

Northern Flank by A. Borealis

Palme's energy dependence plan

The Swedish government's new energy bill points toward enormous imports from the East.

In 1979, the announcement of Sweden's 1980 popular referendum on nuclear energy provoked some consternation, for it featured a lack of real alternatives for the electorate, as even the most "pro-nuclear" side of the referendum was absurdly anti-nuclear, calling for a shutdown of all nuclear energy by the year 2010. Five years of afterthought notwithstanding, the Palme regime's latest energy bill reaffirms that all of Sweden's nuclear reactors are to be shut down and dismantled by that date.

How remarkable this is becomes clear when one considers how great the role of nuclear-generated electricity is in Sweden's energy supply. Leading the world in per capita nuclear energy development by far, no less than 40.6% of Swedish electricity generation was nuclear in 1984—three times the U.S. percentage—which will rise to 45 to 50% of Sweden's electricity in 1985, as the last two one-gigawatt reactors, just completed, will come on line.

Although this means that Swedish nuclear-generated electricity has tripled in five years—an unprecedented success story in cheap and safe energy production—the criminal result of the 1980 referendum, as confirmed by Palme's new energy bill, is that this highly developed nuclear industry is being dismantled.

Moreover, shutting down all Swedish nuclear power plants by 2010, including the six reactors finished since 1980, will mean shutting down reac-

tors for which as little as 60% of their longevity will have elapsed.

Thus, the consequence of the new anti-energy bill is that almost half of Sweden's electricity must come from other-than-nuclear sources by 2010, a problem for which the bill has no pretense of a solution:

- There will be no increase in oil imports for electricity generation, as Sweden is already highly dependent on oil imports for heating.

- There will be no dramatic rise in coal imports for environmental reasons.

- Sweden's large hydroelectric power capacity, which supplied 56% of all electricity in 1984, cannot be significantly expanded.

- The only further "sources" of electricity to replace nuclear energy, then, are "conservation" and wind power.

Not even Palme believes that half of Sweden's electricity needs can be met through "saving energy." And to supply a mere 10% of all electricity by wind power would require building two wind-power stations of the currently attainable size every week between now and 2010! The prospects for developing wind power stations at all are poor, as even state-run Swedish shipyards, forced into the wind-power business because of depressed levels of shipbuilding, have now stopped such unprofitable exercises.

Ah, but Olof Palme does have something up his sleeve—and it's just what one would have expected. Dur-

ing a visit to one of the new nuclear reactors, in Oskarshamn on Sweden's east coast, a reporter asked the prime minister if all this means that Sweden will have to import electricity by 2010. Palme's tongue slipped, and he blurted out: "Sure, across the Baltic Sea, in Latvia, four nuclear reactors are now under construction. They may represent a possibility for imports."

Palme did not mention if such plans have already been discussed or agreed upon with the Kremlin; nor did the Latvian nob turned Swedish premier reveal if the laying of an electrical transmission line across the Baltic seabed had been a subject of deliberations at the most recent session of the family council at the old Palme-von Knieriem estate of Skangal, Latvia.

One observer pointed out that the idea of importing electricity from Latvia—i.e., from what is today the U.S.S.R.—seems to be part of a pattern. Back in the mid-1970s, Palme suggested replacing nuclear-generated electricity with coal-fired electrical plants. Sweden has no coal of its own. The coal would have to have been imported from an East bloc country, Poland.

But Palme's supporters and friends in the environmentalist movement oppose coal-fired electricity generation for reasons of "air pollution." So, Palme's bright idea at the time was to have the Poles themselves fire up all the coal—and suffer the pollution of the air—and then export clean electricity by sea cable to Sweden!

Such hypocrisy was unparalleled until Palme's recent idea of solving the electricity shortage resulting from shut-down of all Swedish nuclear energy, by having the Latvians produce nuclear electricity for export to Sweden—making Sweden dependent not only on the much-slandered nuclear energy, but on Soviet deliveries of such energy.