

Northern Flank by Göran Haglund

Premier Ryzhkov visits Stockholm

The Swedish government has sold out part of Sweden's economic zone in the Baltic Sea to Russia.

During his visit in Sweden, Soviet Premier Nikolai Ryzhkov signed an agreement of principle with his Swedish counterpart Ingvar Carlsson, granting Russia 25% of a 13,500 square kilometer sea strip forming part of the Swedish economic zone in the Baltic Sea—and as “compensation” for stealing only 25% of this sea strip, the Russians were granted 20 years of fishing rights in the remaining 75% of the strip.

The shameful agreement signed on Jan. 13 puts a preliminary end to a nearly 20-year dispute, in which Moscow has insisted that the half-way line drawn between the Soviet-occupied Baltic coast and Sweden, defining the respective zones of economic exploitation in the Baltic Sea, is no good, and must be redrawn to ignore the existence of Sweden's largest island, Gotland, extending the Russian economic zone some 50 kilometers to the west.

Succumbing to continuous submarine incursions, the Swedish government had long signaled its readiness to give up part of Sweden's economic zone in a deal with Moscow (see *EIR* No. 29, July 24, 1987). The deal with Ryzhkov was signed only weeks after the commander-in-chief had submitted a report to the government on the submarine activity, the secret part of which identifies the Soviet authorship of the incursions.

Pretending not to know whose submarines are violating the Swedish borders, Carlsson impotently has demanded “unconditional respect of Sweden's territorial integrity.” At his Jan. 12 press conference in Stock-

holm, Ryzhkov claimed that “the Soviet Union is respecting Sweden's traditional neutrality,” which, as was pointed out in the Swedish press, is different from respecting Sweden's territorial integrity.

When asked further questions about the submarines, Ryzhkov flatly denied that the Soviets have ever violated Swedish territorial waters, adding ominously: “The Swedish public as soon as possible shall cease being preoccupied with this issue.”

Given the intense Soviet preoccupation with Western cruise missiles en route to their Soviet targets, one question posed to Ryzhkov was why the Soviets aren't worried about *other* foreign navies using Swedish waters, if indeed the incursions were not made by *Russian* submarines—to which question Ryzhkov mumbled that he doesn't know about any foreign submarines in Swedish waters. . . .

While the government capitulated to Soviet pressures, popular outrage was visible, if controlled. At a Jan. 10 rally on the island of Gotland, a crowd of 300 showed up to hear the chief of the Gotland military command, Maj. Gen. Lars-Eric Wahlgren, as well as an international law professor and a leader of the Gotland fishers' union.

One angry speaker from the floor, receiving strong applause, noted that the Russians had no business negotiating over the Baltic, as the proper coastal states were Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, all illegally occupied by the Soviets.

Although some economic deals were signed regarding natural gas de-

liveries to Sweden and hotel construction in Leningrad, Ryzhkov's visit didn't yield the great trade deals it was supposed to, chiefly because of Russian unwillingness to pay in hard currency. At his press conference, Ryzhkov expressed his “astonishment” that Swedish companies accepted the restrictions now limiting the export of advanced technologies to the Soviets.

As one consequence of the deal on the economic zones of the Baltic Sea, however, the fishing fleets of third countries will henceforth be excluded from the once-disputed sea strip, maybe the richest fish haul area of the Baltic. This will deprive Denmark, for example, of one-third of its current fish haul in the Baltic Sea.

After visiting Sweden, Ryzhkov went on to Norway on Jan. 14, where the border dispute in the Barents Sea remains the greatest unresolved issue, with both economic and military-strategic implications. One Norwegian journalist, reporting on Ryzhkov's visit in Sweden, said he was amazed to see the lack of public protest or demonstrations against the Soviet premier, as last year, during Nancy Reagan's visit, police had to use tear-gas to disperse aggressive demonstrators.

On Jan. 13, however, at the very end of a Stockholm Opera performance in honor of Mrs. Ludmilla Ryzhkova, one of the actors on the scene, a Lithuanian refugee in Sweden since 1976, suddenly unfolded a banner reading “U.S.S.R.,” with a bloody chain painted on the cloth. In a “joint venture” of sorts, Russian and Swedish bodyguards alike surrounded the wildly shooting photographers, and tore the film out of all cameras.

Quipped the Lithuanian actor, “Maybe some glasnost is needed in Sweden, too? At least, the applause was increasing as I unfolded my banner!”