

Sweden Appears Poised to Join NATO as Part of Western Mobilization Against Russia

Debates in the Country Follow Narrow Lines Defined by Government As Dissenting Voices Are Silenced

By [Andi Olluri](#)

Global Research, May 29, 2022

[CovertAction Magazine](#) 28 May 2022

Region: [Europe](#), [Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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With great fanfare, Sweden has now (May 15) officially announced it seeks to apply for formal NATO membership.

The Ukraine War has provided the pretext for this announcement which has long been in the making and has been widely supported in the Swedish mainstream.

The kind of rhetoric associated with the decision was epitomized by that of a leading political commentator and a former government minister who said it is “miraculous how the world’s democracies magnetically gather around the values of the free world,” namely, “democracy and the respect for national sovereignty”—Yemenis and Palestinians not included, plainly. Finally we can rejoice in the “alliance of world democracies” with “giants such as the U.S.” leading us toward “freedom, democracy and peace.”^[1]

“In Sweden, the unanimity is so compact that one is almost moved,” as one of the most respected literary figures, Alex Schulman, cheered in his trance.^[2]

The most respected liberal paper explained that “Western democracy stands against Putin’s neo-Stalinism,” and “there is no middle way, no compromise between these two worldviews.”^[3] Or the leading business analyst, Peter Nilsson, who is revered by everyone: “The production in the American, British, French and Swedish weapons industries need to continue booming” since “there is now no middle way. The world is...black-and-white”—just to quote some of the more moderate ones.^[4]

About two weeks later, after a propaganda campaign which probably would have made even Stalin cringe, the moment to bring up the question of joining NATO was ripe; after all, NATO

“doesn’t seek more territory...doesn’t seek territorial disputes [and] doesn’t threaten the territorial sovereignty of other states...and is supremely resourceful when trying to avoid conflicts,” as one of the leading liberal commentators schooled “the most useful of useful idiots for peace”—namely, most of the general population before the war, and half of it now. “The West and NATO are willing to fold over three times in order to avoid fighting over any territory, except its own,” he further explained, which is “a fact so obvious that it needs no proof”—such as Libya, Yemen, Afghanistan, Iraq and so on.^[5]

Or to quote perhaps the leading voice of the social democratic “left,” Anders Lindberg, who is constantly criticized for being a leftist extremist: Since Putin is “a contemporary Hitler”—as well as since Russians hate “our ideas about freedom”—it is beyond question that we immediately “need to join NATO.”^[6] Again: I am quoting the dovish end, and so the tune goes virtually without exception.



(Right) Anders Lindberg, editor-in-chief of Aftonbladet, Sweden’s daily newspaper. [Source: tellerreport.com]

Funneling arms to the “defense” sector and formally joining NATO became indisputable gospel, needing no credible argument whatsoever, and making any independent criticism psychologically impossible (especially for the critics—who in fact unanimously accept the government propaganda lines, as I will explain below). These “requirements are enormous.” “It is important that this process is not prolonged by vain attempts at estimating its costs,” and the “Government and Parliament [should] accept the judgment without any objections,” as two of the country’s most respected security analysts noted, knowing that would in fact be more or less the case.^[7]

With at least 70% of the corporations being for NATO membership, and barely 50% of the population (*DI*, April 19), it was as indisputable as a mathematical proof that Swedish membership in NATO was “of existential nature for our country’s freedom and sovereignty.”^[8]

All of this, needless to say, systematically suppresses the fact that there have been

diplomatic proposals put forth by Russia for years, which have been unilaterally rejected by the Western governments, and that this has overwhelmingly caused this conflict. Or that NATO provocations and incursions into Russian territory are constantly taking place, which by far outnumber anything carried out by the Russians toward us. (These last two sentences may surprise you. And if so, just look at the deluge of detailed studies presented constantly in the technical diplomatic press, which provide ample evidence reaching a burden of proof expected only in chemistry or physics, however, never presented to the general public for obvious reasons.)^[9]

Or the fact that even those most loyal to the Party line, including the awed and constantly cited Lt. Col. Joakim Paasikivi—who practically sets the entire military analytic agenda in the country—regularly concede that the Russian military “capability is not at all impressive,” failing to take control over cities just across its own border.^[10]

That is unsurprising, since we are dealing with a country whose GDP ranks far below countries like Italy. Or the fact that the Estonian Foreign Minister, Eva-Maria Liimets, openly stated that the Baltics “see no direct [Russian] military threat.”^[11]

But somehow the far more powerful Sweden and its “existential nature” is under Russian threat. That is an impressive achievement, even for the “free” press. Why Russia would invade Sweden, and us needing to formally join NATO, has not once been argued (except through the constant reference to “the changing security climate in the world,” a phrase repeated with the same fervor and lack of meaning as “God is great”). No proof reaching the minimal level of credibility or honesty is ever presented, nor needed, which is standard when you specialize in regurgitating official Party dogma.

However, I do not mean to say that everybody in the media and academia is happy with the near 100% consensus, and do not critique it. One of the most well known and respected journalists complained that those who “opposed” NATO—while still remaining well within the ideological framework established by government propaganda—and who are now “being very late” in joining the chorus for the offensive alliance, “don’t seem to be punished for it.”

In typical Communist Party style, he went on to lament that the pro-NATO side is unfortunately cheering “without enthusiasm”—a total lie, but a neat one when enforcing the required Party discipline.^[12]

Reviewing the literally thousands of articles which strictly abide by the required doctrinal Truth is not so interesting. The commentary is more or less totally predictable and expected. Rather, in looking at what the dovish extreme ends of dissent say (they are so small in numbers that you can practically count them), we will find where the outermost limits of acceptable thought go, and thus we will behold the spectacular feat of the propaganda system.

First, the critic will argue that NATO membership could compromise our prospects for “autonomous foreign policy,” and that sufficient discussion and “serious thought” has not gone into all of this, making this a too hasty decision, to quote the “extremist” Mattias Gardell, who has been accused of being the slave of Hamas and Jihadists, an extreme hater of the West and so on.^[13]

Maybe NATO is not all that good an idea since “37 Danish NATO soldiers died in Afghanistan under the first years of the 2000s,” wrote Arne Larsson, who went as far out as you can go when chastising the lack of counter-arguments put forth by the press.^[14]

Sven-Eric Liedman, the most respected intellectual historian in the country, repeats the revered staples of anti-arguments, citing the possibility of a Trump presidency and NATO’s undemocratic members—which never cause a problem to our sensibilities otherwise, of course. “One of NATO’s most powerful members is Turkey,” and the next “Donald Trump as president” thinks “that NATO is useless”—which is total nonsense when you look at irrelevant things such as facts, but anything goes as long as you defend the Holy State from serious critique.^[15] Or: we will become “less safe,” as our “dissident” Left party put it.

Our own National radical, Göran Greider, noted, “Swedish membership in NATO would mean larger investments in the military, when the climate and the public sector” needs the money.^[16] It is completely uniform among “dissidents” to stick to the above, since these points are considered to be the “most powerful arguments,” to use the phrase of a journalist who has been the target of constant attack for his “pro-Russian” stance.^[17]

All of this could be perfectly true, and in fact mostly is. But it is all beside the point. No one in the press could think of something different, which happens to be ten times more obvious. Namely, that NATO has been carrying out aggression against Russia (constantly, up until the very present), and has been unilaterally rejecting a peace settlement .^[18]



Source: twitter.com

And in the same sense, a true Belarusian dissident would not use the counter-argument that it would be costly for Belarus, dangerous or divert its resources, when arguing against Belarus joining a military pact with Russia; rather, that it would mean joining an aggressive criminal organization—that is the problem. But naturally, stating this will elicit a stream of

attacks and accusations in the West, and the argument itself causes only mental short circuit; it is psychologically impossible to comprehend, which is why the banal truism cannot be uttered even by the most radical critics. This is the ultimate achievement of thought control. I guess some just keep quiet, too, which all makes a good deal of sense. When the Party even hints at it, all must obey and join in the parades, or remain silent. Anything else is not worth it, or is simply too dangerous.

Others have other things to say, however. The CEO of Sweden's largest polling company triumphed that "The discussion about the pros and cons of Membership has been lively." True, there has been a lively debate, but all within Party doctrine.

It is also obvious that the whole question of formal NATO membership is more or less a PR-charade, but which is zealously debated, giving the required democratic guise of passionate and open discussion. The real world relationship between Swedish neutrality and the U.S./NATO was eloquently described by one of our most influential diplomats, Östen Undén, just two months before the creation of NATO in 1949: namely, he described "neutrality as a flawed and passé policy." Furthermore, he went on to describe in a confidential meeting in September 1949 that this secret relation between Sweden and NATO "can't be allowed to be expressed in public."^[19]

These "direct contacts...with the heart of the Pentagon" (as one of the top military chiefs put it) were highly developed and systematic, and it was "therefore important that the knowledge about this partnership would be kept known only to a group as small as possible," to quote one of the chiefs in the General Staff.^[20] Naturally, all of this had to be concealed and diverted from with a "religion" of neutrality, as former Prime Minister Ola Ullsten put it—which of course amounts to "a democratic catastrophe," to use the words of political scientist Kjell Goldmann.^[21]

That continues up to the very present, in which "Sweden's neutrality is more fiction than fact," as Professor Emeritus in history, Harald Gustafsson, recently put it. The fact that Sweden "is more NATO than most NATO members" (*The Economist*, 2007), and that Sweden's ties to NATO "on areas of defense and security never before has been stronger" as well as that "Sweden is a closer partner to NATO than even some of our NATO members are" (as U.S. ambassador Ken Howery said over a year ago), have all had some obvious implications:^[22] Namely, that we have served as a NATO outpost, an "unsinkable aircraft carrier" as an American general once put it.^[23]

Thus, Sweden has for years enthusiastically been part of the rejectionist Western camp, explicitly participating in blocking a diplomatic settlement with Russia. The same goes for the constant participation in NATO war games next to Russia's territory, receiving minimal reporting in the West—which is expected, since keeping to minimal honesty would give the entire game away.

I do not, however, insinuate that *large-scale* incursions do not occur—as opposed to the constant small-scale ones conducted with NATO attack and spy planes, or military ships, which "dwarf" those carried out by Russia toward the West, to quote the findings of a detailed report by *ABC News*.^[24] Just to name one example: During the summer of last year, Sweden participated in Operation Sea Breeze (one of NATO's innumerable war games for 2021) together with 35 other countries from five different continents.

The warships were a couple of kilometers inside of Russian waters, and we know from leaked internal British documents that it was all planned and that they in fact expected a Russian “welcome party,” as they frankly and proudly put it—all while American military planes were “operating in and watching everything in the Black Sea region, as we always do,” which Navy Captain Wendy Snyder boasted.^[25] In short, we were behaving as an obedient satellite before any NATO formalisms.

This is the real issue: We are—and have been for a while—acting within an aggressive anti-diplomatic organization, and that can simply never be discussed. Now, however, the diversion of simply formalizing and ratifying previous policy, is being used as a remarkable tool of distraction and deceit, thus ignoring the central problem itself, even by those who should know better.

We do, however, get a more honest picture as to why we are formalizing the role of an “unsinkable aircraft carrier” in the elite business press—as is quite typical. Euphoric headlines read: “CEO sees opportunities in NATO membership”; “It is now booming” for the military industry; “To be part of NATO absolutely opens up a larger market to the NATO countries...where we can work together on sensitive stuff”, the country’s top military CEO pointed out. We should join NATO formally “with enthusiasm,” “enough talking,” since we will have “the biggest economy, defense industry,” etc., in northern Europe, as the leading national business guru cheers.^[26] “It’s time for victory” for the Industry after formal membership, reads another ecstatic headline.^[27]

The leading Finnish businessman, Mika Ihamuotila, told our business paper that “enormous costs would occur for Swedish investors and corporations if Sweden would not join NATO now,” and we would lose “hundreds of deals” if we “stayed outside of NATO” formally. He did not want to make it all too obvious what all the fuss is actually about, why he as a safety measure added at the very end that Putin “is like Hitler” and so on.^[28] To put it plainly: “There is a before and after February 24th for Swedish business.” “That Sweden joins NATO is attractive for business,” and not joining would mean that “Sweden risks losing direct investments and deals”—so let’s seize the opportunity that we now have.^[29]

Hence the enormous propaganda.

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Andi Olluri lives in western Sweden. He just turned 20 and is studying dietetics. Andi has been an activist since he was a young teenager. He can be reached at andi_ronaldo@hotmail.se.

Notes

1. *Dagens Industri*, Maria Borelius, March 3.
2. *Dagens Nyheter*, Alex Schulman, March 14.
3. *Ibid*, Op-ed, March 17.

4. *Dagens Industri*, P M Nilsson, March 25.
5. *Fokus*, Johan Hakelius, March 7.
6. *Aftonbladet*, Anders Lindberg, April 20;30.
7. *Dagens Industri*, march 22. Quoting former ambassadeur Daine Janse and Gen. Maj. and former principal at the College of Defence, Karlis Neretnieks.
8. *Affärsvärlden*, nr. 15-16, p. 19.
9. As far as I'm aware, I am the only one who has covered this in detail in the Swedish press, and to some degree even so in comparison to the English-speaking press – *Consortium News*, *Antiwar*, *QIRS*, *Counterpunch*, *Mint Press News* etc. The overwhelming aggression carried out by NATO towards (for a short summary, see for example T. G. Carpenter's text in *Responsible Statecraft*, December 14 2020), the outright rejection of multiple Russian peace offers, up until the present, which explicitly refer to adhering to "the UN charter" as well as appealing to "the UNSC" and calling on the West and Russia to "not regard each other as opponents" (the proposal from December 17:th last year) – all of this and other matters are discussed in detail in the texts I've published in *Globalpolitics.se*, between December last year and February this year. Also in my coming review of the current crisis. They are all written in Swedish, but I draw from English sources.
10. *Svenska Dagbladet*, May 13.
11. *Dagens Industri*, March 29.
12. *Dagens Nyheter*, Niklas Ekdal, April 21.
13. *ETC*, May 6.
14. *Svenska Dagbladet*, Arne Larsson, April 14.
15. *Dagens Nyheter*, S-E Liedman, April 20. For discussion, see footnote 9.
16. *Dala-Demokraten*, Göran Greider, March 5.
17. *Dagens Nyheter*, Björn Wiman, March 4.
18. Once again, see footnote 9.
19. Mikael Holmström, *Den Dolda Alliansen*, Atlantis (2011), p. 70f, 100. This 600-page book is the most authoritative scholarly work on the subject.
20. *Ibid*, p. 220, 226.
21. *Ibid*, p. 424, 432f.
22. *Svenska Dagbladet*, Harald Gustafsson, May 4; *Dagens Nyheter*, December 23 2020.
23. Holmström *op. cit.*, p. 447.
24. Carpenter *op.cit.*
25. See for instance *BBC*, June 27 2021; *Antiwar*, June 30 2021 and *Responsible Statecraft*, Kellet Beaucar, June 27 2021.
26. *Dagens Industri*, April 25 (P M Nilsson).
27. *Ibid*, Torun Nilsson, May 6.
28. *Ibid*, May 9.
29. *Ibid*, Henrik Westman, May 13.

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