

# Swedes fail to end Soviet sub threat

by Göran Haglund

The Swedish Navy has been trying to track down what is assumed to be an intruding Soviet mini-submarine hiding in the militarily highly sensitive area just off the major naval base of Karlskrona, in the south of the country, since Feb. 9. The submarine is believed by the Swedish Navy to have been trapped inside a several-miles-wide area. During the intervening weeks, the Swedish population has been torn between doubts about the real nature of the mysterious underwater activity and emerging fears of the consequences of having to admit that little can be done to end the free access of the Soviet military to secret Swedish military installations.

## The ugly face of appeasement

Responsible for this predicament—known clinically as the farce of Swedish neutrality—is Sweden's political leadership, and partly the military as well. Rather than acting vigorously, politically and militarily, to place a penalty on Soviet intrusions higher than the gains expected by the intruders, Prime Minister Olof Palme is leading an unprecedented appeasement policy through his own, private back channels in Moscow.

In a speech on March 16, Palme attacked what he described as "right-wing anti-Sovietism" in Sweden, and he again stressed that "we have no basis for making any accusations against the Soviet Union." Furthermore, "Once an agreement is made" with the Soviets, Palme said, "we can rely on their sticking to it." This statement has observers in Stockholm wondering what sort of secret agreements Palme may be referring to, given that no public agreements at all have been made with the Soviets regarding the submarine incursions, for which Moscow outrightly denies any responsibility.

Effectively preventing the Swedish Navy from ever hitting an intruding mini-sub, Palme's line is that the primary task of the Navy is not to blow the thing out of the water, but to "secure evidence" and "establish clarity" as to what is going on underwater and, if anything is there, to force it to the surface without inflicting unnecessary damage and risking the loss of human life "in times of peace." Using such "humanitarian" balderdash in the face of what military specialists have concluded must be Soviet preparations for submarine-launched surprise strikes against the West from Swedish territorial waters, is worse than criminal.

This display of treachery follows statements by the Swedish Defense Ministry last fall and the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, Rear Admiral Bror Stefenson, this winter that Sweden is committed to shooting down NATO cruise missiles passing through Swedish air space en route to their targets in the East—statements that were acknowledged by Radio Moscow on Feb. 5 as indicating a welcome shift in Sweden's defense posture.

Furthermore, *Pravda* of March 15 attacked those in Sweden who "are taking advantage of every excuse, even the most absurd and far-fetched, such as 'intentional encroachments' by Soviet submarines into Swedish territorial waters, in order to provoke hostility toward the Soviet Union in Sweden," while in the same article heaping praise over Olof Palme, especially for his international efforts for disarmament and nuclear-free zones.

Such "friendly" Soviet acknowledgements that Palme is bending over backwards to please them, however, have always been coupled with rude intimidation.

During the 1981 incident of the "Whisky on the Rocks"—the Soviet submarine that got stuck on the rocks off Karlskrona, a few miles away from the current incident—a Soviet naval force, thinly disguised as "salvage ships," made repeated, full-speed surprise approaches toward the submarine, simulating a raid to liberate it, and changing their course only as they were about to enter Swedish waters.

More recently, as Soviet ambassador Boris Pankin visited Palme supposedly to apologize for the Soviets' "regrettable navigational errors," Comrade Pankin on the contrary demanded a *Swedish* apology, "as Sweden has offended the Soviet leadership and the Soviet Navy"!

## Join the West!

But Palme is now facing opposition even within his own party. On March 16, a leading member of Sweden's Social-Democratic party (SAP) called for Sweden to join the Western Alliance and branded all attempts to stick to neutrality in response to the impending Soviet threat as "not only stupid, but close to criminally insane." Writing in *Svenska Dagbladet*, Sweden's leading conservative daily, Thorwald Arvidsson, an executive committee member of a Stockholm district of the SAP, stated that Sweden should "take out its national insurance policy in the same company where two of our Nordic neighbors are already policy-holders"—referring to Denmark and Norway's NATO membership.

Hitherto, only the European Labor Party in Sweden has conducted a campaign to bring Sweden into the Western Alliance. On Radio Free Sweden, the local radio station run by the ELP in Stockholm, in mass leaflets and in the ELP's newspaper *Ny Solidaritet*, calls have been issued for Sweden to contribute to the building of the Western beam-defense system announced by President Reagan a year ago, and to sign the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty, which provides for mutual defense in case of an attack.