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THE U.S.-SCANDINAVIAN COLD WAR RELATIONS IN VIEW OF THE SWEDISH NEUTRALITY, 1947–1962

The relations between the United States and Sweden in the 1950s and 1960s were of a very varied character, with both countries having so much in common yet being critical of each other at times. These peculiar relations might be attributed to both 1.3 million Swedes who emigrated to America between 1885 and 1915 and a significant number of Americans who claim their ancestry as Swedish.¹ Sweden was the first country not taking part in direct combat who officially recognized the new American republic in the American Revolutionary War. These factors did not however refrain her from the harsh criticism of the Vietnam War and the continuing U.S. bombing of Hanoi, events which Olof Palme compared to the worst atrocities and massacres such as the bombing of Guernica, Katyn or the Jewish holocaust. His speech on these events resulted in the removal of the U.S. Ambassador to Sweden for two years.² After WWII, the first Prime Minister to meet US President Harry S. Truman was Tage Erlander, in 1952, then returning to the USA in 1954 and 1961 during Dwight Eisenhower's and John F. Kennedy's administrations. The first official American visits to Sweden were paid by the then Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1961 and in 1963, a fact which shows that diplomatic relations between the two countries in question were active but not particularly vibrant during the early Cold War years, conditioned by Swedish

¹ In the 2010 census over 4 million Americans claimed their ancestry to be Swedish. U.S. Census Bureau, *American Community Survey*, <http://factfinder2.census.gov> (accessed: 12.08.2013).

² *The translation of the speech of Minister of Education, Mr. Palme, at the Vietnam demonstration of 21 Feb, 1968*, <http://www.olofpalme.org> (accessed: 12.08.2013).

persistent neutrality and the U.S. pressure put on all Scandinavian countries to declare alliances with the Western block as the key factor in the reception of U.S. foreign aid.

The aim of the paper is to discuss the issue of Sweden's neutrality and how it was perceived by the American administrations; how much and what kind of pressure was imposed upon Sweden and her Scandinavian neighbors to divert them from the non-alliance policy; what kind of economic, social and political activity the U.S. government was ready and willing to exercise in Sweden; what kind of contributions Americans expected and, finally, how effective foreign exchange programs and social diplomacy initiatives of the American government, so typical during the Cold War, were in Sweden.

The paper is based mainly on the primary sources such as the collection of Foreign Relations of the United States for the years 1945–1962, the United States Information Agency archives of the field office in Stockholm, and other publications of the U.S. government. Its time span covers the years between the beginning of the Marshall Plan in Europe and the end of John F. Kennedy administration.

Sweden was widely criticized for its “conditioned” neutrality during WWII, for it practiced some kind of favouritism towards Germany at the beginning of the war (which translated, among others, into trading iron ore and allowing for the passage of the German troops) and towards the allied countries at the end of it. This obvious violation of Sweden's neutrality is readily explained by the direct threat to its sovereignty and independence. Wishing to protect its territorial integrity Sweden was excused to act the way it did, which by no means breached its neutrality.³ Neutrality was thus understood as a form of protectionism by way of which to avoid military entanglements, so advised to the New Republic of United States by its first President George Washington in his Farewell Address of 1796.⁴ Morgenthau treated neutrals equally to the belligerents, because both “would act in the face of war according to their interests,” which might have meant remaining neutral or intervening or going into more or less permanent foreign alliances.⁵ Neutrality, even conditioned, is an indispensable element of “the balance of power,” it is this power's inseparable function, according to both

³ E. Karsh: *Neutrality and Small States*, London – New York 1988, p. 26.

⁴ *Washington's Farewell Address*, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/washing.asp (accessed: 12.08.2013).

⁵ H.J. Morgenthau: *The Dilemmas of Politics*, Chicago 1958, p. 198.

Morgenthau and the way it was practiced by the Swedish politicians such as H. Gunnar Hägglöf who served as an ambassador to Britain. In 1960 he stated that “small states can pursue a policy of neutrality with some chance of success only if there exists some sort of balance of power between belligerents,” or when they are occupied somewhere else.⁶

Thus the question of participation or nonparticipation⁷ was at stake and though neutral states chose the latter option they still played the roles both of mediators between the two blocks and critics of war as such. The European countries that assumed this kind of impartiality, namely, Austria, Finland and Sweden, acted according to the two principles later on adopted by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, which recognized the right of states to neutrality, both in the sense of “the traditional law of neutrality and in the sense of non-alignment.”⁸ Hence, the Swedish-American relations of the Cold War era should be viewed from this perspective. In the Cold War era neutral states were causing much concern to the U.S. threatening her with their departure from the western ideas and becoming advocates of the Soviet sphere of influence. In result, many of the neutral states, Sweden included, were pressured to determine or declare which side they were taking.

Yet, neutrality lost its significance after WWII becoming irrelevant or, better still, impossible to be practiced in view of the international law, the UN charter, interconnectivity of the globalized world, an increasing economic interdependence not to mention technological advancement in warfare or conflicts based on highly ideological grounds,⁹ such as the Vietnam conflict. The UN, in particular, with its tools that were more effective than in the case of the League of Nations and thus capable of applying various sanctions towards member states or non-member states, reformulated the neutrality of many countries.

Harry Truman’s policy of containing the spread of Communism required clear-cut political, military and economic declarations rather than reconsideration of the third-way or the mid-way of neutrals among belligerents. During the

⁶ H.G. Hägglöf: *A Test of Neutrality: Sweden in the Second World War*, “International Affairs” 36, 1960, No. 2, pp. 153–167.

⁷ H.J. Morgenthau: *Politics among Nations. The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 6th ed., Boston, Mass., 1993, p. 197.

⁸ *Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Final Act*, Aug. 1, 1975, 14 I.L.M. 1292; *Concluding Document of the Madrid Session*, Nov. 11, 1983, 22 I.L.M. 1389.

⁹ D. Schindler: *Transformations in the Law of Neutrality Since 1945*, in: *Humanitarian Law of Armed Conflict*, ed. by A.J.M. Delissen, G.J. Tanja, Boston 1991.

Dwight Eisenhower administration neutrality of states was tolerated unless ideologically the countries remained intact with the foreign policy objectives practiced by American government. In the report of the National Security Council (NSC) of 1955, neutrality of the states was divided into desirable, understood as government policy, and undesirable, presenting attitudes and psychological tendencies, thus posing a threat of coming too close to subversive Soviet ideas.¹⁰

The neutrality or “alliance-free policy” of Sweden was particularly worrying to the U.S. policy makers. On frequent occasions they were passing on words of warning to the Swedish government officials that in the case of Cold War neutrality could turn out to be extremely problematic to the U.S. Provided “Sweden was prepared to defend her neutrality strongly,” it might have ended up in a similar catastrophe as that of the Dutch in WWII.¹¹

Secretary of State under Eisenhower, John F. Dulles, well known for his anti-Sovietism, went even further in defining how neutralism might be dangerous to the U.S. security. Giving a speech on NATO at Iowa State College, he went even further declaring that neutrality means pretending “that a nation can best gain safety for itself by being indifferent to the fate of others. This has increasingly become an obsolete conception and except under very exceptional circumstance, neutrality today is an immoral and shortsighted conception.”¹² President Eisenhower presented a slightly different viewpoint, giving an impression that the two politicians had conflicting ideas on the problem. The President remarked that the U.S. had been neutral for 150 years, and that in 1956 (at the time when Nikita Khrushchev proposed the concept of “peaceful coexistence” at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the USSR) neutrality meant avoiding attachment to military alliances and that “this did not necessarily mean [...] neutral as between right and wrong or between decay and decency.”¹³

Likewise the U.S., the Soviet Union was concerned about the neutrality of different states, as the ideology could result in the Eastern Block falling apart.

¹⁰ United States Department of State: Foreign Relations of the United States (further: FRUS), 1955–1957, *National Security Council Policy*, Vol. XIX, NSC 5501, *Basic National Security Policy*, Washington, Jan. 7, 1955; National Intelligence Estimate, 100-7-55, *World Situation and Trends*, Washington, Nov. 1, 1955; FRUS, 1955–57, *Central and Southeastern Europe*, Vol. XXVI, NSC 5603, *National Security Council Report*, Washington, March 23, 1956.

¹¹ FRUS, 1955–1957, *Western Europe and Canada*, Vol. XXVII, Doc. 171: *Memorandum of a Conversation*, Stockholm, Nov. 27, 1955.

¹² By stating that Dulles had Austria and Switzerland in mind. *The Iowa State College Speech*, “Department of State Bulletin” 34, 1956, pp. 989–1004.

¹³ <http://www.americanforeignrelations.com> (accessed: 12.08.2013).

At the same time the U.S. constantly turned a very suspicious and critical eye towards any Western country whose neutrality appeared to be “impartially aloof and intolerably indifferent (who should be) fought by all means fair and foul,” by the “crusading nations” as the neutrals might shake fragile balance of power between the two rivals.¹⁴ With time the USSR began viewing the West European neutrality as a means of expanding the nuclear-free zone between the Warsaw Pact and the NATO in the Baltic and Adriatic region¹⁵, adding to the already neutral Sweden and Finland.

The United States of America were concerned with the bad financial situation of many European countries, worrying that their dollar deficit might drain the U.S. economy. Together with the already observed Sweden cutting down imports from Britain and the U.S., this factor could caught up American economy in a declining spiral of trade, which already took place back in the late 1920s and which the government therefore wanted to avoid.¹⁶ Thus, in 1947 under the Marshall Plan, the U.S. undertook a series of policies and principles for the extension of U.S. Aid to Foreign Nations. The purpose was primarily to “support economic stability and orderly political process throughout the world [that would] oppose the spread of chaos and extremism.” Furthermore, the Aid aimed at reducing or preventing “the advancement of national or international power which constituted a substantial threat to the U.S. security and well-being and to oppose programs of coercion and infiltration especially when effected by the use of armed minorities.” The third objective was to orient foreign nations towards the U.S. Before the Economic Cooperation Plan went into action, the U.S. undertook an export program for critical commodities, this being coal in the case of the Sweden in 1947. Sweden was in a group of the other European countries such as France, Italy, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway of special interest to the U.S. for security reasons.¹⁷

Swedish neutrality was not only the matter of concern for the U.S. but also a thorn in the eye of Sweden’s regional allies forwarding edge conditions for

¹⁴ H.J. Morgenthau, *The Dilemmas ...*, p. 199.

¹⁵ The zones were to include the already neutral Sweden and Finland, Denmark and Norway as well as both Germanys. C. Agius: *The Social Construction of Swedish Neutrality*, Manchester 2006, p. 26.

¹⁶ FRUS, 1947, *The British Commonwealth/Europe*, Vol. III, *Memorandum of the British Embassy to the Department of State – UK financial position and the world dollar shortage*, undated, p. 23.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, *Report of the Special ‘Ad Hoc’ Committee of the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee*, April 12, 1947, pp. 208–212.

participating in a regional security organization which would require close military alliances. Sweden was often, in view of its Nordic partners, keeping them in a constant check-mate position, threatening to withdraw if Denmark or Norway decided to join Western military block. For example, Denmark was more inclined to take a definite stand with the West, more than either Norway or Sweden providing Denmark received “assurance of protection from Russian aggression” under the extension of the Truman Doctrine.¹⁸ The Nordic countries seemed to be willing to concede some of their independence to the U.S. by joining the proposed military arrangements on condition they would receive security assurances. Sweden was the only exception then. She was willing, though, to initiate some regional military cooperation, yet nothing except that. On several occasions did Swedish officials present a firm standing regarding their country’s neutrality, a fact which worried not only Sweden’s regional partners but also made American officials dissatisfied. The Swedish Defense Minister Vought believed that Sweden would remain neutral even if northern Norway were occupied by Russians and would not enter the war unless completely encircled, hoping it could escape the involvement in any future conflict. To this Norway Foreign Office Secretary General Andvord replied that “Norway would prefer to fight and go under rather than be neutral and escape.”¹⁹ In case of any Scandinavian military alliance, the high price that Sweden demanded required all the Nordic countries to individually refuse to join any other power block, an alliance which was entirely to the U.S. disadvantage. While Norwegian representatives assured Americans they would convince Denmark of “absolute futility of neutrality,” coaxing Sweden away from neutrality as well,²⁰ Denmark raised worried tones about the possible consequences of joining the North Atlantic Pact. Contributing from the Marshall Plan, Denmark was interested in prolonging the aid after 1952 to all countries who would join the North Atlantic Pact. There were other issues of concern which in the view of the Swedish resistance Denmark wanted to resolve to its own favor. One of these issues comprised the terms and conditions to which American military equipment would be made available to the Danish army and the military

¹⁸ Ibid., *Telegram – The Ambassador to Denmark (Marvel) to the Secretary of State*, Copenhagen, July 22, 1947, pp. 674–677.

¹⁹ Ibid., *The Ambassador in Norway (Bay) to the Secretary of State*, Oslo, May 11, 1948, pp. 119–120.

²⁰ Ibid., *Telegram – The Ambassador in Sweden (Mathews) to the Secretary of State*, Stockholm, May 11, 1948, p. 120; *Telegram – The Ambassador in Norway (Bay) to the Secretary of State*, Oslo, May 18, 1948, pp. 126–127.

assistance they could expect in case of invasion. The last problem was the ban on all east-western trade upon which the USA insisted and which would be economically damaging to the Nordic countries exchanging goods with the Soviet Block.²¹ These negotiations plus the news that struck after the Executive Branch submitted to the House Appropriations Committee figures illustrating distribution of financial resources and commodities among OEEC member countries, the figures which were more than disappointing, served a purpose of suppressing Sweden. However she was still reluctant to accept any further aid without the complete knowledge of their conditions wishing to gain full assurance that the Recovery Program would not become political before Sweden entered into it.²²

The U.S. was making frequent threats towards the Swedish government presenting the latter with a series of conditions to be fulfilled if any military assistance was expected. John D. Hickerson, Director of European Affairs in a conversation with representatives of Norway put forward two key requirements to be fulfilled. The first of them was that the Nordic countries should show a “determination to resist aggression” (understood as any attempt on the part of the Soviets to forward political, economic, military or ideological influences) and “exhibited a willingness to unite their strength for defense with other like-minded nations.” Military assistance would be delivered to the nations which fulfilled both these conditions. Any other nation, and this meant Sweden in particular, would have to wait until the “needs of the higher category had been met.” Americans were putting much pressure on Sweden to change its mind both on the neutrality issue and interior Scandinavian relations requiring more definite steps to be taken by Danish and Norwegian representatives as regards “convincing” Sweden to drop this rather obstinate standing on its neutrality. Both Denmark and Norway were perfectly aware of the fact that even if the three formed a regional alliance (even under Section 51 of the UN obliging each country to declare war in case of aggression against any of them) but one of them refused to join the North Atlantic Pact, the U.S. would not supply arms to “such a neutral arrangement.”²³ This fact

²¹ Ibid., 1948, *Western Europe*, Vol. III, *The Ambassador in Denmark (Marvel) to the Secretary of State*, Copenhagen, Dec. 17, 1948, pp. 323–324.

²² Sweden received \$28.4 M., Norway – \$32.8 M. while Denmark \$130.8 M. Ibid., *Current Economic Developments – Tentative Recovery Allocations bring some protests; OEEC Programming Gets Under Way*, Washington, May 3, 1948, pp. 433, 435.

²³ Ibid., *Memorandum of Conversation, by the Director of the Office of European Affairs*, Washington, Aug. 27, 1948, pp. 223–224; *Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*, Paris, Oct. 14, 1948, pp. 264–266; *ibid.*, 1949, *Western Europe*, Vol. IV, *A telegram – The Ambassador in Denmark (Marvel) to the Acting Secretary of State*, Copenhagen, Jan. 10, 1949, p. 17.

did not refrain Norway from forwarding a repeated enquiry about the possibility to receive military supplies. In order to strengthen Norway militarily and not to hinder its economic recovery, the U.S. would have to allow for the lend-lease arrangement in spite of the absence of formal ties between the two countries.²⁴

On the other hand, Sweden appeared to hold on tight to the notion of strict neutrality as it was commonly believed that “regardless of its policy the US [would] ultimately come to Sweden’s military aid.” Partially, the view was based on the wrong assumption that Sweden possessed a strategic importance to the US, and, because the Swedish sympathies were all with the West, the U.S. government had no other choice but to regard Sweden as an ally. Both the Foreign Office as well the general public shared the opinion that Sweden serviced the U.S. by “doing nothing to upset the tranquility of this area.”²⁵ The obvious fallacies in the Swedish reasoning were noticed by the U.S. Ambassador to Sweden H. Freeman Mathews, who did his best to “hasten the [slow] process of education” of Swedes diverting them from the “unwise” neutrality they stuck to obstinately.²⁶ He would encourage the State Department to reinforce the recommendations that “no export license be given for Swedish radar ground warning stations,” that is, one of the top export military equipment Sweden could sell to the western countries. Furthermore, the Ambassador required that the Department should be more straightforward when telling the Swedes that the American government had neither forgotten, nor liked the Swedish neutrality, or regarded Sweden as a “western ally.” Americans resented the Swedish inability to differentiate between the two opposing blocks in character and purposes of their political actions. By not showing any desire to form a closer alliance with the free nations of the west, Sweden was running a major risk. Based on the wrong assumption that in the last hour of the forthcoming Soviet attack, the U.S. would provide military aid, the risk might have proved to be “a tragic and costly mistake.”²⁷ The Ambassador’s report resulted in the Secretary of State, George Marshall presenting recommendations as regards the Swedish neutrality policy to President Harry Truman. These

²⁴ Ibid., *Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State with Lange, Foreign Minister of Norway*, Paris, Nov. 20, 1948, pp. 279–280.

²⁵ Ibid., *The Ambassador in Sweden (Mathews) to the Secretary of State*, Stockholm, April 21, 1948, p. 97.

²⁶ Ibid., *The Ambassador in Sweden (Mathews) to the Secretary of State*, Stockholm, Feb. 16, 1948, pp. 23–24.

²⁷ Ibid., *The Ambassador in Sweden (Mathews) to the Secretary of State*, Stockholm, April 21, 1948, p. 98.

recommendations were supposed to be executed during an official meeting with Prince Bertil of Sweden and Sven Dahlman of the Swedish Foreign Office in June 1948. The Ambassador advised to disapprove of the neutrality policy followed by Sweden, as the main issue was “not the matter of choosing between two great power blocs, as [seemed] to be widely believed in Sweden, but [was] rather the question of the survival of nations which believed in freedom and democracy processes, [...] while neutrality policy which [revealed] a division among the free nations [...] could only serve to invite aggression.”²⁸ The U.S. presented to Sweden the most pessimistic view of possible consequences of its neutrality. Not only would Sweden have been “disqualified from the ‘aid’ until the requirements were met” but, in view of the Vanderberg resolution of the U.S. Congress,²⁹ would also have risked losing the key supplier of the raw materials for its military industry. In the case of Sweden signing a regional defense pact rather than joining the North Atlantic Pact, Sweden would have needed to provide arms both for its own army and Norway and Denmark to meet all their needs for weaponry. The Swedish industry would thus have been overworked and in dire straits if the U.S. supplies had been to be shut off.³⁰

Both the Foreign Minister of Sweden Östen Undén³¹ and the Swedish Ambassador to the U.S. Erik C. Boheman were of an opinion that the Swedish neutrality was not only as traditional as the Swiss one, that guaranteed Sweden 135 years of peace, but also that is demonstrated as the only reasonable solution, particularly in view of the Soviet presence in Finland. While avoiding any direct orientation towards the western group, such as allowing transit facilities, Sweden avoided suspicion or possible retaliation on the part of Russians, such as the Russianization of Finland or any other measures that Sweden could not afford. In their opinion, Sweden had cooperated loyally with the Western nations, both in the European recovery plans as well as in the United Nations on atomic energy.

²⁸ Ibid., *Memorandum by the Secretary of State to President Truman*, Washington, June 3, 1948, p. 134.

²⁹ “Vanderberg Resolution,” *Senate Resolution 239, Eightieth Congress*, <http://avalon.law.yale.edu> (accessed: 12.08.2013).

³⁰ FRUS, 1948, *The Ambassador in Sweden (Mathews) to the Secretary of State*, Stockholm, Dec. 3, 1948, pp. 299–300.

³¹ Östen Undén was quite controversial as he represented the left-wing of the Social Democrats thus becoming vulnerable to the open criticism of being “too naïve in his view of the USSR.” At the same time he can be credited for a covert cooperation with the U.S., building American military base being one of its manifestations, on condition that agreement signing agencies would not violate foreign treaties or would not involve the Foreign Ministry.

Sweden felt reluctant to enter any military alliance, as the “belief that airfields in Sweden were being made available to the Western Powers for attack on Russia” would most certainly lead to counter-measures and be repugnant to the public opinion for over half a million persons of the Swedish origin lived in Finland and continuous mobilization on the border with Finland would thus turn Sweden from an asset to a liability.³²

For much of 1948 until April 1949 the U.S. tried to convince Sweden of possible consequences, for all Scandinavian countries, of not joining the North Atlantic Pact. Without the American military assistance (and the priority in defense materials was to be given to the countries that met the terms under the Vanderberg resolution and were thus involved in a military pact along with the U.S.) these countries were said not to have “enough strength to protect its members against [Soviet] aggression.”³³ Furthermore, the prolonged delay in the final decision to join the North Atlantic Pact could have brought an undesired Scandinavian defense pact³⁴ with conditions unacceptable to the U.S. The American government was not against a regional alliance but against the Swedish insistence on complete neutrality of its members, *condicio sine qua non* which would only weaken members’ chance of resistance to aggression. Having not received the American blessing would therefore cause a popular outcry of criticism that the United States was “splitting Scandinavian unity,” and possibly also raising the number of Socialists in the region.³⁵ Sweden wanted the Scandinavian alliance as much as being in charge of military, air and naval forces. Thus, for the equipment standardized and produced on Swedish lines (hopefully for American funds) she proposed a kind of military management that would allow the country to gain dominance over Norway and Denmark. The arrangement was entirely unacceptable to either of these two latter states.³⁶ Having gained absolute assurance that

³² FRUS, 1948, *Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State (Marshall) with Foreign Minister Undén, of Sweden*, Paris, Oct. 14, 1948, pp. 264–266; *Memorandum of Conversation, by the Acting Secretary of State (Robert A. Lovett) with Swedish Ambassador, Erik C. Boheman*, Washington, Oct. 26, 1948, pp. 268–278.

³³ *Ibid.*, 1949, *The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in Norway*, Washington, Jan. 14, 1949.

³⁴ An alliance that was discussed in a series of conferences among the Scandinavian countries ending in January, 1949. Sweden was motivated to join such a pact, mostly because of raising economic problems but also as a way of keeping away Norway and Denmark from joining western defense alliance.

³⁵ FRUS, 1949, *The Ambassador in Denmark (Marvel) to the Secretary of State*, Copenhagen, Jan. 26, 1949.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, *The Ambassador in Norway (Bay) to the Secretary of State*, Oslo, Jan. 28, 1949.

the U.S. would not commit any financial or military resources to the regional alliances including the U.S. and would not guarantee self-help or mutual aid under Article 51 of the UN Charter, Norway and Denmark resolved to join the North Atlantic Pact in 1949.³⁷

In view of these negotiations, one thing remains certain that the Swedish unchanging standing on keeping her neutrality drew more of the American attention and keen interest to the region and handed in more arguments to Norway and Denmark in their bargaining.³⁸ In 1951, Sweden adopted a very confident tone with respect to the ability and willingness to defend herself. In November of the same year, under Sweden's decision not to request further economic aid from the USA, the Special Economic Cooperation Administration Mission in Sweden was terminated.³⁹ While the United States decided to continue to "extend military and economic aid" and to develop closer cooperation with Norway and Denmark, she also had to accept the fact that Sweden would avoid any major military alliances in the most foreseeable future. However, the U.S. did not give up hope that having Sweden join the NATO was the most recommendable solution to the regional Scandinavian security. Thus to the best national interest of the U.S. Sweden should have been militarily strong even though it was not the American ally.⁴⁰

Beginning with the Eisenhower's administration, there were decreasingly fewer concerns about Swedish neutrality. It resulted from a more sober western evaluation of possible Soviet threats. The National Intelligence Estimate reported that Sweden was not much at risk when it comes to Soviet economic pressures, as the trade between the two countries was not a major one. It was contrary both to Finland and Austria which had the biggest trade turnover with the USSR, and Italy, where high unemployment in strategic sectors supplemented with large influence of the local communist party made the country vulnerable to any economic

³⁷ Ibid., *The Secretary of Defense (Forrestal) to the Secretary of State; Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense by the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Study on the Military Implication to the United States of a Scandinavian Pact*, Washington, Feb. 10, 1949.

³⁸ What is interesting, however, is the fact that the documents relating to Swedish neutrality issues or U.S.-Swedish relations do not appear in the FRUS volumes discussing U.S. national security. Contrary to the other Nordic countries, Norway suggesting Sweden remained on the fringes of U.S. foreign policy concerns.

³⁹ FRUS, 1951, *Europe: Political and Economic Developments*, Vol. IV, *Sweden*, No. 411, pp. 872–873.

⁴⁰ FRUS, 1952–1954, *Western Europe and Canada*, Vol. VI, Part 2, United States Policy Towards Scandinavia, *Memorandum by the Planning Board of the National Security Council to the National Security Council*, Washington, Jan. 8, 1952, pp. 1758–1759.

tensions.⁴¹ Another factor that contributed to the U.S. shift of interest was the growing resentment of European allies towards American policies and actions undertaken not only in Europe but in other parts of the world as well. The major causes of negative European attitudes lay in: the McCarthyism being the too far-fetched anti-Communist campaign; too much fixed approach to the relationships with the Communist world that would not allow the relaxation of tensions; too uncertain American public and Congressional support for President's foreign policy; the fear that American interest in Europe is declining; too much pressure put by the U.S. administration on the European governments; and, finally, the protective U.S. economic policy that might have frustrated European full recovery.⁴² Sweden's public opinion was no exception to the negative European attitudes towards the U.S. American prestige. Being on a continuing but irregular decline since the beginning of the Cold War, she had even suffered another regression. Many Swedes were worried about more militaristic statements made by the Republican administration announcing a more "dynamic" approach to the Communist world, aspiring to the "liberation of the enslaved people."

McCarthyism, stricter immigration procedures, the execution of the Rosenbergs and discrimination against African-Americans, all contributed to the declining Swedish esteem for the morality of the United States and becoming more convinced than ever that the U.S. was not acting maturely enough to become the leader of the free world. President Eisenhower's 16 of April speech⁴³ was not sufficient for the Swedish public opinion to acknowledge American achievements.⁴⁴ In the recommendations to the report on the decline in U.S. prestige abroad, the authors pointed to the "desirable improvement" to be made in such European countries as: United Kingdom, Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Greece

⁴¹ In 1952 Sweden's import from USSR represented 6% while export 8% of its entire trade turnover. Finland – 19% and 26% respectively, and Austria – 11% and 13%. FRUS, 1952–1954, *General Economic and Political Matters*, Vol. I, Part 2, *Soviet Bloc Economic Warfare Capabilities and Courses of Action*, Washington, March 9, 1954, p. 1097.

⁴² *Ibid.*, *General: Economic and Political Matters*, Vol. I, Part 2, *Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Merchant) to the Secretary of State*, Washington, Aug. 24, 1953, pp. 1468–1480.

⁴³ "The Chance for Peace" also known as "Cross of Iron" speech was delivered on April 16, 1953 shortly after the death of Joseph Stalin. In the speech, President D. Eisenhower discussed the raising costs of the continued hostilities between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, particularly the arms race and reappearing tensions across the globe.

⁴⁴ FRUS, 1952–1954, *Special Report Prepared by the Psychological Strategy Board*, Washington, Sept. 11, 1953, pp. 1480–1528.

and of course Sweden.⁴⁵ In the following year American Ambassador to Sweden Jack Cabot drew attention to the “unusual friendliness...on the part of the Swedish authorities,” that handed to Americans the list of the delegates to the World Peace Council meeting.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the Swedish police organized a stake-out for the Communist spy ring,⁴⁷ which, with the lurid publicity in every Swedish newspaper, was supposed to rejuvenate anti-Communist and pro-Western feelings. Even the critical speech, delivered by the Swedish Foreign Minister Östen Undén during the annual debate in Parliament, in which he blamed the West for the tensions existing between East and West, could not destroy those positive feelings.⁴⁸

In a National Security Council report of 1960, the Scandinavian countries were incorporated into the group of “prime examples of Western democracy” whose support for the U.S. policy appeared to be not only appreciated but also beneficial for the propaganda reasons. In spite of the legal Communist parties holding seats in the parliaments of Scandinavian countries, the labor unions seemed to be prevalingly anti-Communist and thus handy in tackling leftist labor influences in Iceland, Finland or other countries. Additionally, the unions followed a “coordinated policy of friendly relations” with Poland, a role that to the NSC seemed unprecedented in weakening the Soviet grip held on that country. Finally, the NSC forwarded a view of accepting Sweden’s neutrality for her membership in the NATO appeared not to be necessary from the point of Western defense aims, provided she refrained from giving any assistance to the Soviet Block. It was highly recommended for Sweden to purchase modern weapons systems that would be compatible with the NATO systems.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ The study reported the overall prestige of the U.S. in such countries as West Germany, Netherlands, Spain and Turkey as “generally satisfactory,” while France, Italy and Denmark as “disturbingly unsatisfactory.” Ibid., *Study Prepared by the Operations Coordinating Board*, Washington, Sept. 23, 1953, pp. 1528–1529.

⁴⁶ WPC was founded in 1949–1950 as an anti-imperialist, and non-aligned international movement of mass action. The structure, based in more than 100 countries, stands for peace, disarmament and global security and during the Cold War was very critical to the U.S. foreign policy. See <http://www.wpc-in.org> (accessed: 12.08.2013).

⁴⁷ FRUS, 1955–1957, *Western Europe and Canada*, Vol. XXVII, Department of State, Central Files, *U.S. Embassy telegram, 749.5258/3-1355*, Stockholm, March 12, 1955.

⁴⁸ Department of State, Central Files, *U.S. Embassy in Sweden telegram, 758.21/3-955*, Stockholm, March 9, 1955; U.S. Policy Toward Scandinavia, *Letter from the Ambassador in Sweden (Cabot) to the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Merchant)*, Stockholm, March 14, 1955, pp. 473–474.

⁴⁹ It was advised to establish in Sweden early warning, air control and advanced weapons systems, without, however, nuclear weapons. In 1959 Sweden purchased \$10.2 million worth of mili-

Simultaneously to the U.S. efforts of keeping their leadership in Europe intact, the anti-Americanism and the general weakening of the U.S. prestige began to be more noticeable. The evident lack of the knowledge of American institutions, people, culture, history or foreign policy objectives amongst the European allies was to be dealt with by the United States Information Agency. Founded in 1953 by President Eisenhower in order “to explain and support U.S. foreign policy and to promote U.S. interests abroad,”⁵⁰ this agency managed to develop its programs to its full capacity at the end of his administration.

Consequently, the USIA cultural diplomacy programs in Sweden reached its prime light at the beginning of the 1960s, at the time of the Bay of Pigs and the Cuban missile crises as well as the U.S. military involvement in Vietnam tripling in 1961 and again in 1962. The conflict that seemed to be well on its way to another major conflict between the two opposing camps brought much openly articulated criticism by the Swedish public. Unlike the Korean war, when Sweden sent a mobile field hospital unit that stationed in Pusan where 1124 men and women served until April 1957, thus longer than any other military unit in the UN forces, Sweden became one of the fiercest U.S. opponents providing refuge to thousands of deserters.⁵¹

In a USIS⁵² Country Plan Report for the FY 1962, there were several favorable factors mentioned under which the agency was operating in Sweden. These included strong democratic principles and the support for the U.N. individual human rights and freedoms campaigns supported by the Swedish foreign aid programs directed to Pakistan and Ethiopia. English replaced German as the most popular foreign language being taught in Sweden, starting with the fourth grade. This appeared to be particularly helpful to the USIA country plans as it guaranteed keen readership of American books and periodicals and reduced the possibility of language problems in government and private exchange programs. Furthermore, the USIA in Sweden noticed an increasing interest on the part of the

tary equipment from the U.S. under the provisions of the Mutual Security Military Sales program. To compare, the grant total of all military assistance to Denmark in the FY 1950–1959 amounted to \$511.5 million and to Norway – \$679.7 million. FRUS 1958–1960, *Western Europe*, Vol. VII, Part 2, NSC 6006/1. *Statement of U.S. Policy Toward Scandinavia (Denmark, Norway and Sweden)*, April 6, 1960, pp. 672–681. *Financial Appendix*, pp. 682–688.

⁵⁰ *USIA: Overview, 1998*, <http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu> (accessed: 12.08.2013).

⁵¹ C.-G. Scott: *American War Resisters in Sweden during the Vietnam War*, Madison 2000.

⁵² The USIS (United States Information Service) was a name used for the USIA abroad, although, because the most of the agency’s publications bore the name USIA, this acronym seemed to be more popular.

Swedish educational system of including lectures on American literature, history, geography and institutions, and new courses on American literature launched at four universities. There was a fair chance of documentaries, news coverage and other quality materials in English to be utilized by the Swedish media, schools and universities.⁵³ The commercial relations between the U.S. and Sweden seemed to be thriving and so did tourism. Sweden offered much interested and well educated audience for the American lectures, one that appeared to be ready for a two-year courses in American Studies, completing their education with a study tour of the USA.⁵⁴ Contrary to French academics that thought not very highly of American education, culture, research or professional training, the Swedish scientists were very much interested in a collaboration with the American institutes and universities in common research projects sponsored by both governmental and non-governmental U.S. funds that would only increase American prestige.

Nonetheless, the report points to several unfavorable factors refraining the USIS from the expansion of its activities in Sweden, that could help create even more favorable view of the USA. Firstly, in 1962 Sweden's neutrality and "scrupulously correct" behavior towards her powerful Eastern neighbor still raised many brows. Sweden's contacts with the Eastern Block in all possible spheres of life, from economy and education, through labor to religious and artistic fields, appeared to the Western countries to be "ingratiating bows to the Soviet Union." Secondly, the Swedish public opinion did not draw much distinction between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, adopting a rather peculiar attitude of "a curse on both your houses," to use Shakespeare's phrase. In view of the USIS field office, the odd approach adopted by Sweden as contrasted with other Scandinavian countries was nothing in comparison with the complete lack of local, indigenous organizations that would be anti-Communist or at least working for the achievement of clearly Western political objectives. Thirdly, the Swedish media seemed to pose the biggest threat to the creation of a positive image of America in the country. Being controlled by the government, the media not only reflected the non-alliance policy, but openly criticized any unfavorable decision towards her

⁵³ The records of the U.S. Information Agency, *USIS Country Plans – Sweden, Field Message No. 78*, Stockholm, March 29, 1961; *Circular Message No. 11*, Stockholm, Aug. 8, 1961, p. 2.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, *Field Message No. 115*, Stockholm, June 29, 1961.

trade or economy.⁵⁵ The Swedish disapproval of the American race relations was yet another issue reentering media attention.

The last but not least factor contributing to the lack of immediate success “selling the American way” was the lack of other local offices outside Stockholm, with only one USIS employee in Göteborg, what could not be considered sufficient to work against Communist influences.⁵⁶ The objectives which the USIS office in Stockholm requested to undertake were to present the U.S. foreign policy aims in a way identifiable with the aspirations of the Swedish people as well as display American political, social and cultural life in a clear way utilizing the existing family ties and friendly relations and getting rid of all the common misconceptions. The short time objectives included the support for the Nordic Association for American Studies, founded in Oslo in 1959 to stimulate the interest in the American civilization projects, particularly among the youth and student audiences to convey a genuine “appreciation of American life and [...] clear comprehension of American foreign policy,” and to establish new study groups whose main goal would be undertake educational tours of the U.S.⁵⁷ The tools that were to be used ranged from publicity to propaganda, via direct personal relations and friendly organizations utilizing the lack of resources, both material and nonmaterial, thus supplying the needed staff to schools, universities, clubs, museums, cultural centers etc. In order to reduce the number of critical comments in the Swedish press, the USIS was to provide editorial writers, journalists, commentators with the U.S. viewpoint by supplying an “area exclusive feature article service,” and by including larger share of this professional group in the exchange programs to visit the U.S. Thus, the main purpose of cultural diplomacy in Sweden was to “present the U.S. foreign policy objectives in such a way as to identify them with the aspirations of the Swedish people and thus stimulate greater confidence in the U.S. as a leader in the world affairs.” The audience through which this knowledge was to be disseminated included: the Swedish mass media, officials of the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other government officials, the Student Foreign Policy Associations of Uppsala and Lund Universities and the Stockholm School of Economics, adult education classes of unskilled and white collar workers, the

⁵⁵ The first such a case occurred when American producers demanded a quota put on Swedish products in order to protect American local market. Other criticized policies included 50-50 shipping arrangements – the reduction of custom exemption to American tourists that hurt Swedish retail business.

⁵⁶ *USIS Country Plans – Sweden, Circular Message No. 11*, Stockholm, Aug. 8, 1961, pp. 2–3.

⁵⁷ *Ibid., Field Message No. 115*, Stockholm, June 29, 1961.

Swedish-American Chamber of Commerce, the American business community, and missions of foreign governments in Sweden.⁵⁸

Summing up, both countries admitted strong friendship based on similar concepts held on democracy, large numbers of Americans of the Swedish ancestry and an exchange of sources and goods. The only issue that seemed to be causing problems was Swedish neutrality. Sweden's strategic geographic location, with its access to ports, and commanding position in respect to the Baltic Sea and the Danish Straits, close proximity to the USSR's territory completed by its influential position among the Scandinavian countries made it a country whose fate and security was of great concern in the U.S. foreign policy. An attack on Sweden, although it was not a member of a mutual military agreement, would cause a series of strategic problems to the U.S. Firstly, the other Scandinavian countries would put much pressure on the U.S. to intervene. Secondly, Scandinavian raw materials and products, such as paper, pulp, ball bearings, machine tools, electronic equipment, ordnance, and most of all iron ore of superb quality, could cease as supplying the American military industry or most probably fall into the hands of Russians. The U.S. could count on the Swedish support in respect to the atomic bomb and disarmament. Unlike other West-European countries, communism was not very popular there, the few sits in the lower house of Riksdag were of no influence and neither were the few supporters of the ideology who managed to penetrate strategic spheres of life or were active in the labor unions. They did not pose any major threat to Sweden's security and were thus of no immediate threat to the West-East balance of power, either.

Swedish neutrality played a very important role in the Cold War reality, however shunned by the U.S. and however desired by the USSR, in view of Olof Palme "the policy of neutrality has given [Sweden] the possibility and therefore the responsibility for contributing actively to building bridges between East and West."⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Ibid., *Field Message No. 78. Country Assessment Report– Sweden*, Stockholm, April 15, 1962, pp. 1–2.

⁵⁹ O. Palme: *Sweden's Role in the World*, in: *Sweden: Choices for Economic and Social Policy in the 1980s*, ed. by B. Rydén, W. Bergström, London 1982, p. 237.

**SZWEDZKA NEUTRALNOŚĆ
W ŚWIETLE AMERYKAŃSKO-SKANDYNAWSKICH
RELACJI ZIMNOWOJENNYCH, 1947–1962**

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest ukazanie delikatnych relacji dyplomatycznych pomiędzy Stanami Zjednoczonymi a Szwecją, jakie panowały we wczesnym okresie zimnej wojny. Głównym motywem jest określenie, jak ważne dla Szwecji było utrzymanie swojej niezależności od wymagającego sojusznika, neutralności, która okazała się poważną przeszkodą w planach określonych przez administrację amerykańską dla tego regionu świata. Niesłabnące naciski USA odczuwalne były nie tylko w sferze militarnej, gospodarczej i politycznej, ale i społecznej. Jedną z obranych przez rząd amerykański metod było wykorzystanie dyplomacji kulturalnej, w tym programów wymiany edukacyjnej i kulturalnej, oraz niezwykle aktywna działalność USIA, czyli Amerykańskiej Agencji Informacyjnej. Wszelkie podejmowane kroki okazały się nieskuteczne. Pomimo że Szwecja pozostała przy stanowisku zachowania roli państwa niezaangażowanego, odegrała bardzo ważną rolę w budowie „mostów” porozumienia między Wschodem a Zachodem.

**THE U.S.-SCANDINAVIAN COLD WAR RELATIONS
IN VIEW OF THE SWEDISH NEUTRALITY, 1947–1962**

Summary

The article aims at presenting – very fragile and scanty – foreign relations existing between the United States of America and Sweden during the initial Cold War period. The author discusses the Swedish reluctance to give up its neutrality as contrary to the expectations which America had with reference to Sweden. In order to receive American aid, particularly in the form of military equipment, the American government required significant contributions to be made on the part of Sweden and her people in the process of non-alignment with the Communist Block. The article both presents the American public diplomacy efforts to have been exercised mostly via cultural and educational exchange programs and demonstrates the activities of the United States Information Agency undertaken so as to convince the Swedish society to American culture, American people and American foreign policy aims and tools. Although Sweden remained determined to continue its policy of non-alliance and neutrality, she nevertheless contributed to the improvement of East-West relations.