du jour: The Conduct of Swedish Security Policy since 1945* (Ann Arbor: Johns Hopkins University, 1990); and Nils Andréén, "On the meaning and uses of neutrality" *Cooperation and Conflict: Nordic Journal of International Studies* XXVI, 1991.

75 For accounts of the double policy, see Robert Dalsjö, *Life-Line Lost. The Rise and Fall of 'Neutral' Sweden's Secret Reserve Option of Help from the West* (Stockholm: Santérus, 2006) and Robert Dalsjö, "The hidden rationality of Sweden's policy of neutrality during the Cold War" *Cold War History* Vol. 14, No. 2 2014.

superpowers. Although all countries may exhibit gaps between the rhetoric and practice of its security policy, in the Swedish case it became almost absurd. Exercising an ‘independent voice’ in world affairs, Prime Minister Olof Palme criticised the U.S. use of B-52s in the Vietnam War, while at the same time Sweden prepared to host B-52 planes for recovery basing in the event of war with the Soviet Union. On a rhetorical level, Sweden could decide itself what its security policy entailed, whereas the power realities of the Cold War completely ignored this level.

The end of the Cold War is often described as the starting point for a major shift in Sweden’s security policy. Sweden became Europeanised and internationalised, and this has been a gradual process, regardless of the parties in government. The policy of neutrality was cultivated during the post-WWII hegemony of social democracy, but it is interesting to note that the long farewell to neutrality was embraced also by the Social Democrats. The centre-right government under Carl Bildt 1991-1994 started the reform process and, following EU membership in 1995, policy was adjusted to military non-alignment, which reflected participation in the European supranational project. After 2004 and the emergence of the doctrine of EU solidarity, Sweden scrapped neutrality as an alternative. In 2009, Sweden declared a unilateral policy of solidarity with the EU and Nordic countries, a policy built on expectations of mutual help among the Nordic countries.⁷⁶

While it is true that EU membership made neutrality impossible, it is interesting to note that the basic components of the double policy has remained. To this day, in the Swedish debate there is significant difference between military non-alignment

76 For a short overview of this policy development, see Justyna Gotkowska, *Sitting on the Fence: Swedish Defence Policy and the Baltic Sea Region* Centre for Eastern Studies Point of View No. 33 April 2013.

and neutrality. There is space for double policy because there is no consensus on what the declaration of solidarity really entails in practice: does it mean that Sweden would support its neighbours militarily in the event of Russian aggression? The political parties that support NATO membership (the Moderate party, the Liberal party, the Centre party and the Christian Democrats) argue that military non-alignment is a meaningless term, as the solidarity doctrine explicitly states that Sweden will take a stand (diplomatically and militarily) for its EU and Nordic neighbours. The traditionalists in the Swedish debate (the Social Democrats, the Left party and the Green party) argue that it is still possible to get the major powers to respect Swedish non-involvement in a Baltic Sea conflict, and that military non-alignment has a rationale.

However, the contemporary setting for a double policy is indeed different. During the social democratic hegemony, the double policy was fully known only to a tight circle of politicians and officials. One must remember that, during the period of Social Democratic government 1946-1976, Sweden had two prime ministers, and only six politicians took turns to be foreign- and defence ministers.⁷⁷ In other words, there was one circle of decision-makers, but two policies. Under the current Social Democrat government, there are two ministries with separate agendas. While the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is hopeful concerning the Swedish 'independent voice' in world affairs, the Ministry of Defence develops close cooperation with Western powers that could prove useful in the event of war. The process of abandoning neutrality is complete, while the struggle for what this implies for

77 Prime ministers: Tage Erlander 1946-1969, Olof Palme 1969-1976. Ministers for defence: Allan Vought 1945-1951, Torsten Nilsson 1951-1957, Sven Andersson 1957-1973, Eric Holmqvist 1973-1976. Ministers for foreign affairs: Östen Undén 1945-1962, Torsten Nilsson 1962-1971, Krister Wickman 1971-1973, Sven Andersson 1973-1976.

Swedish security policy still rages within government as well as in the public debate. This is a debate dictated more by emotions and national myths than calculation of national interests. The net effect is that Sweden continues to integrate with international structures, while its population still enjoys the façades of the Potemkin village built during the Cold War double policy.

SWEDEN AND NATO: A COMPLICATED AFFAIR

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND of double policy is fundamental to understanding Sweden's current relationship with NATO. The present intimate partnership and largely frictionless association is indeed in stark contrast to the attitude during the Cold War. The most sacred part of the double policy was that it could never be as much as hinted at in public, as that would risk the credibility of neutrality. Officially, any overt involvement with the Western Alliance was strictly forbidden, to the point that Sweden never fully recognised the normative difference between the collective defence of democracy and the Warsaw Pact control of the satellite states in Eastern Europe. In other words, the full potential of the 'independent voice' was realised in foreign affairs concerning Africa, Latin America and Asia, but not the Soviet Union. Although a small circle of insiders understood how dependent Sweden de facto was on NATO in the event of war, any discussion concerning Western reinforcements in such an eventuality was stigmatised, particularly in the latter period of the Cold War. During the Cold War, proponents of Swedish NATO membership were largely marginalised anti-Communists with far-right sympathies.

This is perhaps the most damaging effect and legacy of the double policy: that it quelled strategic analysis in the name of credible neutrality. What started as a somewhat reasonable

balance of power argument concerning the status of Finland and Baltic Sea region security, slowly became an official liturgy that was false and arguably dangerous for Swedish interests. The price of double policy is that Swedish citizens have largely come to believe that neutrality was a success story, and that it was a natural condition for a small state in Northern Europe. If military non-alignment has been so successful, why become a member of a military pact?

After the end of the Cold War, Sweden embraced the development of a transformed NATO. Sweden joined Partnership for Peace (PfP) in 1994 and even recommended that other states become members of the Alliance. Active participation and adjustment to NATO slowly became standard practice for the armed forces. Partnership has had a peculiar function in Sweden's security policy: it has offered access to participation in interventions and military transformation, while upholding the identity of Sweden as a militarily non-aligned country. Thus, partnership was never a temporary status while preparing for membership, but the perfect option for a country that did not want to have a membership debate. It allowed the government to 'kick the can down the road', and not openly discuss the profound myths that had been part of its previous policy. This has disconnected many politicians from the fundamental understanding of the strategic implications of partnership and interoperability. For example, many Swedish politicians would not understand why active participation in the Balkans, Afghanistan and Libya might imply future membership. This complication never affected Sweden's relationship with NATO: most of its contributions were appreciated and represented more than the U.S. could have expected from a non-member state. For sure, Sweden did not (officially) get access to Allied intelligence in the operations, but the partnership mainly served both parties during the 1990s and post-9/11.

Accordingly, close cooperation and active participation in NATO operations did not influence public opinion in Sweden in favour of membership. This is why development of an intimate relationship and adaptation of the armed forces never changed the Swedish attitude concerning membership. Thus, every time the rather apparent contradictions of Swedish security policy were pointed out, the Social Democrats and centre-right parties both quelled the debate by referring to the lack of public opinion and political consensus. Politicians were spinning the NATO issue in a circle: public opinion has not changed, so we will not change public opinion. In retrospect, this represents a strategic mistake of the first order by the Swedish government. Everyone forgot the most fundamental question for a small state: who will we team up with if there is war in our neighbourhood?

However, a great complication of partnership started to emerge in the changing security climate in Europe after the Russian aggression on Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea in 2014. These events triggered a strategic shock, although the road to war had actually already revealed a number of warning signs. As the partnership had granted sufficient access while allowing the national myth of neutrality to remain untouched, there had not been any pressure for a membership debate. Almost overnight these conditions changed: in the face of the Russian threat, Sweden as a partner country lacked access to credible planning for collective defence and it was desperately short on military capabilities to ensure a deterrence regime on its own. Although Sweden and Finland were included in the Enhanced Opportunity Programme (alongside Australia, Georgia and Jordan) at the Wales Summit, a fundamental problem for the credibility of Swedish security policy became more obvious. Thus, public opinion shifted in favour of NATO membership and re-armament. This process conformed to two out of three conditions for Swedish

membership in NATO: an identified Russian threat in public opinion, and an identified cost of being outside the Alliance.⁷⁸

Interestingly, the Swedish political landscape started to shift.⁷⁹ Following the election of the Social Democrat and Green party coalition government in 2014, the centre-right opposition united in favour of Swedish NATO-membership. As of 2015, the security policy doctrine is a contested issue between the government and opposition in Sweden. Thus, the final condition for Swedish membership, support from the Social Democrats, is not fulfilled. There have not been any serious attempts to start a debate among the Social Democrats, and neither is the issue important for its members. The vast majority of the party are completely embedded in the mythology of neutrality. To complicate matters even more, the growing support for the right-wing populist party in Parliament has made a robust coalition government in favour of membership even more unlikely.

Alternatively, there have been proponents for a referendum concerning NATO membership. Even if most supporters of Swedish NATO membership tend to dislike the idea of a referendum, it might be difficult to avoid one if the membership question is not part of the election platforms in future parliamentary elections. There is active opposition among the Social Democrats and the Left party against further Swedish cooperation with NATO, and they will most likely try to pour cold water on the idea. Furthermore, as pointed out by some opponents of

78 For an analysis of the criteria for Swedish membership, see Magnus Christiansson, "Solidarity and Sovereignty – The Two-Dimensional Game of Swedish Security Policy" *Baltic Security and Defence Review* Vol. 12, No. 2 2010.

79 Two important inquiries that highly influenced the political debate among defence intellectuals include the "Bertelman report" and the "Bringéus report", see Ministry of Defence, *International Defence Cooperation. Efficiency, Solidarity, Sovereignty* Report from the Inquiry of Sweden's Defence Cooperation Fö:2013B (Stockholm, 2014), and Statens Offentliga Utredningar, *Säkerhet i en ny tid* Betänkande av Utredningen om Sveriges försvars- och säkerhetspolitiska samarbeten SOU 2016:57.

Swedish NATO membership, the result of a referendum is risky: it could close doors in the future and is difficult to coordinate with Finland.

ENTER TRUMP: POWER POLITICS, FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY AND THE NATO ISSUE IN SWEDEN

THE ENDURING IMPORTANCE of double policy is essential for understanding the NATO question in Sweden today. When Donald Trump entered the stage at the New York Hilton Midtown to give his victory speech in the presidential campaign in November 2016, it is a gross understatement to conclude that it was bad news for the Swedish government. The progressive government of Sweden probably represents everything that Donald Trump dislikes: feminism, big government, multilateralism and environmentalism. For its part, Stockholm feared catastrophe because of the “America First” policy of Trump, and that it would destroy more than a decade of good relationships with Washington.

Following the invasion of Crimea, in 2014 the newly elected Social Democrat and Green party coalition government continued and reinforced a process of re-armament and reforms to strengthen defence. The Russian aggression in Ukraine marked the rebirth of power politics in Europe, and Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist committed whole-heartedly to the ambition of having broad parliamentary support for the re-armament policy. In fact, the appointment of Peter Hultqvist is probably a more significant factor for Swedish security than the election of Donald Trump. Furthermore, Hultqvist has become something of a ‘Sun King’ in the Swedish establishment: nothing of major importance to defence escapes him.

During 2015, a pattern emerged concerning defence policy featuring three significant steps. Firstly, Hultqvist committed

to breaking the pattern of stagnating defence budgets and to (modestly) increase military capabilities. Although Swedish capabilities remain limited, the country is now aiming for re-armament over the next decade. Secondly, he undercut the public debate about Swedish membership in NATO. Hultqvist has openly stated that he is a personal guarantor for continued non-membership. Finally, he has developed a string of bilateral cooperative partnerships, including with Poland, the UK, Denmark, and not least Finland. The most precious bilateral partnership is with the U.S. As the security situation has deteriorated in the Baltic Sea region, key U.S. officials and military dignitaries have started regularly to add Stockholm to their travelling schedule for Europe.

This 'Kinder Egg' philosophy of small state realism underpins what has been called the 'Hultqvist doctrine'. In other words, Sweden could successfully strengthen its own deterrence capabilities, rely de facto on bilateral support from the U.S. in a Baltic Sea region crisis, and avoid the turmoil of a NATO membership debate. It was rather telling that Hultqvist was a staunch supporter of increased military cooperation with Finland in 2015 and of the parliamentary passing of the Host Nation Support agreement with NATO in 2016. Arguably, the Trump presidency complicates this doctrine. Although the U.S. President is currently surrounded by 'grown-ups' in all key positions of the administration (McMaster as National Security Advisor, Kelly as White House Chief of Staff, Tillerson as Secretary of State and Mattis as Secretary of Defense), there are still doubts about the administration's support for multilateral institutions. In this sense, the Hultqvist doctrine is in line with the realist sceptics of NATO, which emphasises a focus on capabilities: why have an internal struggle for NATO membership, when one may develop close bilateral ties to the one country that can actually provide deterrence? However, as pointed out by supporters of NATO

membership, it is hardly a better option only to have a bilateral relationship with a reckless president. European countries having bilateralism as an alternative to NATO would eventually undermine the transatlantic link.

The first major national military exercise in Sweden in decades, 'Aurora', was carried out in September 2017. This event featured key participation by U.S. and Finnish units and, although it was not a NATO exercise, it rehearsed the stationing of Allied reinforcements in Sweden under a simulated Russian attack. While Sweden has clearly re-focused its defence efforts and has some interesting niche capabilities, it will remain a limited military actor in the region for many years to come. Hultqvist and his entourage at the Ministry of Defence are certainly aware of this.

The effect of the Hultqvist doctrine is that it further institutionalises dependence on foreign support in war under military non-alignment. Not many analysts understand the logic of military non-alignment when actively preparing for war with other states but, given the background of double policy, it makes perfect sense. The contradictions are so apparent that even the traditionalists in the Swedish debate have become worried that Hultqvist is actually preparing for Sweden to end up with a *fait accompli* for membership. In this narrative, Finland is only used as a tool to get rid of military non-alignment. The recurring calls for a formal Swedish-Finnish defence pact, in order to solidify the credibility of the defence cooperation, would simultaneously be the end of military non-alignment. The traditionalists fear that Hultqvist is a closet supporter of Swedish membership.

The great hope for the traditionalists, on the other hand, is Minister for Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström. When appointed, she initiated the 'feminist foreign policy', which included a focus on a Swedish seat in the UN Security Council (UNSC), international aid and development as well as women's rights

and disarmament in world politics. The feminist foreign policy is a reincarnation of the ‘independent’ foreign policy from the 1970s and 1980s, which was only one side of the double policy. The independent foreign policy is underpinned by two idealist assumptions: that small states may form and influence the international system, and that they can broker deals and find solutions to conflicts in international politics. It has, however, proved somewhat difficult to combine these roles. When Sweden recognised Palestine as a state in 2014, Israeli officials refused to meet with Wallström in 2015. When Sweden condemned Saudi Arabia for the medieval treatment of blogger Raif Badawi, Saudi blocked Wallström from addressing the Arab League in 2015.⁸⁰ For a period, Sweden managed to manoeuvre into the unlikely position of simultaneously being condemned by Israel and the Arab world. It is tempting to conclude that small states may be activists or peace brokers, but can hardly do both things at the same time. As is the case for Hultqvist, the Trump presidency is also a challenge for Wallström, but for the opposite reason: Swedish foreign policy wants to be a counterweight to almost everything that the current U.S. administration stands for.

In any case, the flagship project for Wallström was to run for non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council in 2016. Again, this strongly echoes idealist assumptions in world affairs, as UNSC has no substantial role in the event of war in the Baltic Sea region. The successful Swedish campaign was built explicitly on the idea of an ‘independent voice’ in world politics, but it is worth remembering that in the end NATO competitors, Italy and the Netherlands, were also given terms in the council.

80 “Saudis block Swedish minister’s speech at Arab League”, March 9th 2015, Reuters. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-sweden-saudi/saudis-block-swedish-ministers-speech-at-arab-league-idUSKBN0M50ZS20150309>

Typically, following the election results, Wallström announced that “Sweden is back in the world!”

The UN activism illustrates the current inherent tensions in Swedish policy. Faithful to its activist impulses, the government prioritised arms control and appointed the first Special Ambassador for disarmament in 25 years. It strongly supported the Humanitarian Initiative that led to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2017. The aim of the initiative is to make nuclear weapons illegal, and to reinforce the norm of non-use of nuclear weapons. For NATO countries, this is a sensitive question and U.S. no less regards a nuclear ban treaty as counterproductive to nuclear proliferation efforts and defence cooperation. The fact that no Nordic country, not even Finland, took part in the treaty negotiations did not discourage the independent voice of Sweden. As Margot Wallström concluded in spring 2017 regarding the negotiations: “Sweden has always participated in multilateral negotiations related to disarmament. We see no reason not to do so this time.”⁸¹ In other words, the interests of partner countries were of lesser interest to the independent voice of Sweden.

Furthermore, after Sweden had voted in favour of the nuclear ban treaty, there was clear diplomatic signalling from several NATO countries, as well as Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, regarding possible negative consequences for the partnership. Again, the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs ignored these signals, and several NATO countries were simply informed that signing the nuclear ban treaty would have no impact on the relationship with NATO. This is an echo of the official side of Cold War policy, in which Sweden decided for itself what was conformable with neutrality.

81 Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva, 1 March 2017.

The issue culminated in late August 2017, when John Mattis wrote a letter to Peter Hultqvist about the consequences of a Swedish signing of the treaty. Although the content of the letter is classified, it is fair to assume that it was a sharp U.S. warning, as the Swedish government soon announced that it would not sign and that it would instead carry out “an investigation to highlight all the consequences of the convention”⁸².

This episode illustrates the inherent tensions of the current double policy. On the one hand, a foreign policy that emphasises an independent voice, on the other hand a defence policy built on NATO reinforcements in the event of war. The question a foreign observer must ask is how independent Sweden really is, as its fighter aircraft pose in formation together with B-52s from Strategic Air Command in the recurring BALTOPS exercises. For sure, images like these undermine any credibility of remaining outside in the eyes of Russian military staff. It is tempting to conclude that not many outsiders believe in the Potemkin village of military non-alignment any more, and that it only serves domestic purposes. However, as the episode about the nuclear ban treaty exemplifies, this façade is not entirely convincing for the Swedish public in the new context of double policy. While the tight circle of political leaders managed to deal with contradictions in a schizophrenic way during the Cold War, the tensions between foreign- and defence policy are currently creating clashes that are visible beyond government offices. Not only are the processes and departmental infighting exposed in public, but it also creates an area of weakness that may be exploited by the Kremlin. Currently there seems to be détente between the feminist foreign policy and the Hultqvist doctrine, but who knows what will happen in the event of a

82 Utrikesdepartementet, Gemensamt uttalande från utrikesminister Margot Wallström och försvarsminister Peter Hultqvist, 4 september 2017.

foreign policy crisis in the Baltic Sea region? The current double policy is a much more fragile construct than its Cold War predecessor.

CONCLUSIONS: THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD FOR SWEDISH NATO MEMBERSHIP

THE PREVIOUS ACCOUNT tries to make sense of the fact that, despite its long-standing and important entanglement with Western powers, Sweden is not about to file any membership application to NATO. We may conclude that there is a struggle in government and in the political debate about the meaning of solidarity in the Baltic Sea region that is far from decided. Depending on the outcome of this struggle, we may expect the membership issue to move or stagnate over the coming year. What will be the result of this struggle, and which factors are of importance?

One crucial factor for change is a new leadership for the Social Democrats, as their endorsement of membership is the final piece of the puzzle. Unfortunately, one may almost be forced to use “Kremlinology” to keep full track of this factor. However, for a number of reasons a new Social Democrat leadership with pro-NATO membership sympathies seems somewhat far-fetched. Firstly, the Social Democrats are not prepared in any way for an informed NATO debate. It is difficult to envision a congressional debate about NATO, simply because there is such a lack of fundamental knowledge about the organisation and its character. In any case, Swedish non-membership is used as an instrument for the policies of social democracy. Secondly, while there are certainly differences between different generations of Social Democrats, the legacy from leaders like Tage Erlander and Olof Palme is one of the truly unifying aspects. Thus, it is

very unlikely that Social Democrats, although deeply divided on many other issues, would erupt in conflict over party history and an identity that they all share. Finally, if the Social Democrats are forced into political soul-searching, for example because of a bad election result à la *Parti Socialiste* or SPD, it is difficult to see why this process would start with a policy area that is of less importance to the electorate. In other words, a new Social Democrat leadership open to NATO membership would tend to exist only in the daydreams of centre-right sympathizers.

Another alternative would be for the old Social Democrat leadership to shift policy. The spectacular U-turn made by the party's leadership regarding the Swedish EU membership question in 1990–1991 is sometimes used as an analogy. However, one must remember that the price for this U-turn was a referendum, which was a way of solving the problem of party cohesion in the face of such a divisive question. Thus, even if the party leadership would like to make a U-turn, the membership issue would end up as an uncertain and highly controversial question in a referendum. Alternatively, the party leadership could include the first steps of scrapping military non-alignment as part of its election platform in the next general election in 2018. The advantage would be that it would be possible to get legitimacy for a policy shift in a general election. As of October 2017, there are no signs of this among Social Democrats. The problem of avoiding a referendum will most likely persist after 2018. While the four centre-right parties in Parliament are in favour of membership, it will be difficult to form a new government with a clear majority for membership and, in any case, any exclusion in such an important question in the election campaign would trigger fierce demands for a referendum among left-wing Social Democrats.

Thus, the most likely future development is a continued double policy. Sweden and Finland will continue to deepen their

defence cooperation, while the Swedish government continues to either quell the debate or passively contemplate the issue. If this process leads to a Swedish-Finnish defence pact and Sweden restores its credibility after the nuclear ban episode, the next government will have moved closer to NATO membership. This represents an incremental, if somewhat hypocritical policy. However, this policy may also trigger neutralist impulses in both Stockholm and Finland, as if this pact were a substitute for membership.

Importantly, one may ask the question of whether Swedish and Finnish politicians are ready to become bedfellows and to rely completely on each other, outside a framework of the major powers. To mention just one incident, the Swedish circus around the nuclear ban has been noted in Helsinki. This is the tragedy of the Hultqvist doctrine: it may be that Sweden and Finland outside NATO are cornered together in the Baltic Sea region when the music stops and winter is coming.

I started this chapter with the reflection that war experience was crucial for the security policies of the Nordic states after WWII. War is the father of all, as Heraclitus put it. Perhaps the sad truth is that the next time the strategic configuration changes in the Baltic Sea region, it will be because of the experience of a war.