

Northern Flank by A. Borealis

Foreign minister puts foot in mouth

Palme's foreign minister played down the Soviet threat and scorned Sweden's navy—yet Palme comes out stronger!

At a Jan. 31 dinner in Stockholm with six journalists, Sweden's Foreign Minister Lennart Bodström questioned the reports of submarine incursions into Swedish waters, and scorned the Swedish navy's unfruitful attempts to capture a Soviet submarine—the only proof the Palme regime would accept in determining from which country the submarines are deployed.

During the dinner, which was hosted by journalist Harald Hamrin of the liberal daily *Dagens Nyheter*, Bodström charged that nobody can say that there have been submarine violations of Swedish waters since the famous Hors Bay incident in the fall of 1982, when photographs were released of tracks of Soviet mini-submarines on the sea bed.

Bodström also accused the Swedish military of chasing ghosts, and praised the calm Norwegian and Finnish reactions to the Soviet cruise missile provocation on Dec. 28, 1984, reactions he contrasted to Swedish hysteria over Soviet submarine intrusions, whose very existence he doubted.

During the intervening days between the foreign minister's outrageous statements on Jan. 31 and their publication in *Dagens Nyheter* on Feb. 3, Harald Hamrin, a notorious Moscow conduit, published two prominent articles on the Soviet perception of submarine operations in Swedish waters. Hamrin, who was trained at the University of Moscow in the 1960s before starting his journalistic career at *Dagens Nyheter*, skillfully designed the articles to set up the foreign

minister the day after.

The message of the articles is that Sweden must accept Moscow's claim of uncontested military control over the entire Baltic Sea or face the tragic consequences of challenging Soviet power. In the first article, Hamrin "revealed" that Soviet mini-submers operated in Swedish waters throughout the 1970s.

In the second article, Hamrin affirms that "the Soviets regard the Baltic Sea as their inland lake. Submarine intrusions must be seen against this background. For a longer period, Sweden has acted in such a way that the Soviet Union may have believed that the Swedish government not only knew of but also silently tolerated the intrusions."

After the dramatic revelations of Soviet submarine intrusions during 1981-82, the Swedes began to upgrade their anti-submarine warfare capabilities, which may have created a problem, Hamrin writes: "It is possible that the Soviets misinterpreted this, one source tells *Dagens Nyheter*. They may have imagined that Sweden no longer accepted Soviet behaviour that Sweden had tolerated for 40 years. They may have believed that Sweden wanted to roll-back the Soviet Union in a vital area."

This sophist's argument, ridiculous as it seems, concluded: "This interpretation gives reason for great pessimism over future submarine affairs, *Dagens Nyheter's* source says. One cannot avoid the feeling that the whole thing will come to a tragic end."

It was after this barrage of psy-war that Foreign Minister Bodström's pe-

culiar view of the matter was released to the public. At first, the military leadership as well as the political opposition was outraged. Banner headlines included threats to resign from both the commander in chief and the chief of staff of the armed forces. The three opposition parties in parliament raised a vote of no confidence against the foreign minister personally, arguing pathetically that they—the "opposition"—wholeheartedly supported Premier Olof Palme's foreign policy, but that the foreign minister did not.

Palme, in supreme disregard of the truth, publicly decreed that the foreign minister—"as always"(!)—is of the same opinion as the government and the military, while Defense Minister Anders Thunborg, who is viewed by the military as "their man" in the government, privately convinced the military leadership to stay cool. Adding to the demoralization of the military, a large winter maneuver, termed "Western Frontier," goes on through February along Sweden's border with Norway, a most unlikely adversary.

While this poor show was still going on, Moscow's favorite journalist Harald Hamrin appeared on a nationally televised talk show, explaining the unfolding scenario: The three opposition parties would now call for a vote of no confidence, they would be defeated, and Palme would come out stronger than before.

And indeed, after all "opposition" parties declared their full confidence in Palme, and Palme declared his confidence in Foreign Minister Bodström, the parliament with its socialist majority easily defeated the impotent vote of no confidence against Bodström on Feb. 8. While the current foreign minister admittedly isn't the greatest one could think of, Palme's current opposition remains his chief political asset.