

Northern Flank by A. Borealis

Koivisto's diplomacy: made in Russia

Finnish President Koivisto visited Palme in Stockholm to explain why Sweden should follow Finland's example.

From the very beginning of the new year, Stockholm has been a center of hectic diplomatic activity. On Jan. 7, Finnish President Mauno Koivisto paid a dramatic one-day official visit to Stockholm, and three days before him, East German dictator Erich Honecker also surfaced in the Swedish capital. Both Premier Olof Palme himself and several of his associates are touring most of Asia during January, as salesmen for the disarmament policies of the Moscow-run Palme Commission.

According to reports in the Swedish press, Koivisto's visit to Stockholm was intended to clarify the provocative remarks made by the Finnish President about Sweden during his November 1984 visit to London. In London, Koivisto had stirred the imagination of relevant circles by publicly stating that he wished that similar relations be established between Stockholm and Moscow as already govern relations between Moscow and Helsinki.

Indicating that indeed something beyond the usual protocol was the subject of Koivisto's Stockholm visit, the Finnish President—who was just scheduled to meet with Palme—only three days before his arrival in Stockholm surprisingly requested separate talks with the chairmen of all three non-socialist opposition parties.

Although the laconic Finn in effect said nothing in the public domain this time, the comments given by his Swedish hosts confirm that the Swedish-Soviet relations played a prominent role in the talks. Koivisto at-

tempted to smooth over the resentment caused by Soviet military incursions into Swedish waters and air space.

The security spokesman of the Moderate Party, Carl Bildt, stated that the Moderates had assured Koivisto that a non-socialist government—which is not unlikely to result from the September elections this year—would cling to the same “traditional Swedish neutrality policy” that Palme is pursuing.

Although nominally a “neutral” country, Finland's security policy is based on its “Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Assistance” with the Russians, the so-called VSB Pact, that the Finns were forced to sign after World War II. The VSB Pact stipulates, among other things, that if the security of the Soviet Union is threatened through Finnish territory or air space, the Soviets will “assist” the Finns in defending both Finland and the Soviet Union, e.g., by demanding Soviet military bases in Finland.

For over a year, the Soviet Union has been making public statements to Sweden and Finland, demanding that both countries show whether they are militarily capable of preventing NATO cruise missiles from passing through Swedish and Finnish air space on their way to targets in the Soviet Union. If not, it is implied, the Soviet Union has the right to establish forward defense positions controlling the air space of the two “neutral,” but too weakly defended countries.

Just before Koivisto, Erich Ho-

necker discreetly visited Stockholm, allegedly for the congress of the tiny Swedish Communist Party (VPK). However, informed observers believe that the visit, which was only reported after the fact by East German TV, must have had a much more important purpose, such as perhaps a special consultation with Palme.

The Palme regime, in fact, is launching a broad Asian “disarmament” offensive. Palme himself will visit India on Jan. 26, to push the so-called “Five Continent Initiative,” which includes Moscow-inspired ideas of a “nuclear freeze” and “nuclear-free zones.” The sponsors of the initiative, the Five Continent Group, will meet in India, including Greece's Andreas Papandreou, Argentina's Raul Alfonsín, Mexico's Miguel de la Madrid, Tanzania's Julius Nyerere, and the host, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Sweden's “disarmament minister,” Maj-Britt Theorin, is visiting New Zealand and Australia on Jan. 8-17. Theorin will meet cabinet ministers, talk to peace movement leaders, and speak at universities in the two countries. Theorin's mission to New Zealand and Australia coincides with Sweden's Foreign Minister Lennart Bodström's visit to Vietnam, Thailand, Hong Kong, and South Korea.

The Swedish National Trade Union Confederation (LO) seems to be giving its contribution to the destabilization of Asia. On Jan. 3, an LO official was arrested by the Philippine police in his hotel room in the capital of Manila for smuggling money into the country.

Law enforcement officials suspect that the money was allocated for subversive activities against the Philippines' pro-American President Ferdinand Marcos, who has been the target of intense efforts aimed at knocking over one of the most important allies of the United States in the region.